

# MARTYRDOM & RESISTANCE



Vol. 35-No.1

ISSN 0892-1571

September/October 2008-Tishri/Cheshvan 5769

## THE AMERICAN & INTERNATIONAL SOCIETIES FOR YAD VASHEM ANNUAL TRIBUTE DINNER

### GUEST SPEAKER MARGARET SPELLINGS, U.S. SECRETARY OF EDUCATION



Margaret Spellings is the U.S. Secretary of Education. As the first mother of school-aged children to serve as Education Secretary, Spellings has a special appreciation for the hopes and concerns of American families.

Secretary Spellings is working to ensure that every young American has the knowledge and skills to succeed in the 21st century. She has partnered with states to implement and enforce the No Child Left Behind Act, which commits our schools to bringing all students up to grade level or better in reading and math by 2014. The law has led to rising test scores and shrinking achievement gaps in states across the country.

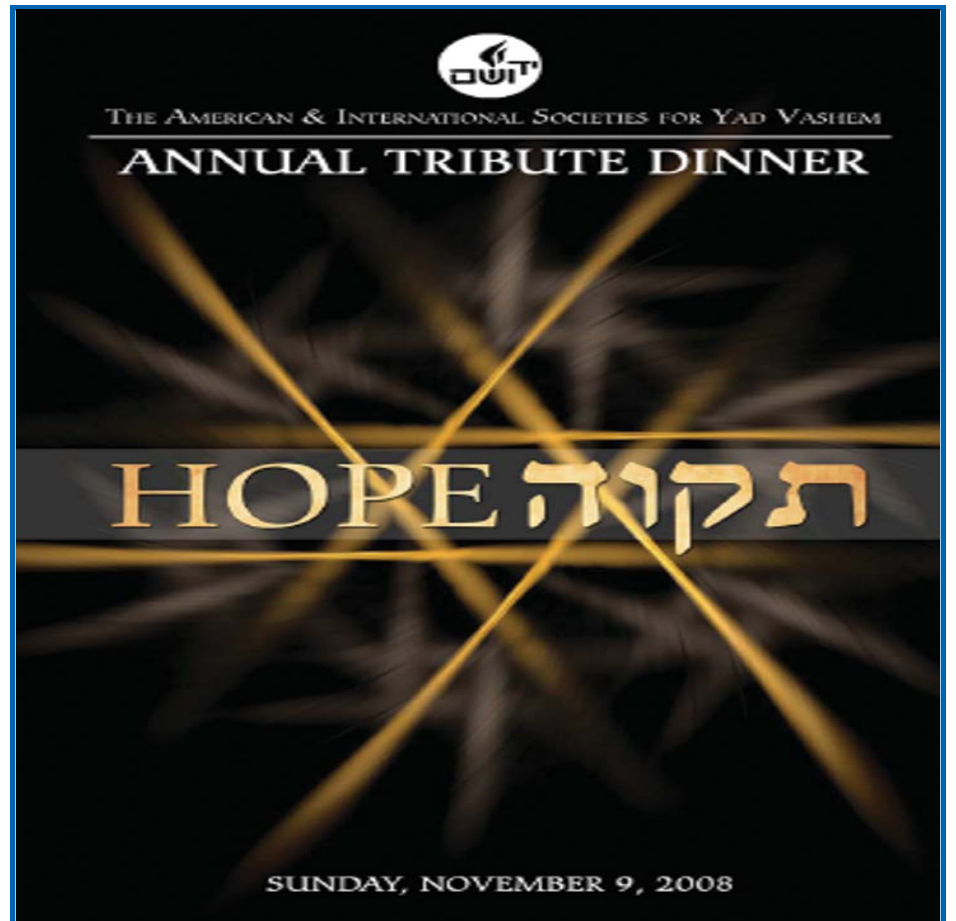
Secretary Spellings has been a leader in reform to make education more innovative and responsive. She supported teachers with new financial incentives for gains in student achievement and parents with new educational choices and

options. She announced new rules to ensure that students with disabilities and English language learners are educated to the highest standards. She also proposed a landmark Plan for Higher Education that would improve accessibility, affordability and accountability.

Secretary Spellings believes we must not retreat from the world in the face of increased competition. She led the effort to pass President Bush's American Competitiveness Initiative to strengthen math and science instruction and encourage high schools to offer more rigorous and advanced coursework. She worked to implement Academic Competitiveness and National SMART grants, which are providing millions of dollars to low-income students who major in math, science, or critical foreign languages.

Prior to her tenure as Education Secretary, Spellings served as Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy, where she helped create the No Child Left Behind Act and crafted policies on education, immigration, health care, labor, transportation, justice, housing, and other elements of the President's domestic agenda. Previously, Spellings worked for six years as Senior Advisor to Governor George W. Bush with responsibility for developing and implementing the Governor's education reforms and policies. From the White House and the Statehouse to the school board and college campus, Spellings has been involved with education policy at every level.

Born in Michigan, Spellings moved with her family at a young age to Houston, Texas, where she attended public schools. She graduated from the University of Houston with a bachelor's degree in political science.



It is with great pleasure that we write to invite you to join us at the American & International Societies for Yad Vashem's Annual Tribute Dinner. On the 70th Anniversary of KRISTALLNACHT we salute the 60th Anniversary of the STATE OF ISRAEL.

Sunday, November 9, 2008  
Sheraton New York Hotel Towers  
811 Seventh Avenue at 52 Street  
New York City

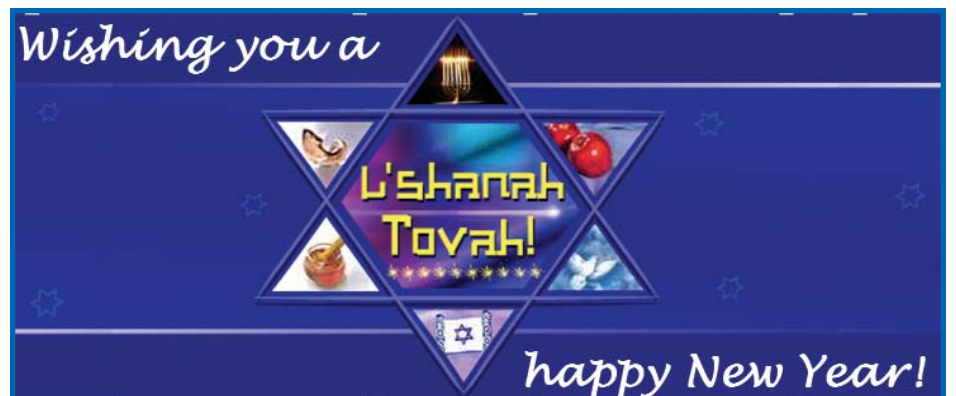
Reception 4:30  
Dinner 6:00

*Dietary Laws Observed*

*Black Tie Optional*

### IN THIS ISSUE

The American & International Societies for Yad Vashem Annual Tribute Dinner..1,	8-9
Jewish Women Prisoners of Ravensbrück.....	4
The Holocaust: A clash for civilization.....	5
The Holocaust survivors facing war-crimes trials.....	6
The birth of a nation.....	7
Revealing the good.....	10
Status as Salvadorans saved Jews during the Holocaust.....	11
Nazi atrocities, committed by ordinary people.....	12
New debate over looted Jewish art.....	13
The Rape of Europa.....	14
Fun in the sun for a noble cause.....	16



## AMERICAN JEWS HONOR POLISH HOLOCAUST RESCUERS

BY ROB STRYBEL, REUTERS

Poles who risked their lives a half century ago by taking in fugitive Jews during the Nazi Holocaust were honored in Warsaw in July, in what may be one of their final gatherings.

They recalled how they tucked Jews into odd hiding places when German soldiers were on the prowl, risking the death penalty for themselves and their families.

"At various times we had up to nine people living in our flat. They had free run of the house, but when they heard a knock at the door, they would all run down to a special hiding place next to the coal bin," said Waclaw Nowinski, 83.

He was one of about 60 ageing Poles invited to the event by the U.S.-based Jewish Foundation for the Righteous (JFR), all of them medal-holders of the Yad Vashem Institute's Righteous among the Nations decoration.

Since its inception in 1986, the JFR has spent millions of dollars supporting needy Gentile rescuers like Nowinska and Irena Senderska-Rzonca, who was only 13 in 1943 when her family provided a safe haven for a Jewish doctor's family in the eastern Polish town of *Boryslaw*, now in Ukraine.

She recounted how a Jew named Dr. Bander asked her father if he could help his wife and five-year-old son, she said.

"We hid them in the dovecote, and I would take food and water up to them. They were later joined by the father."

## CZECH HOLOCAUST VICTIMS REMEMBERED IN TEREZIN

A crowd of 1,000 people, headed by Czech Senate chairman Premysl Sobotka, paid respects to all the inmates of the war-time *Terezin* ghetto and the local Gestapo prison.

The *Terezin* mourning ceremony was held for the 61st time.

"This year is strange. Due to a thief, bronze plates with the names of the people who perished here are missing on a number of graves," *Terezin* National Memorial's director Jan Munk said.

Munk said this barbarous act had provoked a tremendous wave of solidarity.

"We must not be reconciled with the theft. On the other

hand, we have seen a positive response and help. Sculptor Oldrich Hejtmanek will make the new plates free," Munk said.

The staff of the Czech *Terezin* National Memorial pasted the first 115 new resin



Poignant statue on grounds of infamous concentration camp Theresienstadt.

On one occasion, Nazi officers were billeted in the house and German soldiers bedded down in the attic, separated from their quarry by only the thinnest of slats.

Like many Yad Vashem medal-holders, Senderska-Rzonca has stayed in touch with her beneficiaries. "Miron Bander was just a little boy back then. He is now a successful physics professor in California," she said.

Nowinski said he had been in contact with a rescued Jew named Bronowski until his death in Israel last year at 103.

"We're still in touch with Janina Panski of Tel Aviv. My dad arranged forged Aryan (racial-purity) documents for her, and because she didn't look Jewish she could freely walk the streets," he explained.

During World War Two, Poland was the only country in German-occupied Europe where anyone aiding Jews risked death. In was also the only occupied country whose government-in-exile set up an underground organization for the express purpose of aiding and saving Jews.

According to estimates, up to 120,000 Jews who could not have survived the Holocaust without help were rescued, and over 6,000 Poles were subsequently awarded the Righteous Among Nations medal, more than any other country.

There was a bittersweet note to the Warsaw ceremony.

"Due to the rising age of the rescuers, it will likely be the last," said one of the organizers.

plates on the graves that are to replace the total 824 bronze plates stolen there earlier this year.

Unlike the bronze plates, they will not attract metal scrap thieves.

The thief, who has been detained, inflicted a damage of more than \$150,000 on the National Memorial in *Terezin*. He faces up to eight years in prison, if found guilty.

The *Terezin* prison and ghetto and the *Litomerice* concentration camp made up the largest complex of its kind in the Nazi Protectorate of *Bohemia* and *Moravia*. Some 220,000 people from all over Europe passed through it during the war.

Only about one third of them lived to see the end of the war. Some of the prisoners died in *Terezin*, others in extermination camps.

The *Terezin* Memorial was established in *Terezin's* Small Fortress in May 1947.

## NAZI CAMP GUARD LOSES U.S. CITIZENSHIP

A U.S. appeals court revoked the citizenship of a Pennsylvania man who worked as a Nazi concentration camp guard.

The 3rd Circuit Court of Appeals affirmed a ruling by the U.S. District Court in Pittsburgh revoking the U.S. citizenship of Anton Geiser of Sharon, who served during World War II as an armed SS guard at Nazi concentration camps.

Geiser admitted under oath that he served during most of 1943 as an armed SS guard at *Sachsenhausen* near Berlin. His duties included escorting prisoners to slave labor sites and standing guard in the camp's guard towers. He said he was under standing orders to shoot any prisoner attempting escape.

Geiser also admitted serving as a guard at *Buchenwald* and its *Arolsen* subcamp.

While Geiser served at *Sachsenhausen*, more than 3,000 prisoners were murdered or died from brutal treatment, including hard physical labor. Many prisoners died from exhaustion or disease; many were shot or hanged.

Geiser, 81, immigrated to the United States from Austria in October 1956, and was naturalized as a U.S. citizen in March 1962. Efforts to denaturalize him began in 2004.

"Individuals like Anton Geiser, who assisted the Nazis in their quest to extinguish the lives of millions of innocent men, women and children, do not deserve the benefits of U.S. citizenship," said U.S. Attorney Mary Beth Buchanan. "The 3rd Circuit's decision affirms that the United States will not be a sanctuary for perpetrators of the Holocaust."

## CHINESE DIPLOMAT WHO SAVED THOUSANDS DURING HOLOCAUST HONORED

The heroic actions of a Chinese diplomat who saved thousands of Jews from the Holocaust by issuing visas for them to flee Austria are being honored in an exhibition at the US Congress.

Against the orders of his superiors, Feng Shan Ho, the Chinese consul-general in Vienna from 1937 to 1940, facilitated the safe departure of the Jews in the years immediately preceding the Second World War, including those sent to Nazi concentration camps.

Ho's extraordinary rescue efforts were not known until after his death in 1997 – thanks to his reporter daughter's nose for news.

Ho had lived after retirement in 1973 for almost a quarter of a century in San Francisco, California, not far from some of the people he had saved, but they never knew it.

"He did not seek publicity, he did not seek recognition, he did not seek compensation. It was enough for him to know that he had done the right thing," said Martin Gold, a member of the US Commission for the Preservation of America's Heritage Abroad.

The commission launched the exhibition "*On the Wings of the Phoenix: Dr Feng Shan Ho and the Rescue of Austrian Jews*" at the rotunda of a Senate office building on Capitol Hill.

Ho, born in *Yiyang*, *Hunan* Province and who became fatherless by age seven, had witnessed firsthand the *Anschluss*, the annexation of Austria by Germany in 1938 and the subsequent imposition of Nazi racial laws and terror unleashed on Jews.

Many Jews sought to leave Austria, but

found almost no country willing to allow them entry.

Some of those who obtained Chinese visas were able to escape to *Shanghai* or made their way to North and South America, Palestine, the Philippines, Cuba and elsewhere.



Manli Ho poses next to a photograph of her father, Dr. Feng Shan Ho.

The Chinese visas were used to obtain transit visas from countries like Italy, which required proof of an end destination.

The Washington exhibition was developed with the help of Ho's daughter Manli Ho, a former reporter with the *Boston Globe* newspaper, who helped unravel her father's heroic actions.

Ho was among the first of a small number of diplomatic rescuers who took "extraordinary steps at some personal risk to themselves" to save the Jews, Gold said.

Most of the Jews who escaped were refugees from Poland or residents of Lithuania.

Ho was posthumously bestowed the title of "Righteous Among the Nations."

## BULGARIA ACCEPTS BLAME FOR 11,000 HOLOCAUST DEATHS

President Georgi Parvanov, during a visit to Israel, took responsibility for the deaths of 11,000 Jewish residents of *Thrace* and *Macedonia*, areas that were annexed to Bulgaria in April 1941.

Acting under Nazi orders, Bulgarian police arrested Jews in those territories and deported them to Treblinka in 1943. The history of those Jews often has been played down in the face of the saving of 48,000 Jews in Bulgaria proper by the country's religious and political leaders.

"When we express justifiable pride at

what we have done to save Jews, we do not forget that at the same time there was an anti-Semitic regime in Bulgaria, and we do not shirk our responsibility for the fate of more than 11,000 Jews who were deported from *Thrace* and *Macedonia* to death camps," Parvanov said at the Israeli president's residence in Jerusalem.

Parvanov, a member of the socialist -- formerly Communist -- party, is the first Bulgarian leader to accept responsibility for the deaths.

## HUNGARIAN ARMY OFFICER WHO SAVED JEWS DURING WWII COMMEMORATED AT EU PARLIAMENT

A Hungarian army officer, who saved the lives of around 2000 Jews in Budapest from Nazi persecutions during the last months of World War II, was commemorated at the European Parliament in Brussels.

Captain Laszlo Ocskay, who was recognized as a "Righteous Among the Nations" by the Yad Vashem in Jerusalem in 2003, acted consistently against the policies of the "Arrow Cross Militia," the Hungarian pro-Nazi authorities headed by Ferenc Szalasi.

Between October 1944 and January 1945, he used a former Jewish high school building in Budapest as a shelter for the 2,000 women, men and children, feeding them with army rations and defending them with military force.

After WWII, Ocskay lived in Austria before immigrating to the United States

where he joined his son. He died in 1966 of a trauma after a fall.

During the commemoration event at the EU parliament, under patronage of Hungarian MEP Andras Gyurk, whose

family members also saved Jews in WWII, and B'nai B'rith Brussels, Leslie J. Pardon, a 83-year-old Israeli who was among the people saved by Ocskay, saluted his heroism and dedication.

"He was an outstanding and brave human being who protected a group of helpless human beings from annihilation under the most critical conditions, and risked his own life by standing up against the power of institutionalized terror," he said.

"Thanks to him I could miraculously escape from a train bound for Auschwitz."

Over 600,000 Jews were killed by the Nazis in Auschwitz and in Hungary during the last few months of WWII.



Captain Laszlo Ocskay.

## THE HOLOCAUST WAS NOT EXPERIENCED IN THE SAME WAY BY EVERYONE

Jewish experiences of the Holocaust are complex. Swedish researcher Laura Palosuo from Uppsala University has studied the testimony of Hungarian survivors, and in her dissertation she shows that the way different people experienced the anti-Jewish legislation and the violence in the German occupied areas is linked to gender, age and social class.

Hungary was the first country in Europe to legislate against the Jewish minority, in 1920. In the late 1930s and early 1940s, several anti-Jewish laws were introduced, but the deportations did not take place until after the German occupation in March 1944. Then, over half of the country's 800,000 Jews were transported in freight trains to Auschwitz-Birkenau, where the majority were killed immediately after arrival.

The thesis *Yellow Stars and Trouser Inspections* is based on 151 interviews, reports and memoirs with and by Hungarian Jews who survived the Holocaust. Most of them came from Budapest, and belonged to the group that was not deported but that experienced the terror of the Fascist Arrow Cross party. With the aid of these accounts, Laura Palosuo has analyzed the way Jewish men and women of different ages and from different social strata describe the

persecution and their own reactions to it, and how their experiences can be linked to gender, age and class.

The results show that the experiences were extremely complex, and that they cannot be related just to 'race.'

"A clear example of the role played by gender was the so-called trouser inspections. When a Jewish man was outdoors the authorities could easily check whether he was circumcised by simply pulling down his trousers," says Laura Palosuo.

Jewish women could move about outdoors more freely if they removed the yellow star, and since they did not have any physical markers indicating their 'Jewishness' they could more easily avoid harassment. However, the differences linked to gender, age and class were erased in the course of time, and towards the end of the war these factors came to play a smaller and smaller role in people's experiences.

Analyzing the importance of gender combined with other factors in the way Laura Palosuo has done is a new and unexplored perspective in the field of genocide research.

"The results are of interest to anyone who wants to know more about how people perceive and react to catastrophic situations," she says.

## REPORT DETAILS CATHOLIC ROLE IN NAZI ABUSES

The Roman Catholic Church in Germany exploited nearly 6,000 forced laborers during the Nazi era, the church said in a report.

In 2000, the church acknowledged its use of forced labor under Hitler; it has paid about \$2.35 million in compensation to foreign workers. The report, *Forced Labor and the Catholic Church 1939-1945*, is the most thorough look at the issue.

It documents the fate of 1,075 prisoners of war and 4,829 civilians who were forced to work for the Nazis in nearly 800 Catholic institutions, including hospitals and monastery gardens, to help the war effort.

The church, which has financed more than 200 reconciliation projects, said final numbers would never be known.

It should not be concealed that the Catholic Church was blind for too long to the fate and suffering of men, women and children from the whole of Europe who were carted off to Germany as forced laborers, Cardinal Karl Lehmann said at the presentation of the report.

Catholics and Protestants were subject

to oppression under the Nazis, but aside from some notable voices of opposition from each church, they generally went along with the regime.

The SS expropriated more than 300 monasteries and Catholic institutions from 1940 to 1942, and thousands of Catholics were sent to concentration camps, said Karl-Joseph Hummel, a historian and a co-author of the report.

At a televised news conference in Mainz, Mr. Hummel said the term cooperative antagonism summed up the church's strategy at the time. The report said a large proportion of the workers, mostly from Poland, Ukraine and the Soviet Union, were forced to help the Nazi war effort in military hospitals that would not have been able to keep operating without them.

The Nazis shipped millions of people from conquered territories, especially in Eastern Europe, to work for the war economy in poor conditions.

Mr. Hummel said the conditions for those in forced labor for the church were not as bad as at some other organizations.

## SERBIA TO SEEK EXTRADITION OF ALLEGED EX-NAZI

Serbia's war crimes prosecutors plan to seek the extradition of an American who allegedly served in a Nazi unit that killed 17,000 civilians here during World War II.

Vladimir Vukcevic, Serbia's chief war crimes prosecutor, told The Associated Press that his investigators have been gathering information about Peter Egner, 86, a native of Yugoslavia now living in the United States, in order to try him in Serbia.

In July, the US Justice Department asked a federal court to revoke Egner's American citizenship, saying he had served as a guard and interpreter with the Nazi-controlled Security Police and Security Service in *Belgrade* from April 1941 to September 1943.

Egner, who lives in a retirement community in the Seattle area, can only be extradited to Serbia if he is stripped of

his US citizenship.

In its complaint filed in US District Court in Seattle, the Justice Department said Egner had failed to divulge that information when he applied for US citizenship. Instead, he reported serving in a German unit and was granted US citizenship in 1966.

The US Justice Department, citing Nazi documents, said that in the fall of 1941, Egner's unit executed 11,164 people – mostly Serbian Jewish men, suspected communists and Gypsies. In early 1942, it also killed 6,280 Serbian Jewish women and children who had been prisoners at a concentration camp in *Belgrade*.

Over a period of two months the women and children were allegedly taken from the camp and forced into a specially designed van, where they were gassed with carbon monoxide.

## SON OF NAZI DOCTOR SEEKS TO DONATE FATHER'S MONEY TO HOLOCAUST EDUCATION

A son of notorious Nazi doctor Aribert Heim was quoted as saying that he wants his father declared legally dead so he can take control of his money and donate some of it to help document the suffering that occurred at a former concentration camp.

Ruediger Heim told the *Bild am Sonntag* newspaper that his father – dubbed Dr. Death and atop the Simon Wiesenthal Center's list of most-wanted suspected Nazi war criminals – should officially be declared missing and then dead.

He reiterated he has not had any contact with his father since he fled Germany in 1962, save two short notes in his family's mailbox.

"Between 1962 and 1967, two notes appeared in our mailbox. There was a single sentence written on them, 'I am doing fine.' But if those letters were really from my father, I do not know," the paper quoted him as saying.

Heim also said that he has no idea if his father, who would be 94 today, is alive or dead. He told the paper he is working with a lawyer to see how he can have his wanted father declared missing and then dead so as to get control of the former Nazi's bank account.

He said he, his brother and sister only discovered in 1997 that a bank account in his father's name existed. If he could get

control of the money, he told the newspaper he would donate to help document suffering in the *Mauthausen* concentration camp near *Linz*, Austria, where his father worked as camp doctor in October and November 1941.

So far, Heim's children have made no claim to a bank account with 1.2 million euros (\$1.78 million) and other investments in his name. To do that, they would have to produce proof that their father is dead.

In July, the world's top Nazi-hunter said he had made progress in finding the 94-year-old Doctor Death, who stands accused of torturing Jewish prisoners at *Mauthausen* and who may have been living for decades in Argentina or Chile.

Efraim Zuroff, head of the Israeli branch of the Simon Wiesenthal Center, told a news conference that his mission to the southern reaches of the Americas led him to at least four people who claimed to have seen Aribert Heim in the 45 days leading up to his visit.

Zuroff's two-week mission took him to the southern Chilean fishing town of *Puerto Montt*, where Heim's daughter lives, and to the town of *San Carlos de Bariloche*, across the border in Argentina.

The Nazi hunter believes Heim is hiding out somewhere between the two towns, separated by the Andes mountain range.



Aribert Heim, known as Dr. Death.

## DEAL REACHED ON PAINTING SEIZED BY NAZIS

A valuable 17th-Century painting seized by the Nazis has been returned to the family of its former owner, but will remain on display at a Munich gallery, according to an agreement signed in June. The oil painting

*Still Life with a Porcelain Jug* by Dutch master Willem Kalf was unlawfully obtained from Jewish art collector Josef Block nearly 70 years ago.

It has been hanging at the Alte Pinakothek gallery in Munich, where it will remain following an agreement signed with Block's grandson, Peter Block. Under the



*Still Life with a Porcelain Jug* by Dutch master Willem Kalf.

deal, the gallery paid an undisclosed sum to Block for the painting.

Willem Kalf (1622-1693) is considered one of the most important Dutch still life painters of the 17th Century.

The Nazis stole countless works of art from Jewish collectors or forced them to sell their works at knock-down prices.

In recent years there have been growing efforts to find and compensate families of art collectors disappropriated before and during World War II.

## GERMAN NEO-NAZIS CONDEMN ANTI-SEMITISM

Nazis against anti-Semitism? As bizarre as that sounds, a group of Germans which calls itself *"National Socialists For Israel"* launched its Web site in support of Israel.

"Stop the hatred of the Jewish people," the Web site reads. "The Jews are a healthy, strong nation."

The organization – whose members have yet to reveal themselves to the public – claims that Israel's right to exist is anchored in the principles of social Darwinism, the same principles which the Nazis adopted prior to the Second World War.

"Israel earned the right to live among the nations [after emerging] from unending wars," the group writes on the site. "Israel also has a right to exist. This nation also has culture... The nation of Israel is appreciated... It is our duty, as neo-Nazis, to defend this supreme success."

As such, "Nazis for Israel" also leveled criticism at their colleagues in the neo-Nazi National Democratic Party (NPD), calling them "politicos, cowards, and reactionaries."

"Show us proof of a Jewish plot to dom-

inate the world," they wrote in a rare manifesto which was posted on their Web site.

These unusual statements on the internet compliment the group's other public campaigns, including the dissemination of bumper stickers. One of the stickers features a picture of Reinhard Heydrich, the senior Nazi official who chaired the Wannsee Conference where the Final Solution was hatched. Underneath the photo reads: "As a Nazi, I'm a Zionist."

Another sticker shows a photo of Israel Defense Forces soldiers during the Second Lebanon War under the heading: "2,000 years of struggling to survive – respect to those worthy of it."

In terms of the group's attitude towards the Holocaust, the organization says: "We must view what is referred to as 'the Holocaust' within the context of acts of self-defense undertaken by nations under threat." It added, however, "that there is no justification for it." Instead, the Nazis ought to have supported the Zionist cause, the group states.



# BOOK REVIEWS

## A WALL OF TWO: POEMS OF RESISTANCE AND SUFFERING FROM KRAKÓW TO BUCHENWALD AND BEYOND

*A Wall of Two: Poems of Resistance and Suffering from Kraków to Buchenwald and Beyond.* Henia Karmel and Ilona Karmel. Introduction and Adaptations by Fanny Howe. Translated from the Polish by Arie A. Galles and Warren Niesluchowski. University of California Press: Berkeley, 2007. 119 pp. \$16.95 paper, \$45 cloth.

REVIEWED BY DR. DIANE CYPKIN

The blurb to *A Wall of Two: Poems of Resistance and Suffering from Kraków to Buchenwald and Beyond* begins:

"*Buchenwald* survivors Ilona and Henia Karmel were 17 and 20 years old when they were sent to the Nazi labor camps from the Kraków ghetto. These remarkable poems were written during that time."

How full with meaning those two sentences are. How very much they say so compactly. Just imagine how Ilona and Henia Karmel wrote, usually under the most horrible of conditions. Imagine the miracle of just getting the paper to write on, and writing so the Nazis didn't notice. And imagine, . . . both they and their poems survived.

*A Wall of Two*, in sum, is a compilation of these Jewish sisters poems, translated here for the first time from the Polish into English by Arie A. Galles and Warren Niesluchowski. Fanny Howe, herself a prizewinning writer, writes a beautiful introduction, which tells the story of how the girls and their work made it to freedom. Ms. Howe is also responsible for the poems' adaptations into English. In fact, in a separate chapter near the close of the volume, we learn how diligently she scrutinized every word and the rhythm of every line to make sure the writings kept close to the sisters' style and that they did not lose their essential meanings in translation. Indeed, this reviewer must say bravo to her! The poems don't sound translated from another language at all – and that's not an easy job.

The individual poems themselves, touching and sensitive, are arranged



chronologically *vis-à-vis* the war. Thus, the first piece by Ilona, entitled, "*Autobiography*," and subtitled, "childhood," presents us with a world (written in the present tense, but actually remembered) from before the war, a gentle, tender world of "milk and flowers" . . . and "miracles." A little girl lives here, soon to become an adolescent, ready to take on joyful "adventures." Then it all abruptly ends . . . as times drastically change and time itself is now calculated in "menace, ashes, ruin, pain, despair, terror, suffering, murder." And "[t]here are no words . . . [o]nly tears." Hitler's Nazis have arrived!

Then, not long after, Henia's poem called, "*Us*," appears. It is short, but has a powerful impact on the reader. Henia and Ilona are prisoners of the Nazis now, and Henia watches as new and already "nameless" beings are "introduced" to

"Hitler-style" [my words] incarceration. "One, two, three, four . . ." they march by, and we see them, we hear their footsteps and we can begin to know and feel, by way of Henia's writing, that soon these "nameless" ones will know of "trembling lamps, [d]rizzle, rifles and hard rain." Sadly, too, they will soon know "sufferings without number." Strange, one can almost paint this poem.

And then, much later, Henia writes of freedom in a piece appropriately titled "My Freedom." Ironically, the moment of freedom is not at all what she thought or felt it would be like. She feels "sick" and can't "face" it. It came "too late. . ." It feels like everything is gone, "[e]ven happiness had died with the rest." Freedom after so much loss — it just doesn't feel free. And it's not like it used to be . . . nor will it ever be . . .

These aforementioned writings are but a small sampling of the heartfelt pieces in *A Wall of Two*. Readers of *M&R*, readers of poetry, will find the volume unique and exceptionally moving.

Dr. Diane Cypkin is a Professor of Media & Communication Arts at Pace University.

## JEWISH WOMEN

### PRISONERS OF RAVENSBRÜCK

*Jewish Women Prisoners of Ravensbrück: Who Were They?* By Judith Buber Agassi. Oneworld Publications, 2007. 352 pp. \$68

REVIEWED BY RIVKA CHAYA SCHILLER

As the grandchild and great-niece of women who were incarcerated in Ravensbrück, the first all-female concentration camp, which began functioning on May 18, 1939, I read with much interest Dr. Judith Buber Agassi's 2007 publication, *Jewish Women of Ravensbrück: Who Were They?* More than all the other concentration camps, extermination centers, and ghettos combined, the Ravensbrück Concentration Camp stands as the symbol of these unique, female-targeted atrocities. However, until the past couple of years, it was greatly overlooked in the shadow of more infamous and widely discussed killing sites, such as *Auschwitz-Birkenau*, *Bergen-Belsen*, and *Treblinka*.

One of the first issues that Buber Agassi addresses in her highly detailed, thoroughly researched, and deductive book is that of why the Ravensbrück chapter of the Holocaust has been so sorely neglected by researchers concentrating on Jewish prisoners in specific concentration camps. This is only one of the numerous questions that the author sets out to answer for herself by interviewing – together with a team of researchers – 138 survivors of Ravensbrück on more than three continents, and by sifting through primary and

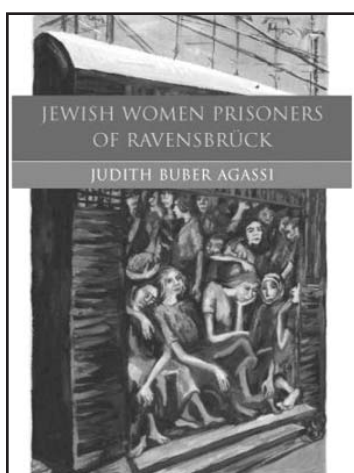
secondary sources, as well as some 100+ published and unpublished memoirs and manuscripts. All of this was necessary in order to "reconstruct the crime" as it was committed over the course of six years, from 1939 to 1945. In the process, Buber Agassi also succeeded in uncovering vital data about the more than 16,000 individual Jewish victims — both those who were murdered and those who survived.

According to Buber Agassi, whose own mother, Margarete Buber-Neumann, was incarcerated for five years in Ravensbrück, there were a number of obstacles to Jewish commemoration. One of these is steeped in the uniqueness of the Jewish experience during the

Holocaust, as Ravensbrück does not fit this traditional model. Indeed, it was a "place of suffering to women from all over Europe, the Jewish women among them constituting a minority."

As a sociologist specializing in gender and work Buber Agassi felt that her chief goal in constructing such a book was to ascertain some of the following questions: Who were these Jewish women? Or – more specifically – which countries did they come from? What was their age distribution? What types of professional roles did they hold prior to the war? Did they come from traditional (i.e., religiously observant) backgrounds or not? What types of social interactions and emotional support existed among and between the various groups of women, i.e., Jews, non-Jews, Zionists, non-Zionists, Communists, Socialists, et al.?

(Continued on page 15)



## ICON OF EVIL

*Icon of Evil. Hitler's Mufti and the Rise of Radical Islam.* By David G. Dalin and John F. Rothmann. New York: Random House, 2008. Pp. 227. \$26.00.

REVIEWED BY RABBI I. ZOBERMAN

Authors and scholars David G. Dalin from the Hoover Institution at Stanford University with John F. Rothmann of the Fromm Institute at the University of San Francisco, have collaborated to prove in the riveting account of *Icon of Evil* that the infamous grand mufti of Jerusalem Haj Amin al-Husseini is directly responsible for the violent identity of Radical Islam.

Interestingly, the authors' bond and focus on the book's theme dates back to 1968 and a joint experience as Hebrew University visiting summer students in Jerusalem's Yad Vashem. There a shared photo of the mufti with Adolf Hitler piqued their curiosity, ultimately resulting in meticulous and revealing research concerning the close personal as well as ideological relationships between the two. The mufti's planting of the fertile seeds of both anti-Semitism and anti-Western attitude, the antecedent authoritatively claimed by the authors, for today's Radical Islam's uncompromising hatred.

Ironically, it was the first British high commissioner for Palestine, the Jewish and Zionist-committed Sir Herbert Samuel, whose controversial 1921 appointment of the 26 year old al-Huseini as Jerusalem's mufti allowed the most virulently hostile candidate for the significant Muslim office over Islam's third holiest city, to enter the religious and political arena with lasting disastrous consequences. He became a leader in the

Muslim Brotherhood whose ideals are embodied in the terrorist organizations of Hamas, Hezbollah and al-Qaeda.

In the historic meeting on November 28, 1941, between al-Husseini and Hitler in the Fuhrer's Berlin office, the Muslim leader made it clear that their goals vis-à-vis the Jews were identical. Al-Husseini participated in the destruction of Bosnia's Jews through his personal involvement with the Muslim recruits to the Waffen-SS, *Bosnia-Hercegovina*. Found documents indicate his persistent request of Heinrich



Himmler and Herman Goring to conduct air attacks on Jews in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv. However, he did receive poison meant for Tel Aviv's water system which was caught in time. The mufti broadcasted on German radio in 1943 his fatwa, "Kill the Jews."

If he were captured at the war's end, he would have been tried and convicted as a war criminal beside the German leaders, assert the authors.

Early on al-Husseini would use assassination of his own Arab rivals as an accepted weapon and there is even reason to connect him to the murder of Jordan's King Abdullah in Jerusalem's *Al-Aqsa Mosque* in 1951.

The authors clearly conclude, "As the founding father of radical Islamic anti-Semitism in the twentieth century, al-Husseini remains the inextricable and enduring link between the old anti-Semitism of pre-Holocaust Europe and the Hew hatred and Holocaust denial that now permeates the Muslim world." (p.108)

Rabbi Israel Zoberman, Spiritual Leader of Congregation Beth Chaverim in Virginia Beach, is the son of Polish Holocaust survivors.

# THE NAZI CRIMINALS AMONG US

BY TOM TEICHOLZ, LA TIMES

John Demjanjuk's last appeal to avoid deportation was rejected by the U.S. Supreme Court on May 19. The 88-year-old accused Nazi concentration camp guard was stripped of his citizenship and ordered sent to Ukraine, his birthplace; Poland, the locus of the crimes; or Germany, the heir to the Nazi regime under which he served.

Yet, as it now stands, he is still in the United States. Why? He can't be exiled unless another country agrees to accept him. For the time being, he remains free.

In this, Demjanjuk is not alone. There are five other former Nazi criminals against whom the U.S. Justice Department successfully completed deportation proceedings, but whom no country has been willing to accept.

Romanian-born Johann Leprich, a guard at *Mauthausen* camp in Austria, is one; his deportation was finalized in 2006. Another is Jakiw Palij, born in a region of Poland that is now in Ukraine. He was a guard at Poland's *Trawniki* labor camp (where in a single day in 1943, 6,000 prisoners were murdered), and his deportation was finalized in January 2006. Mykola Wasyluk, another *Trawniki* guard also found to be at the *Budzyn* camp, had his final appeal denied in 2004.

Theodor Szezhinskyj, also born in a part of Ukraine that used to be Poland, was in the SS unit called the Death's Head Brigade and was a guard at the *Gross-Rosen*, *Sachsenhausen* and the Warsaw concentration camps. His deportation litigation was completed in March 2006.

Finally, there is Anton Tittjung. Tittjung was born in what was then Yugoslavia and is now Croatia. He was a *Waffen SS* member and a guard at *Mauthausen*.

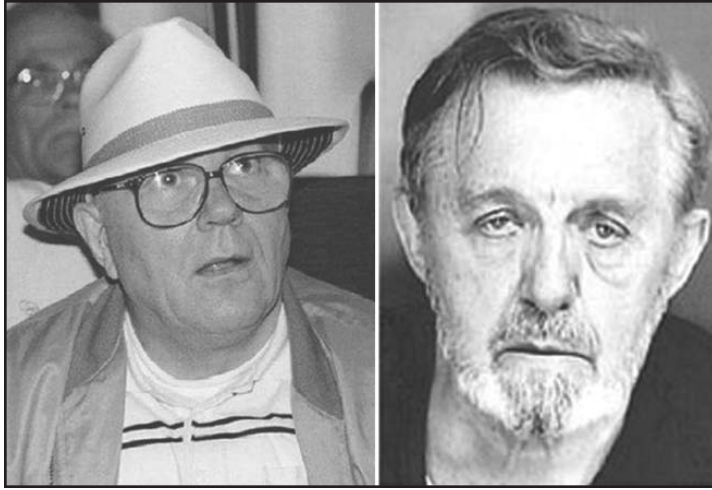
Should any of these criminals worry that deportation is imminent, they might take comfort from the fact that the Supreme Court declined to hear Tittjung's final appeal way back in 2000. He still remains free in the United States. In addition, in recent years, four of their denaturalized Nazi peers died before they were ever deported.

In all of these cases, the countries of their birth, such as Ukraine, Romania, Poland or Croatia, and the countries where their crimes were committed, such as Austria or Poland as well as Germany, were contacted by the Justice Department, and none expressed interest in receiving these now "stateless" persons.

There is no law, domestic or international, that requires foreign countries to accept or extradite these former Nazis or to give a reason why they don't. However, their reasons are easy to divine and include not wanting to burden the state with these aged citizens, no desire for an expensive investigation and trial, and fear that nationalist or neo-Nazi elements might be aroused by

reopening Nazi-era wounds.

But that does not lift their moral responsibility to accept and/or prosecute the criminals of the Nazi era. In what society do murderers go free? What nation can forget the crimes of the Nazi era? Given that the victims of the Holocaust cannot



John Demjanjuk (left) and Johann Leprich.

cry out for justice, who will?

Poland, Ukraine and Romania might make the argument that they were under Nazi rule at that time. Germany has no such excuse. And although Germany has prosecuted many native-born Germans for their World War II-era crimes, they have been less eager to do so as time goes by. Germany has had even less interest in prosecuting those non-Germans, like Demjanjuk, who served the Nazis in the countries they conquered, as though Germany could draw a border around the Holocaust crimes it is responsible for.

Regardless of any moral impetus countries might have to extradite Nazi criminals, until now there has been no legal one. That may change. On May 12, Sen. Gordon Smith, R-Ore., introduced the World War II War Crimes Accountability Act of 2008, which would require the United States to evaluate foreign countries' cooperation in extraditing or prosecuting Nazi criminals the United States wants deported. Assistance or lack thereof would affect a nation's visa-waiver status for business travelers and tourists.

More than 50 years after the end of World War II, it is fair to ask: Why do we care? What's the point of expending our time, effort and money and that of other countries on these old men? Why not move on? What of forgiveness?

Forgiveness or mitigation as a legal, or even a moral, concept should only be available to those who are willing to fully confess their participation in the crimes of the Nazi era and express remorse. But to date, there have been no complete confessions by the guilty and no remorse. Demjanjuk, for example, continues to deny any Nazi involvement whatsoever, even in the face of incontrovertible documentary evidence unearthed after the collapse of the Soviet Union that confirmed his presence at numerous concentration camps.

Still, time is passing. In the case of these criminals, there is some irony in the fact that they have lived long enough to be exposed for who they were and what they did.

If no country accepts them before they die, at least they won't pass from this Earth as innocents.

It may not be final justice, but it is some comfort.

## THE HOLOCAUST: A CLASH FOR CIVILIZATION

BY JASON GUBERMAN-PFEFFER

In trying to understand the Holocaust, the inexplicable, it is comforting to think of the perpetrators not as human beings but *Übermenschen* – the fanatical, technologically advanced "Aryan master race" that the Nazis believed themselves to be. The perpetrators of the Holocaust, however, were not just members of the SS and their bureaucratic enablers. They were, rather, ordinary Germans and their rather ordinary collaborators. As Leonard Cohen reminds us, Eichmann was of medium height, weight and intelligence, and without any distinguishing features. With no more or less than ten fingers he managed to compose the orders, requisitions, and correspondence which oversaw the execution of the "Final Solution." This Final Solution was, we should recall, carried out, at least for 40% of the victims, by decidedly less than the modern, efficient, and impersonal methods of annihilation that are often associated with the event. Holocaust victims died through malnutrition, famine, and disease in the ghettos, through being worked to death in labor camps, through deportations late in the war that turned into horrific death marches, or through the gruesome executions in pits, trenches, and ravines, using machine guns, rifles, and revolvers.

These practices were just as much a part of the Nazi's arsenal as the gas chambers and crematoria. With this acknowledgement comes the realization that the responsibility for the Final Solution is more widespread than previously thought, and that the average people who carried it out, often face-to-face

with their victims, had a choice and chose to do evil. According to Daniel Goldhagen, "the perpetrators, having consulted their own convictions and morality and having judged the mass annihilation of Jews to be right, did not want to say 'no.'"

How could ordinary people commit such fantastic atrocities? This speaks to the success of the Nazis to synthesize historical, pseudo-scientific, and theological reserves of hatred into an ultimately self-destructive obsession with the Jews. The Nazi's had a well-documented preference, and while they hated and killed other groups, there was neither the perceived necessity nor determination to carry out similar total extermination campaigns against them. This is, by no means, to lessen the importance of their other victims' deaths or to create a "competition among the victims." It is instead to put those deaths in their proper context in the recognition that the Nazi's legacy is inextricably their anti-Semitism.

The Nazi's hatred of Gypsies, Poles, Slaves, Russians, the disabled, and homosexuals was certainly as irrational as their hatred of the Jews, though, somehow their anti-Semitism was more so. This is evident from their insistence on fighting "an omnipotent 'Jewish' power even as their mass murder of the Jews revealed the powerlessness of their enemy." The other groups were labeled "racially inferior" and "burdens to society" but never accused of being the root of all evil, as the mythological global enemy of the *Fatherland*. At a time when Jews constituted around 1% of the German population and some such similar percentage worldwide, Hitler wrote:

The forces which now have the direction

of affairs in their hands are Jews here and Jews there and Jews everywhere. The trend of development which we are now experiencing would, if allowed to go on unhampered, leads to the realization of the Pan-Jewish prophecy that the Jews will one day devour the other nations and become lords of the earth.

Therefore, in laying out his political program, Hitler posited that "the first objective will not be to build up the idea of the People's State but rather to wipe out the Jewish State which is now in existence." His mission was, in his own words, not to advance prejudice but justice: "I am freeing men from the restraints of an intelligence that has taken charge; from the dirty and degrading self-mortifications of a chimera called conscience and morality, and from the demands of a freedom and personal independence which only a very few can bear."

Now we approach the essence of Nazism. Its all-encompassing hatred is why seven years after the Nuremberg Laws had effectively disenfranchised the Jewish community in Germany, Hitler was still not satisfied – nor should he have been. A final solution was not only deemed imperative, it was of the utmost urgency. The *Madagascar Plan* or other alternatives were never to get past the planning phases or the occasional propaganda slogan of "Jews go to Palestine." No, Hitler believed that deportations would be insufficient; the "solution" to the "Jewish problem" was an all-or-nothing proposition or, as Chaim A. Kaplan wrote in his famous diary kept inside the Warsaw Ghetto, "Either humanity would be Judaic, or it would be idolatrous-German."

The difference is between civilization and barbarism – a state Hitler openly aspired to champion. Jews, as the living memories of civilization – in Judea Pearl's phrase, its scouts – were rightly seen as obstacles to the *Thousand Year Reich's* mission of destroying intelligence, conscience, morality, and freedom. The prohibitions of a totalitarian regime are simply incompatible with a people characterized by their stiff-necked willingness to question conventional wisdom and constantly seek the exploration of new pathways. Abraham questioned the wisdom of idolatry, Moses questioned the wisdom of servitude and lawlessness, the prophets questioned institutional injustice, and so the chain goes on from the Maccabees, to Einstein, and the civil rights activists of the 1960's.

Hitler's assertion that "conscience is a Jewish invention... a blemish, like circumcision," provides "a brusque insight into the infectious nature of morality. Kill the remembrancer, the claim agent, and you will have canceled the debt. Jews are, then, akin to canaries in a coal mine. As Ernst Fischer poignantly wrote: "the degree of a society's culture can be measured against its attitude towards the Jews. All forms of anti-Semitism are evidence of a reversion to barbarism." From this perspective, perhaps seen as blasphemous, Hitler's motivating ideology and deeds are rational, normal, and understandable. In the abyss of nihilism, where truth ("either in the moral or in the scientific sense") has been dispensed with, this is undoubtedly the case. The Holocaust was nonetheless, never justifiable, never excusable, and never forgivable. This is a lesson we must forever try to come to terms with.

First published on *Algemeiner.com*

# SURVIVORS' CORNER

## HOLOCAUST SURVIVOR, RESCUER LIVE LIKE SISTERS

BY VANESSA GERA, AP

They are two silver-haired ladies with a special bond forged in the Holocaust. One is the daughter of Jews who perished under the Nazis, the other her Roman Catholic rescuer.

Today Janina Pietrasiak, 74, and Maria Lopuszanska, 79, live like sisters just around the corner from each other in a Warsaw neighborhood shaded by chestnut trees.

They see each other every day, tend to each other's needs, even finish each other's sentences.

Their story is a testament to how devotion born of deep adversity can endure for a lifetime and how the Holocaust survivors' exhortation "never forget" can find resonance as much in acts of great generosity as in those of unspeakable depravity.

During several hours with The Associated Press, the women relived the events that merged their lives while sitting side-by-side in Maria's tiny room in a nursing home, a five-minute walk from the modest apartment where Janina lives alone.

Maria was the teenage daughter of members of the Polish anti-Nazi underground who gave shelter in their Warsaw apartment in 1942 to Janina and her mother, Roza Feldman.

Feldman soon died of tuberculosis, her strength depleted by the cold and hunger she had endured before escaping from the Krakow Ghetto.

After that, Janina, not yet 8 when she joined the Catholic home, clung desperately to her new family and was baptized to fit in with them and increase her chances of survival under the Nazis.

After the war, she gave up the chance to live with an uncle in the United States — sealing a fate lived out for decades behind the Iron Curtain as Poland came under communist rule.

"I was very afraid to leave their family because I was happy I had a family, and I kept holding on to them all the time, trying not to lose them," she said.

"It was the family that raised me, that rescued me. I also didn't want to leave Poland — I thought it was the country that let me live."

The bond deepened during the ill-fated Warsaw Uprising of 1944, when the girls had to fend for themselves because Maria's father was ill and her mother had taken up arms against the Nazis in the streets of the capital.

They saw bombs exploding, corpses and body parts strewn on the streets, narrowly escaping death themselves more than once. Both recalled how the younger Janina would bury herself in the older girl's skirt as the bombs exploded.

"She was like a mother," Janina said, reaching over and grasping the hem of Maria's skirt as she remembered.

"She thought I wasn't scared of anything," Maria added. "But I was 15 years old. I was incredibly scared of the bombs. I was no hero."

Janina lost the most. Her father died in

Auschwitz. Her only sibling, Ewa, survived the war but later committed suicide by inhaling gas. And the death of her beloved mother fills her with pain to this day.



Janina Pietrasiak, right, brings out papers documenting the tragic fate of her family, alongside a woman she considers her sister, Maria Lopuszanska.

Through the years, Janina suffered bouts of depression so severe that she was forced to retire early at age 59 from her work as a translator, and went on medication.

"I think of my mother often because she was the dearest person in my life. It stays with you all the time, what you go through. You can't throw it out of your memory," she said.

Her marriage to a devout Roman Catholic brought a daughter, but also the fresh pain of a husband, from whom she is now separated, who taunted her with anti-Semitic remarks.

"My husband is very religious and doesn't especially care for the Jews," she said. "Anytime he tried to say something

against the Jews, I would tell him, 'you forget who I am.'"

Despite her own ordeals, including a battle with leukemia now in remission, the main focus in her life is the woman she calls her sister.

Maria lives on a pension so small that after paying her nursing home, she only has 300 zlotys (\$145) left over — most of which the breast cancer survivor needs for medicine.

After the war she became an economist, married and had three children. Her room is filled with photos of her grandchildren, along with crucifixes. Her husband died in 1987.

Janina became a regular Mass attendee and didn't seek contact with Jews until 1997 — and then, it was only in an attempt to seek recognition for Maria.

She contacted the Yad Vashem Holocaust museum in Jerusalem, which then bestowed the title of "Righteous Among the Nations" to Maria and to her parents, Henryk and Janina Jetkiewicz.

The title, reserved for non-Jews who saved Jews, has gone to people from 44 countries. On Jan. 1, Poles made up the largest number, 6,066, followed by the Netherlands with 4,863.

Thanks to her recognition as a rescuer, Maria receives \$1,200 per year from the New York-based Jewish Foundation for the Righteous, which helps with the medicine and a few extras, such as this year's summer holiday to the Warsaw countryside.

As the afternoon wore on, the women moved to Maria's tiny terrace, ringed by peach-colored geraniums, and gazed out over the nursing home's lush and blooming garden.

Janina wiped a fleck of lint from Maria's cheek. Maria then reached over and tenderly straightened out her sister's rumpled dress.

## THE HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS FACING WAR-CRIMES TRIALS

Elderly Jews say they are outraged that Lithuania is pursuing them over their wartime role as anti-Nazi partisans

BY DANA GLOGER

Fania Branstovsky was just 20 when she joined the Jewish partisan movement, fighting the Nazis in her home country of Lithuania. In the Vilnius ghetto, she and her fellow partisans carried out attacks against the occupying German forces. By the end of the war, almost her entire family — more than 50 people — had perished at the hands of the Nazis. Yet now, over 60 years later, she is the one being branded unpatriotic, and is reportedly under investigation by Lithuanian authorities for alleged war crimes.

National and local newspapers and television stations are referring to the 86-year-old Holocaust survivor, who now works as a librarian at the Vilnius Yiddish Institute, as a murderer and a terrorist. Earlier this year, the Vilnius-based newspaper *Lietuvos Aidas* called for her to be put on trial. The allegation leveled against her is that during her time as a partisan, she committed crimes against Lithuanians. But she strongly denies that she and her partisan colleagues ever targeted groups of local people.

"It's very upsetting and shocking," says Branstovsky, a mother of two, with six grandchildren and two great-grand-children.

"We fought against the powers of the Nazis. Not against the locals. The Nazis wanted to annihilate all Jews and all people who loved freedom, and I joined the underground partisan organization in September 1943 to defend myself and my people. It was a matter of honor."

Even with a possible war-crimes prosecution hanging over her, she has no regrets. "I didn't want all Jewish people to die with no resistance. I feel very proud, and I'm very glad that I had the opportunity to do something for honor and humanity."

She vows that the prospect of being put on trial for war crimes will not drive her out of her country. "I'm very patriotic. I was born here and have always lived here. Of course I am worried, but I am not planning to leave because of this. By doing this they want to rewrite history."

Branstovsky is not the only Holocaust survivor being pursued by the Lithuanian authorities. Yitzhak Arad, a historian and former chairman of Israel's Holocaust museum, Yad Vashem, is also being investigated over similar alleged crimes.

Arad joined the partisan movement in the Vilnius ghetto during the war. His parents had already been taken by the Nazis two years earlier, eventually dying in

Warsaw. So the teenage Arad decided to try to make it alone. "The night before we had to go to the ghetto, I escaped to Belorussia [then part of the Soviet Union, now Belarus]," he recalls. "In doing that, I escaped the killings. Forty members of my family were killed as well as many people from my village."

He returned to Vilnius as a member of the pro-Soviet partisan movement, whose main activity was sabotaging German trains. Having fought so hard to survive the Nazi killings, Arad, who settled in Israel after the war, says he is "upset and disappointed" at being branded a war criminal.

"In doing this, they are trying to rewrite history and to turn the murderers of thousands of Jews into heroes and the few survivors into criminals," he says.

Although he has had no formal confirmation from the authorities that they are looking into his partisan activities, or that a prosecution is planned, he says he has heard through other channels that a group of anti-Soviets in the country filed a complaint against him to Lithuanian prosecutors. This led to an investigation being launched. The local media have also reported that an investigation is under way, accusing both Arad and Branstovsky of massacring civilians in the village of Kaniukai.

The prospect of standing trial has, naturally enough, left Arad reluctant to return to his home town. "I have not been back for two years, and I'm not planning on going back now," he says.

If trials do go ahead, it seems that a third Jewish partisan could be the primary witness for the prosecution. Rachel Margolis, founder of Vilnius's Jewish museum, has written a memoir recounting her escape from the ghetto and her time as a partisan. Extracts from her book, she fears, could be used as evidence by prosecutors.

Margolis, who lost her family in the Holocaust and now lives in Israel, was unavailable to talk. But according to Efraim Zuroff, director of the Jerusalem office of the Simon Wiesenthal Centre, an investigator was sent to the address which she uses in Lithuania. He says the investigator interviewed Rachel Konstanian, the director of the Vilnius Jewish Museum, and told her that he was looking for Margolis in order to question her regarding an investigation into Fania Branstovsky.

Margolis's cousin, Budd Margolis, who lives in London, fears that the stress of going through a trial could prove life-

(Continued on page 14)

## HOLOCAUST SIBLINGS MEET AFTER SIXTY SIX YEARS

BY MATTHEW CHANCE, CNN

A frail Irene Famulak clutched her brother on the airport tarmac, her arm wrapped around him in a tight embrace, tears streaming down their faces. It was the first time since 1942 they had seen each other, when she was 17 and he was just 7.

That was the night the invading Nazis came to take her away from her Ukrainian home.

"I remember it well because I kissed him good-bye, and he pushed me away," she said of her brother. "I asked, 'Why did you do that?' And he said that he doesn't like kisses."

"The Nazis told my mother that I was being taken to work in a German labor camp for six months. But it was, of course, much longer. I was there for years."

Both siblings survived the Holocaust and grew up on different sides of the Iron Curtain, not knowing the fate of the other.

But after 66 years apart, Famulak, 83, was reunited with her long lost 73-year-old brother, Wssewolog Galezkij. They held each other close this time, cherishing the moment.

"I don't believe anyone has ever known such happiness. Now, I truly believe I can die satisfied," Galezkij said.

Famulak made the long journey to Donetsk in eastern Ukraine from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, after being contacted by the American Red Cross. The organization told her they had located her only surviving sibling.

Famulak said she spent World War II in a labor camp in Munich, Germany, working in the kitchens. She had been taken to the camp with her older sister. When it was liberated in 1945, Famulak stayed in Germany for several years, eventually emigrating to the United States in 1956.

She never saw her parents again after that day in 1942 when Nazis separated

her from her family. She and her brother still have no idea what happened to their mother and father. Some of their siblings lived through the war, but later died; others, they never heard from again after being separated.

But her younger brother never gave up hope of tracking his sister down. He, too,



Siblings Wssewolog Galezkij and Irene Famulak were separated in 1942 when Nazis took her to a labor camp.

was sent to a German labor camp, but after the war, he moved back to Ukraine, then a republic of the Soviet Union.

Under Soviet leader Josef Stalin, information on lost relatives was kept sealed, and Galezkij said it wasn't until reforms in the late 1980s, followed by the Soviet collapse, that he started making progress in finding his sister.

Even then, it took him more than 17 years to locate her in the United States. He broke down in tears as he spoke of his overwhelming happiness at finding her.

"When the Red Cross told me they had found her in America, it was such a joy," he said, sobbing.

In fact, he had to be taken to the hospital because he was so overcome when he first learned she was alive. At this week's

reunion, there was a doctor on hand at the airport as a precaution.

Back in the United States, there were tears, too.

Linda Klein, the director of the American Red Cross Holocaust and War Victims Tracing Center, said the volunteer who helped the siblings find each other got caught up in the emotion herself.

"When I showed her the picture, she stood there and wept," Klein said. "She was beside herself."

Klein's group has reunited 1,500 families since it began work in 1990. She said the former Soviet Union released records in 1989 of concentration camps it liberated, greatly helping organizers find information on Holocaust victims.

"We're playing beat the clock right now," she said, adding, "It's about families that one day they were together and then they were apart."

"When a connection is made, there are just smiles all around."

That was the case for this family in Ukraine. Years of trauma, of separation, of not knowing what happened to loved ones, have been replaced by celebration.

In a picturesque orchard overlooking rolling fields, Galezkij, his wife and their neighbors laid out a feast for his American sister. As the vodka flowed, he told her how he had survived for a lifetime without her.

"He says he always thought he'd see me someday. He dreamt lots about me," Famulak said, as she sat next to her brother.

"And he wrote a song for me. When he went to sleep, he sang every night and cried."

With that, Galezkij, weakened by illness and age, burst into song. But this time, he sang the words with pure joy.

## ISRAEL PAID HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS BILLIONS SHORT OF COMMITMENT

The government has paid Israeli Holocaust survivors just over a half of the compensation funds transferred as part of the reparation agreement with Germany, says a report by the state commission of inquiry into the government's treatment of Holocaust survivors.

The panel, headed by former Supreme Court judge Dalia Dorner, stated that the reparation money Germany has paid Israel adds up to more than \$17 billion according to current rates, whereas a mere \$10.5 billion have been paid to the survivors themselves to date.

The 1952 Luxembourg Agreement stipulated that Germany would give Israel \$833 million in money and merchandise, and Israel would look after the survivors, who would not be permitted to sue Germany directly.

The panel claims that Israel has discriminated against Holocaust survivors, who were entitled to compensations from Germany as well as other countries, and has paid each \$363-613 thousand less than it should have.

The committee also said that the state defied a Supreme Court ruling from 1996, according to which Holocaust survivors' stipends should be increased to match the sum paid by Germany.

The Dorner Committee report says the government should pay survivors \$70 million with immediate effect, so that 43,000 survivors will be entitled to at least 75% of the German reparation funds.

Also, the panel strongly criticized the Finance Ministry's bureau for the rehabilitation of the handicapped, which caters also to Holocaust survivors, for obstructing their treatment and allocating the stipends in a "random and arbitrary" manner.

## THE BIRTH OF A NATION

BY RUTH GRUBER, THE NEW YORK TIMES

It was Friday, May 14, 1948. I was sitting in the press section of the United Nations General Assembly in its temporary quarters at Flushing Meadow in Queens. I felt my heart thumping. We journalists were waiting impatiently to see who would win a tug of war taking place in Washington.

On one side was President Harry S. Truman, who had told his aides that, with the last British troops leaving Palestine that day, he believed the Jews had a right to declare their own nation, and that he would make sure that the United States would be the first country to recognize it.

On the other side was the State Department, which wanted the land placed in a trusteeship under the United Nations. Secretary of State George Marshall was so passionate in his opposition to a Jewish state that he threatened to vote against the president in the November election. For Truman, who had come to office with the death of Franklin Roosevelt three years earlier, this was to be one of his first true tests of power.

As I sat waiting for the announcement of the decision in Washington, my mind wandered back to the spring and summer of the year before, which I had spent reporting for *The New York Herald Tribune*. I had traveled in Germany and Austria with the 11 members of the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine. There had been many such committees studying

the problems of the Holy Land since the Arab riots of the 1920s; this one was distinguished by having no representatives from Britain, which had been universally hostile to the Zionist cause.

With the members, I visited the camps for displaced persons in Germany and Austria and listened, dumbfounded, as the refugees described the horrors of the war. In particular, I remember visiting the Rothschild Hospital camp in Vienna. Some 100 refugees had just arrived from Romania, many of them children covered with sores and dirt. There was no place to put them but the street; they lay, exhausted, on the paving stones.

A young man approached us, his eyes bloodshot. "In Romania, they killed 30,000 Jews in two hours," he said, his voice sounding as if it came straight from his guts. "They took Jews to the slaughterhouse and hung them alive the way they hang cows, and they put knives to their throats and split them. Underneath them, they put a sign: Koshers Beef."

In camp after camp, the committee members asked, "Why do you want to go to Palestine? It's such a poor country. The Arabs and Jews are always fighting. They don't have enough food, they don't have

enough water. What is it about Palestine?" A 16-year-old orphan — actually, we



A group sings "Hatikva," which later became Israel's national anthem, at a camp in Zeilshheim, Germany, 1946.

never used the word "orphan" because the term couldn't convey the horrors these children had been through — gave the most poignant answer. "Everybody has a home," he said. "The Americans. The British. The French. The Russians. Only we don't have a home. Don't ask us. Ask the world."

A woman tugged the sleeve of my jacket. "You are the only woman with all these men," she implored. "You will understand

me. I saw my husband burned. I don't want to burn. I want to go home — to Eretz Israel." The Land of Israel.

"That's why we're here," I told her. "To help solve the problem. But if, Heaven forbid, we fail to find a solution, where would you like to go?"

Her reply: "Back to the crematory."

It was this committee's report that led directly to the General Assembly vote of Nov. 29, 1947, to partition Palestine into separate Jewish and Arab entities. The Jews accepted this proposal, but the Arabs stormed out and threatened war.

My mind was drawn immediately back to the present of May 1948 as I noticed an American representative to the United Nations, Philip Jessup, hurrying toward the podium. I knew, after talking to his aides, that in his hand he had a speech supporting trusteeship, not statehood, for Israel. The State Department was about to betray the president.

Jessup was halfway up the stairs when an Associated Press reporter handed him a dispatch. Jessup read it, grew white-faced, descended the stairs and then disappeared. The reporter next to me said, "He's gone to the bathroom."

I shook my head. "He's gone home."

Then we were handed the A.P. report. In Tel Aviv, David Ben-Gurion had just read the world's latest proclamation of independence. Eleven minutes later, Harry Truman had recognized Ben-Gurion's government as the "de facto authority" of the new state.

Israel was born.

# THE AMERICAN & INTERNATIONAL ANNUAL TRIP

## HONOREE FRED S. ZEIDMAN



Fred S. Zeidman was appointed Chairman of the United States Holocaust Memorial Council by President George W. Bush in March 2002. The Council is the governing board of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. The Museum is America's national institution dedicated to remembering the Holocaust and teaching its lessons to future generations.

A prominent Houston-based business and civic leader, Mr. Zeidman is former Chairman of the Board of Seitel, Inc. He serves on the Jewish National Fund's Board of Directors and Executive Committee and chairs its audit committee. He is also National Board Member, Development Corporation for Israel; Texas State Chairman, Israel Bonds; Vice Chairman, Republican Jewish Coalition; and Vice Chair of The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston Development Board. He serves on the Executive Committees of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), and the Houston Ear Research Foundation.

He is past Vice Chairman of the Board of Regents, Texas Southern University; past Chairman, Southwest Region, Anti-Defamation League; former Vice President and Director, Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs, former member of Texas Inter-Faith Housing Corporation's Executive Committee, and has played a leadership role in a number of other organizations,

including the Jewish Federation of Greater Houston; as a member of the Alumni Board of Governors, Washington University, St. Louis; and as a Director of the American Jewish Committee.

In April 2004, Mr. Zeidman served on the U.S. delegation to the Anti-Semitism Conference in Berlin. For his work with many varied organizations, Mr. Zeidman has received many awards and has been recognized for all the work he has done and continues to do.

Mr. Zeidman holds a Bachelor's degree from Washington University in St. Louis, and a Master's in Business Administration from New York University. He is married with four children.

## HONOREE AVNER SHALEV



Avner Shalev has been Chairman, he initiated a museum with the necessary tools to address the 21st century. This includes the establishment and the creation of a new Museum of the Holocaust at Yad Vashem.

Yad Vashem Holocaust History Museum, the uploading of Yad Vashem's content harnessing modern technology in 2007, Shalev was awarded the Leifur Eiriksson Award for Concord on behalf of Holocaust survivors.

Shalev was born in 1939 in Jerusalem, 1956 and 1980, reaching the rank of major general, and served as a bureau chief for IDF Chief of Staff, and as a member of the General Staff Instruction Division of the General Staff.

Corps, where he was editor-in-chief of the IDF Radio Station and the IDF National Security College.

After retiring from military service, Shalev served as Director of the National Culture and Art Council, and Chairman of the National Culture and Art Council.

Shalev graduated from the IDF Command and Staff College and was a witness to the Holocaust Remembrance at Yad Vashem (2005) and the

### HONORARY CHAIRMEN

Joseph Wilf

Hon. Julius Berman  
Hon. Tzipi Livni

Rabbi Israel M. Lau  
H.E. Salai Meridor

Hon. Edgar M. Bronfman  
Hon. Dr. Yael Tamir

Dr. Miriam Adelson  
Ishai Amrami  
Dr. Yitzhak Arad  
David Azrieli  
Prof. David Bankier

Prof. Wladyslaw Bartoszewski  
Prof. Yehuda Bauer  
Stacy & Matthew Bronfman  
Hon. Michael Chertoff  
Prof. Israel Gutman

Yossi Hollander  
Hon. Moshe Kantor  
Hon. Ronald S. Lauder  
Cecile & Edward Mosberg  
H.E. Prof. Gabriela Shalev

H.E. Asaf Shariv  
Prof. Feliks Tych  
Simone Weil  
Hon. Elie Wiesel  
Prof. Szewach Weiss

### HONORARY CO-CHAIRMEN

Hon. Hillary Rodham Clinton  
Hon. John Cornyn  
Hon. Jon S. Corzine

Hon. Kay Bailey Hutchison  
Hon. Joseph I. Lieberman

Hon. Frank R. Lautenberg  
Hon. Robert Menendez

Hon. George E. Pataki  
Hon. Charles E. Schumer

### GENERAL CHAIRMEN

Sheldon G. Adelson

Leonard Wilf

Eli Zborowski

### GENERAL CO-CHAIRMEN

Ira Drukier

Cheryl Lifshitz

Marilyn & Jack A. Belz  
Roberta & Irwin Chafetz  
Joan & Theodore Cutler  
Gale Drukier  
Lewis M. Eisenberg  
Hal M. Hirsch  
Leslie & Michael Adler  
Rebecca & Michael Altman  
Harriet Becker  
Susan & Jack Bender  
Berne & James Bookhammer  
Drs. Rochelle & Robert Cherry

Sharon & David Halpern  
Richard M. Joel  
Seryl & Charles Kushner  
Rita & David Levy  
Dr. Lilly & Avner Naveh  
Barry Rubenstein  
Merry & Seymour Cohen  
Renée & Lester Crown  
Abraham Foxman  
Annette & Barry Goldberg  
Elaine & Joel Goldstein

Steven Schwarz  
Fela & David Shapell  
Steven Spielberg  
Moshe Steinberg  
Dr. Ingrid Tauber  
Dr. Teri D. Troy  
Marilyn & Jack H. Pechter  
Karen & Harvey Pollak  
Dara & Brian Rubenstein  
Phyllis & William Mack  
Jean Rubinstein

Marilyn Rubenstein  
Audrey & Zygmunt Wilf  
Beth & Leonard Wilf  
Jane & Mark Wilf  
Ruta & Dr. Felix Zandman  
Murry Zborowski  
Rochelle & Henryk Schwarz  
Mary & David Solomon  
Marcia & Dr. Yaakov Toledano  
Mara & Richard Weissmann  
Frances M. White

### DINNER CHAIRMEN

Ira Mitzner

David Halpern

### DINNER COMMITTEE CHAIRWOMEN

Elly Krakowski

Gladys Halpern  
Dr. Rochelle Cherry

Stella Skura  
Celina Zborowski

Elizabeth Wilf  
Elizabeth Zborowski

Esther Born  
Rita Distenfeld

Anna Erlich  
Doris Gross

Eva Halpern  
Dr. Romana Strochlitz Primus

Lilly Stawski

### DINNER CO-CHAIRMEN

Jill Goodman & Melvin Bukiet  
Rella & Dr. Charles Feldman  
Jan & Andrew Groveman

Caroline & Morris Massel  
Michael S. Miller  
Mindy Mitzner

Linda Olmert  
Elisa & Alan Pines  
Aliza & Elie Singer

Debbie & Richard Born  
Fred Distenfeld  
Susan & Ed Falk  
Chaya & Howard Friedman  
Doree & Charles Greenberg

Cheryl & Mark Grunwald  
Batsheva & Murray Halpern  
Cheryl & Fred Halpern  
Lieba & Jack Halpern  
Deedee & Mark Honigsfeld

Andrea & Harry Krakowski  
Lee & Murray Kushner  
Barry Levine  
Tami & Fred Mack  
Mark Moskowitz

David Mitzner  
Ann Oster  
Nancy & Larry Pantirer  
Galit & Ziggy Zborowski  
Judith & Mark Zborowski

### TRIBUTE CHAIRMEN

Sam Halpern

Naomi Shalev

Kay Zeidman

Pearl Field

Jay Zeidman

Anat Zuria



# AL SOCIETIES FOR YAD VASHEM BUTE DINNER

## NER SHALEV

Chairman of the Yad Vashem Directorate since 1993. As multi-year development plan aimed at equipping Yad Vashem to meet the challenges of Holocaust remembrance in the 21st century. He is also the director of the International School for Holocaust Studies, Yad Vashem Complex. Shalev serves as the chief curator of the new Yad Vashem Museum, which opened in March 2005. He also brought about the creation of the Central Database of Shoah Victims' Names onto the Internet, and the service of Holocaust remembrance and education. In 2005, he was named a Member of the Legion of Honor by French President Nicolas Sarkozy for his leadership in Holocaust awareness worldwide, and also accepted Spain's Prince of Asturias Award for his work on behalf of Yad Vashem.

Shalev was born in Jerusalem. He served in the Israel Defense Forces between 1967 and 1974 as a captain and later as a brigadier general. Between 1972 and 1974 he served as the Chief of Staff of the Israel Defense Forces. He was also: head of the Information and Public Relations Staff; Chief Education Officer and head of the Education Department of the IDF weekly magazine; and senior lecturer at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. He served as the Director General of the Culture Authority in the Ministry of Education and as the Director of the National Security College. Among his publications are *To Bear Witness* and *We Are Here – Holocaust Survivors in Israel* (2008).



## HONOREE SELMA GRUDER HOROWITZ

Selma Gruder Horowitz was born in Hanaczow, Poland, the second of four children, to Leah and Bernard Gruder. She came from a well-to-do family who owned a wholesale butcher business.

During the war, Selma was taken to the *Korowice* concentration camp. When the Germans liquidated the camp in June 1943, she escaped and hid in the forests of *Hanaczow* with her family. They remained hidden until April 1944 when their village was burned by the Ukrainians and many Poles and Jews were murdered. She later fled with her mother and three siblings to *Bilka*, Poland where they were hidden by Maria Paczkowska in her home until their liberation three months later. Mrs. Paczkowska was posthumously designated as a Righteous Among The Nations by Yad Vashem in August 2003.

Selma's father, Bernard Gruder, contracted typhus and died during their time in the forest. Bernard Gruder's entire family, Leah Gruder's eight siblings and many aunts and uncles perished in the Holocaust. However, Selma's mother and siblings survived and they all came to the United States in 1950.

Selma Gruder Horowitz founded and currently serves as President of East Coast Industrial Uniform, Inc., a uniform rental company. She is especially proud of the fact that the business is owned and run by a woman. Selma is actively involved with many American Jewish and Israeli organizations. She is an Executive Board member of the American Society for Yad Vashem and a Trustee of Yad Vashem, Jerusalem. She also supports the US Holocaust Memorial Museum, UJA, and an orphanage in Israel.

**Kenneth J. Bialkin**  
**Irma & Norman Braman**  
**Rhoda & David T. Chase**  
**Carl Field**  
Renata & Murray Alon  
Bernard Aptaker  
Etta & Ulo Barad  
Elinor & Norman Belfer  
Dorothy Berman  
Halina Bitensky  
Dr. & Mrs. Mark Blum

Shirly Bagno  
Sara & Charles Bedzow  
Scott Berrie  
Cesia & Frank Blaichman  
Betty Breslaw  
Sharon & Ram Heskia  
Susan & Stanley Chesley  
Lena Corra  
Michal and Eli Dikstein  
Joseph Distenfeld  
Helene & Glenn Dorfman  
Marysia & David Feuerstein  
Pamela & Barry Fingerhut  
Sandra & Steven Finkelman  
Suellen & Gordon Freeman

Abe Besser  
Rose & Max Blecher  
Lilly & Sam Bloch  
Judy & Phillip Bloom  
Judi & Dr. Kenneth Burnstein  
Jane & Alan Cornell  
Batsheva & Joseph Eden  
Lynn & Erwin Fisch  
Angie & Moritz Goldfeier  
Isaac Goodfriend  
Bila & Ernst Hacker  
Maria Herskovic  
Dan Heskia

Gail & Larry Altman  
Barbara & Harvey Arfa  
Lauren Belfer  
Michelle & Benjamin Belfer  
Jennifer & Matt Birnbaum  
Dr. Debbie & Sheldon Bootin  
Nanette & Dr. Arthur Brenner  
Gail & Bruce Bukiet  
Karen & Michael Bukiet  
Adina & Lawrence Burian  
Sherrye & David Dantzker  
Talya & Shmuel Davidovich  
Cheri & Arnon Deshe  
Edith Druyan  
Trudy & Sol Englander

**Jean & Eugen Gluck**  
**Helen & Herbert Gruder**  
**Naomi Jakobovitz & Hanoch Lipsky**  
Al Bukiet  
Rose Bukiet  
Susan Crown  
Suzanne & Jan Czuker  
Hannah & Bruce Goldman  
Fanya Gottesfeld Heller  
Danielle & Harry Karten

Doretta & Jona Goldrich  
Rachel & Barnard J. Gottstein  
Ruth & Alexander Hart  
Kim & Gary Heiman  
Martin Heinfing  
Meredith Heller  
Pnina & Anatol Hiller  
Susan & Arnold Holtzman  
Genia Horn  
Meirav & Yoav Jakobovitz  
Doris & Simon Konover  
Cecile & Roman Kriegstein  
Beth & Jonathan Kaye  
Pamela & Joseph Lubeck  
Paula & William Mandell

Yael Heskia  
Miriam Field & William Jacobie  
Gustave Jacobs  
Neta Jakobovitz  
Sophie Kalina  
Roselyn & Richard Kesof  
Caroline & Daniel J. Katz  
Frieda & Walter Katz  
Sima Katz  
Jan & John Kornreich  
Wendy & Peter Lewis  
Ardith & Charles Mederrick  
Mindyleah & Sam Pollak

Rochelle & Maks Etingin  
Allan Fried  
Charles Fried  
Roselyn & Dr. Mark Friedman  
Sharon & Dr. Jeffrey Frieling  
Rachel Goldstein  
Susan & Richard Goodstadt  
Tzipporah & Dr. Jack Gruber  
Michelle & Yossi Hadad  
Abbi & Jeremy Halpern  
Dan Hoffman  
Margalith Hoffman  
Amy & John Jacobsson  
Judy & Ruben Josephs  
Robin & Stuart Koenig

**Gladys & Sam Halpern**  
**Hon. Jack Kemp**  
**George Klein**  
**Myrna & Mark Palmer**  
Jocelyn & Gregory Klar  
Israel Krakowski  
Connie & Harvey Krueger  
William Kunkler  
Tami & Fred Mack  
Diana & Simon Mundlak

**TRIBUTE CO-CHAIRMEN**  
David and Esther Mann  
Vladka Meed  
Eva & Ben Mellen  
Sandi & David Nussbaum  
Miriam Oster  
Sivan Ochshorn  
Elaine & Bernard Pannagl  
Lucy & Murray Pantirer  
Sally & Jack Pomeranc  
M.K. & J.B. Pritzker  
Bonnie & Arash Rahmani  
Noa & Ron Reiter  
Sari & Israel Roizman  
Nina & Jeffrey Rubinstein

**TRIBUTE COMMITTEE**  
Danni Reiter  
Yahali Reiter  
Miriam & Louis Rosenbaum  
Lillian R. Rozmaryn  
Arlene & Jerry Sanders  
Sally & Joe Schulman  
Marion & Hans Seidemann  
Ran Shevi  
Pola & Charles Sporer  
Lillian & Milton Steinberg  
Sam Stern  
Edith & Rudolph Tessler  
Michele Cohn Tocci

**DINNER COMMITTEE (in formation)**  
Linda & Murray Laulich  
Chaya & Lorne Lieberman  
Christine & Richard Mack  
Sheila & Martin Major  
David Mandelbaum  
Stanley Nayer  
Susan & Mark Nevins  
Gonen Paradis  
Shelley & Josef Paradis  
Lilly Stawski  
Lidia & Jimmy Resnick  
Jacqueline & Sigmund Rolat  
Dola Rubin  
Bella & George Savran  
Stephen Savitt

**J. Phillip Rosen**  
**Nili & Michael Shevi**  
**Dr. Axel Stawski**  
**Celina & Marvin Zborowski**  
Sally Reisman  
Evelyn & Dr. Israel Singer  
Leslie Zeidman  
Cara Rosenthal & Mark Zeidman  
Nancy Zeidman  
Yossi Zuria

Nancy & Sam Shamie  
Maureen & Ira Schwartz  
Alan Silverman  
Jacqueline & David Simon  
Nurit and Shay Shevi  
Orly Shevi  
Sara & Moniek Stawski  
Jerry & William Ungar  
Millie & Jack Werber  
Patricia Willens  
Sara & Leo Wolf  
Rose Zarucki  
Millie & Abraham Zuckerman  
Anne & David Zygelman

Devora & Rabbi Mark Urkowitz  
Olga & Herman Wachtenheim  
Regina & David Weinberg  
Bernice & David Weiss  
Zehava & Steven Wolosky  
Henry Wrobel  
Julie & Scott Zelnick  
Marjorie & Aaron Ziegelman  
Abigail Zuria  
Daniel Zuria  
Jonathan Zuria  
Ruth Zuria  
Shira Zuria

Mindy & Alan Schall  
Judy & Stanley Schneier  
Esther & William Schulder  
Betty & Howard Schwartz  
Ann & Bernard Sklar  
Sherry & Henry Stein  
Keren Toledano  
Freda & Michael Wadler  
Ariel & Josh Weiner  
Lisa & Orin Wilf  
Shira & Dr. Daniel Yoshor  
Cynthia & Jeff Wisenfeld  
Elaine & Irwin Zamore  
Amy & Brad Zelnick



# REPORT FROM YAD VASHEM

## YAD VASHEM CONCERNED BY ATMOSPHERE OF ANTISEMITISM AND HOLOCAUST REVISION IN LITHUANIA

Shalev letter to Lithuanian PM urges direct intervention by Prime Minister to "restore Lithuania's integrity"

Yad Vashem is increasingly concerned by the atmosphere of anti-Semitism and Holocaust revisionism in Lithuania.

For nearly a year, Lithuanian authorities have been carrying out investigations into Jewish Holocaust survivors for their wartime activities as partisans in Lithuania. Among those being persecuted is Dr. Yitzhak Arad, a Holocaust historian and former Chairman of the Yad Vashem Directorate.

Despite various protest actions taken by Yad Vashem and other bodies, the persecutions of Jewish partisans continues in Lithuania, as do antisemitic incidents, such as the spray-painting of many swastikas and antisemitic graffiti on the Jewish organizations' building yesterday in Vilnius.

In a letter dated August 10, Yad Vashem Chairman Avner Shalev wrote to Lithuanian Prime Minister Gediminas

Kirkilas: "Sadly, to date, the public outcry has yet to yield a fair and reasonable Lithuanian response. If anything, it seems that the harmful phenomenon of historical revisionism and distortion, of which the investigation of the Jewish partisans is a prime example, may actually be increasing in your country.

In light of this severe and continuing problem, Yad Vashem calls upon you to intervene directly and restore Lithuania's integrity as an enlightened and democratic nation by ending the misguided investigations. Only by dealing openly and forthrightly with the full and complex truth about the past will your nation succeed in building for itself a secure and stable future," he wrote.

Yad Vashem believes that a key way to combat the Holocaust revisionist trend is through education, and by providing comprehensive, credible information to all those who seek it.

"Yad Vashem will continue to welcome and teach Lithuanian educators about the events, ramifications and legacy of the Holocaust, thus reflecting and communicating our core commitment to the truth. We shall continue to support these teachers' admirable attempts to strengthen true democracy in your country and hope that they remain steadfast within an increasingly inhibiting atmosphere that they can now sense around them," Shalev wrote.

In tandem to the letter to Prime Minister Kirkilas, Shalev also wrote to Historical Commission Chair Emanuelis Zingeris again to urge him to publicly voice his protest against the situation.

In addition to actions taken with other organizations, in September 2007 Yad Vashem suspended its participation in the Historical Commission, and in February 2008 Yad Vashem Chairman Avner Shalev presented a letter of protest to Lithuanian Foreign Minister Petras Vaitiekunas during his visit to Yad Vashem.

## YAD VASHEM ON YOUTUBE

Yad Vashem has launched English- and Arabic-language channels on YouTube.

The two educational channels were launched in honor of the Holocaust Remembrance Day in Israel.

One channel, intended for the Anglophone audience, contains testimonies from Holocaust survivors, archival footage, historical lectures and stories on issues of human interest, such as survivors' reunions. The second channel contains similar content, but with Arabic subtitles.

"We know that YouTube is one of the most popular Web sites today," Yad Vashem chairman Avner Shalev said in a statement. "Unfortunately, there is a plethora of misinformation and deliberate lies available on the Internet. The Yad Vashem channels will counter this material and make reliable information widely available to anyone who seeks to know more about this terrible chapter in human history."

## GRIM ANNIVERSARY

On August 7, Yad Vashem marked 66 years since the deportation to Treblinka of Janusz Korczak, Stefania Wilczynska, and the children of their orphanage, from the Warsaw Ghetto. Survivors, members of the Korczak society, and of the youth movements participated in the ceremony at Janusz Korczak Square at Yad Vashem.

Janusz Korczak was the pen name of Henryk Goldszmit, a Polish-born doctor, author and educator. Born in Warsaw to an assimilated Jewish family, Korczak dedicated his life to caring for children, particularly orphans. He believed that children should always be listened to and respected, and this belief was reflected in his work. He wrote several books for and about children, and broadcast a children's radio program. In 1912, Korczak became the director of a Jewish orphanage in Warsaw. When World War II broke out in 1939, Korczak first refused to accept the German occupation and heed their regulations (consequently spending time in jail). However, when the Jews of Warsaw were forced to move into a ghetto, Korczak refocused his efforts on the children in his orphanage. Despite offers from Polish friends to hide him on the "Aryan" side of the city, Korczak refused to abandon the children.

Stefania Wilczynska was born in 1886 in Poland, and completed her studies at the University of Liège, Belgium. In 1909, she met Korczak, and the two began working together. When World War I began, Korczak was recruited and Stefania remained in charge of running the orphanage, which had expanded and now housed some 150 children. In 1935, she visited Palestine and lived at Ein Harod until 1939. With the Nazi occupation, the members of Ein Harod arranged for her the possibility of leaving Poland, but she turned it down and moved to the ghetto, along with Dr. Korczak and the children.

In August 1942, during a 2-month wave of deportations from the ghetto, the Nazis rounded up Korczak, Wilczynska and the 200 children of the orphanage. They marched in rows to the Umschlagplatz with Korczak in the lead. He and Stefania never abandoned the children, even to the very end. Korczak and the children were sent to Treblinka, where they were all murdered.

## REVEALING THE GOOD

BY IRENA STEINFELDT

At first, the case of Roger and Esther Perret seemed like any other. Claude Marx had contacted Yad Vashem in 2006 requesting that the Perrets, who had hidden him during the Holocaust, be recognized for their act. When the name of the French town — *Buzancais* — where the wartime events had occurred came up during a session of the Commission for the Designation of the Righteous, no one noticed the reaction of Dr. Ehud Loeb, Commission member since 2004. He too had been hidden in *Buzancais*, though by a different couple, Jules and Jeanne Roger, who had been recognized as Righteous Among the Nations in 1989. Dr. Loeb was further astonished to learn that, just like his own rescuer, Roger Perret had been a butcher by trade.

After the Perrets had also been granted recognition, it came to light that Roger Perret and Jules Roger had in fact known one another. It is possible that during the war they met up occasionally, and it is reasonable to assume that they spoke of their families, about the difficulties of life in wartime, and about the cost of meat. But it seems almost certain that neither man ever raised one topic: the fact that he was hiding a Jewish child in his home.

Forty-five years ago, the Commission for the Designation of the Righteous was charged with the task of deciding who is entitled to the highest honor bestowed by the State of Israel on non-Jews. This year, as Israel celebrates 60 years of independence and Yad Vashem recognizes the contribution of Holocaust survivors to the State, it is fitting to pay particular attention to the role played by those survivors who, rather than sink into vengeance, sought to extract something positive from the horrors they endured. It is they who provided much of the impetus to establish this honor, and who continue to work for this important project to this day.

Commission members, who volunteer their time and services, together speak some 17 languages, and bring with them

an enormous knowledge of the history of the Holocaust in different locations. Unlike historians who analyze the complex human situations of the Holocaust and describe the different points of view, Commission members must draw a clear line through the multi-faceted and complex spectrum of human behavior. They are required to raise a hand and decide whether the actions described before them will grant an individual the right to be called a Righteous Among the Nations.



One of the earliest meetings of the Commission for the Designation of the Righteous.

Over the years, the Commission has developed a set of defined and detailed criteria, but every rescue situation was unique, and their circumstances often bring about difficult deliberations on how precisely to apply the rules. Should the fact that a family deeply loved the child they were hiding and didn't want to give him back at the end of the war prevent them from being recognized? What about those who started out as members of Nazi or fascist organizations but who ended up rescuing Jews — should the act of rescue negate their previous heinous actions?

In addition, most Commission members are themselves Holocaust survivors; some were rescued, while others encountered only apathy or hostility on the part of their neighbors. Delving into the cases often brings nightmares to the surface, and probes still-open wounds. Personal memories flicker through Commission dis-

cussions, but great efforts are then made to redirect the discussion to the cases at hand. Conversely, insisting on staying strictly on topic is also unacceptable, since Commission members constantly remind each other of the sharply different context in which the rescuers and rescued had to operate, compared to the comfortable and safe room in which they are discussing their stories.

Understanding the enormity of the challenge, from the outset of the program, Yad

Vashem has appointed a Supreme Court Justice to chair the Commission. Today, retired Supreme Court Justice Jacob Türkel devotes much of his time to steering the Commission's work, reviewing the minutes and examining its decisions.

Simha Rotem (Kazik) has been working on the Commission since its inception. "What brought me to the Commission was the feeling that this was the least we could do for those who rescued us," he explains. "I knew some of the Righteous in Poland during the Holocaust, I am aware of the danger their acts of rescue entailed, and I know that no one could give more than they gave. Recognizing the Righteous Among the Nations is a sacred commitment, and I could never excuse myself from this mission."

The author is Director of the Department for the Righteous Among the Nations.

# STATUS AS SALVADORANS SAVED JEWS DURING HOLOCAUST

BY BECCA MILFELD, MEDILL REPORTS

During the Holocaust, an estimated 30,000 Jews were protected by their status as citizens of a small, Central American country.

And in June, the Embassy of El Salvador was letting the world know.



George Mandel-Mantello (left) and Jose Arturo Castellanos.

Colonel Jose Arturo Castellanos, a figure who has remained relatively unknown in the annals of Holocaust history, made a significant difference by issuing Salvadoran citizenship certificates to

Jews across Europe, in his capacity as Salvadoran Consul General in Geneva.

Now, more than 60 years later, the Salvadoran government is seeking to have Castellanos declared "righteous among the Nations," by Holocaust remembrance authority Yad Vashem. The title is awarded to non-Jews who risked their lives to save Jews during the Holocaust.

In addition to Castellanos, El Salvador Consulate First Secretary George Mandel-Mantello, a Romanian Jew, played an equally important role.

The granting of Salvadoran citizenship papers started when a French-Jewish refugee approached Mandel-Mantello about getting documents for a number of French Jews.

These were granted, and then Montello began issuing citizenship papers to Jews he knew and those brought to him through Jewish organizations. Castellanos authorized and put his full support behind the practice, even though he had no authority to approve manufacturing of the certificates.

And when the two finally partnered with the Swiss Legation, the certificates were

distributed to a far broader population. By the end of the war, 10,000 documents were distributed, often with multiple family members on each. When the war ended, though, Castellanos rarely talked about it.

For years his daughter, Frieda Garcia, knew nothing of her father's actions, but now is helping bring them to light.

"The memory of our father is out of the desk, out of the drawers and on the table again," Garcia said at the news conference held at the Salvadoran Embassy.

The people who spoke there included Garcia, Mandel-Mantello's son, Salvadoran ambassadors Rene A. Leon and Ricardo Moran Ferracuti, along with Brad Marlowe and Leonor Avila de Marlowe, the husband-wife team that recently created "Glass House," a documentary chronicling the story.

Latin America's involvement with the Holocaust was checked, as the pan-elists demonstrated.

Bolivia and the Dominican Republic, for example, "opened the doors on Jewish immigration during the Holocaust years, while others accepted Nazi criminals as refugees after the war," said Dina Siegel Vann, who is Jewish and from Mexico. She spoke at the event as the director for Latin and Latin America at the American



Documents such as this, which stated that the holders were Salvadoran citizens, helped thousands of Jews during the Holocaust.

Jewish Committee.

But the spotlight is now beginning to shine on other countries, as well.

"Castellanos and the little country of El Salvador became the means for all these thousands of people to survive," Leonor Avila de Marlowe said.

## FORMER SWEDISH NEO-NAZIS BECOME HOLOCAUST COMMEMORATORS

"I can no longer deny it happened, or salute what happened," says former neo-Nazi teenager after a visit to Auschwitz as part of Swedish initiative to confront troubled youths with their distorted anti-Semitic views.

They used to paint swastika graffiti, get into street fights with immigrants, and distribute anti-Semitic propaganda. But after studying the cases of a few of the 6 million Jews killed by the Nazis during World War II, some former Swedish neo-Nazi teenagers came to the Yad Vashem Holocaust memorial to underline their new attitudes.

The kids, some of whom were active members of neo-Nazi groups, came to the memorial to present the findings of their research into the stories of 16 Holocaust victims from their hometown of Karlstad, and add pages of testimony for the previously unknown dead.

The project, named Combatting Social Unrest, is the initiative of Swedish Holocaust educator Christer Mattsson. The concept is to take troubled youths off the street, confront their prejudices and ignorance, and slowly convert them into Holocaust educators themselves.

"The first time I took a neo-Nazi to Auschwitz, I didn't know what to expect," he said. "But after seeing it, after seeing where Jews used to live, he said: 'I can no longer deny it happened, or salute what happened.'"

The journey has been an arduous one. Of the 100 teenagers in his program, Mattsson said, about five to eight are "hard-core neo-Nazis" — some completely reformed, others not. Those, some sporting Nazi tattoos, did not make the trip to Israel, either for fear of offending survivors or to remain anonymous for their own safety.

The only former active member who arrived, 17-year-old Joar, refused to be photographed and would be identified only by his first name for fear of retribution from his former friends.

The shy, blond Joar hid behind a base-

ball cap and a large pair of sunglasses. He would only say that he used to have "different opinions."

"I didn't know so much. I've learned a lot about the Holocaust," he said, through a translator. "I have a different perspective on life now."

Sweden remained neutral during World War II. It had a very small Jewish population and closed its gates to refugees. That policy began to change as the horrors of the Holocaust became



Group met with Holocaust survivor.

apparent and Sweden began to lean toward the allies.

In 1944, Swedish diplomat Raoul Wallenberg began handing out papers to save thousands of Hungarian Jews from the Nazi death camps. After the war, some 27,000 survivors arrived in Sweden.

In Karlstad, 16 Jewish women died shortly afterward, most from illness, and were buried in a Jewish cemetery. Mattsson took his students there to ask them if they still believed the Holocaust to be a myth. They, in turn, decided to investigate the women's stories. The result is a 100-page book that details their stories.

They presented their findings to Israel's official Holocaust museum and memorial. Yad Vashem spokeswoman Estee Yaari said it probably marked the first time it had ever dealt directly with neo-Nazis.

The teenagers toured the museum and met with Mirjam Akavia, a Holocaust survivor who fled to Sweden after the war.

She vividly described her childhood and how she was yanked out of school and sent to the camps, where only she and sister emerged while the rest of her family perished.

"When I was 12, it was the end of my beautiful childhood. It was the end of everything," she said.

The Swedish teenagers were not much older when they encountered their own local brand of anti-Semitism.

"The headmaster of my former school, who is here today, was beaten up by people I knew three years ago," said 17-year-old Jennifer Lindstrom, who said she joined Mattsson's group so she could have the tools to battle her classmates' rhetoric and actions.

"Maybe because I have been studying about the Holocaust and Nazism, maybe because I have been to Auschwitz and the empty shtetels in Poland or maybe because I got sick and fed up with racism and neo-Nazis — I could not remain silent."

Lindstrom's principal was assaulted because he tried to keep the neo-Nazi students out of his school. The two other teenagers in the group were Johanna Karlsson and Deken Izat, a Kurdish immigrant to Sweden who used to belong to a rival gang that battled with Joar's.

Lindstrom said that finding out what happened in her own backyard proved to be the best way for her and her new friends to counter racism.

"It is slightly unreal to be here today and handing over material that we have worked with for so long, knowing that it will be here at Yad Vashem for always," Lindstrom said.

Associated Press

## FINAL APPROVAL GIVEN TO HOLOCAUST CLAIMS

Final approval of a settlement has been granted to thousands of Holocaust victims and their heirs against Italian insurer *Generali* over unpaid insurance policies during the Holocaust era.

A U.S. appeals court upheld the settlement that was reaffirmed by a lower court judge in January, awarding what lawyers have estimated to total \$50 million in payouts to more than 50,000 potential class members.

"We conclude that it was not error for the District Court to approve the settlement," the Second Circuit Court of Appeals ruled.

*Generali* was among the biggest insurers in eastern Europe before World War Two and its policies were popular with Jews. It faced a class-action lawsuit over claims it failed to honor policies held by victims of the Nazis.

An initial settlement between *Generali* and victims of the Nazis and their relatives was reached last year.

U.S. District Judge George Daniels ruled in January that appropriate notice had been given to potential class members, after the appeals court annulled the initial settlement. At that time the court questioned whether adequate notice had been given to people with potential interest in the suit.

But the appeals court agreed with Daniels, saying "the record indicates that the notice provided to potential class members satisfied the requirements of due process."

*Generali* has said it already paid claims for a total of \$35 million and in January one of the victim's lawyers said a further 35,000 claims had been submitted that could result in a payout of over \$15 million.

Potential class members had until Dec. 26 to file a claim. But *Generali* has said the filing date can be extended until 2009 if new documents proving the existence of insurance policies emerged from the archive in the small German town of Bad Arolsen.

# NAZI ATROCITIES, COMMITTED BY ORDINARY PEOPLE

BY GEORG BÖNISCH AND KLAUS WIEGREFE, SPIEGEL ONLINE

**From doctors to opera singers, teachers to truant schoolchildren, the extermination of European Jews was the work of roughly 200,000 ordinary Germans and their helpers. Years of research – not yet complete – reveal how sane members of a modern society committed murder for an evil regime.**

Walter Mattner, a police secretary from Vienna, was there in October 1941 when 2,273 Jews were shot to death in Mogilyov in Belarus. He later wrote to his wife: "My hand was shaking a bit with the first cars. By the tenth car, I was aiming calmly and shooting dependably at the many women, children and babies. Bearing in mind that I have two babies at home, I knew that they would suffer exactly the same treatment, if not ten times as bad, at the hands of these hordes." After World War II, it was obvious to most observers that such acts could only have been committed by sadists and psychopaths, under orders from a handful of principal war criminals surrounding Adolf Hitler. It was a comforting way of looking at things, because it meant that ordinary people were not the real perpetrators.

But the horrifying results of an opinion poll that the Americans conducted in their occupation zone in October 1945 could have raised doubts even then about the version of the story that blames everything on a few pathological criminals. Twenty percent of the respondents

"agreed with Hitler's treatment of the Jews." Another 19 percent said that although they felt that his policies toward Jews were exaggerated, they were fundamentally correct.

It took until the 1990s before historians and other experts embarked on a large-scale search for those men (and women)



A woman about to be executed in Belzec concentration camp.

who carried out the Holocaust. The research isn't complete yet, but the results available to date are shocking.

The researchers found that the perpetrators included both committed Nazis and people who had nothing to do with the Nazis. The murderers and their assistants included Catholics and Protestants, the old and the young, people with double doctorates and poorly educated members

of the working class. And the percentage of psychopaths was not higher than the average in society as a whole.

The number of perpetrators is now estimated at 200,000 Germans (and Austrians). They were police officers like Walter Mattner, concentration-camp personnel, members of the SS, or administrators. Another 200,000 Estonians, Ukrainians, Lithuanians and other foreigners also helped kill Jews, some because they were forced to do so, and others voluntarily.

Like Satan in the Old Testament, evil had many faces. There were those who committed crimes out of conviction, the dedicated Nazis in the police force – members of the SS and the military who, like Hitler, were convinced that the Jews were the root of all evil. Some committed their first murders in the 1920s and 1930s. There were also those who committed crimes of excess, taking advantage of the Jews' lack of rights in Eastern Europe to rape and steal. In *Western Galicia*, for example, members of the occupation police force would spend their free time shooting Jews in the ghetto or blackmailing them for their jewelry.

There were those who just carried out orders from above, like Major Trapp of Reserve Police Battalion 101. According

to witness testimony, Major Trapp was in tears when he ordered the shooting of 1,500 women, children and elderly Jews near Warsaw, all the while saying: "An order is an order!" In July 1942, his men drove the victims out of their houses, loaded them into trucks and took them to a remote clearing to be executed. They shot them in the head or in the back of the neck, and in the evenings the soldiers' uniforms were covered with bone fragments, brain matter and bloodstains.

Just as there is usually more than one perpetrator, there is a host of reasons why perfectly normal men turn to murder: years of indoctrination, blind faith in leaders, a sense of duty and obedience, peer pressure, the downplaying of violence as a result of wartime experiences, not to mention the lust for Jewish property.

One man who seemed to have no trouble switching from his desk to the massacres in the East was *Dortmund* native Walter Blume, born in 1906, the son of a teacher and a lawyer who completed the German equivalent of the bar examination with a poor grade of "adequate." Nevertheless, in 1932 Blume got a job as an assistant judge on the district court in his hometown.

Blume's career in the Hitler regime started on March 1, 1933, shortly after the Nazis came to power. His first position was as head of the political division at the police headquarters in Dortmund. After joining the Nazi Party and the Storm Troopers (SA), he became head of the Nazi secret police, or Gestapo, in the

(Continued on page 14)

## KLAUS BARBIE: A BEAST ON TRIAL

In 1944, when she was 13, Simone Lagrange testified yesterday, Klaus Barbie gave her a smile as thin as a knife blade, then hit her in the face as he cuddled a cat at the Gestapo headquarters in Lyon.

Lise Lesevre, 86, said Barbie tortured her for nine days in 1944, beating her, nearly drowning her in a bathtub and finally breaking one of her vertebrae with a spiked ball.

Ennat Leger, now 92, said Barbie "had the eyes of a monster. He was savage. My God, he was savage! It was unimaginable. He broke my teeth, he pulled my hair back. He put a bottle in my mouth and pushed it until the lips split from the pressure."

The three women were among seven people who took the witness stand in September to testify against Barbie, the former head of the Gestapo in [Paris] during the Nazi occupation of France in World War II.

Barbie, 73, is on trial in Lyon, accused of torturing Jews and members of the French Resistance and deporting them to Nazi death camps.

But he did not hear their testimony because he has refused to attend the courtroom sessions since the second day of the trial, as he may do under French law.

He has, however, denied the accusations against him and has contended that his 1983 extradition from Bolivia to France was illegal.

Several of the seven witnesses yesterday sobbed as they told of arrest, torture, rail convoys to the Drancy collection center near Paris and on to concentration camps.

They depicted Barbie as a harsh, sadistic officer ready to resort to any cruelty to extract information.

Lagrange, her voice breaking, recalled the arrest of her father, mother

and herself on June 6, 1944, the day Allied troops landed in Normandy to drive back the Germans.

Denounced by a French neighbor as Jews and Resistance fighters, Lagrange and her parents were taken to Gestapo headquarters where a man, dressed in gray and caressing a cat, said Simone was pretty.

"I was a little girl, and wasn't afraid of him, with his little cat. And he didn't look like the typical tall, blond SS officer we were told to beware of," she said.

The man, whom she identified as Barbie, asked her terrified parents for the addresses of their two younger children.

"When we said we did not know, he pulled my hair, hit me, the first time in my life I was slapped," she said.

During the following week, the man hauled her out of a prison cell each day, beating and punching at her open wounds in an effort to obtain the information.

"He always came with his thin smile like a knife blade," she said. "Then he smashed my face. That lasted seven days."

Later that month, Simone and her mother were put aboard a sealed train for the Auschwitz concentration camp on a horror ride "which turned us into different people" and that still gave her nightmares 40 years later.

From Auschwitz, where her mother was gassed, the inmates were marched to

Ravensbruck, where only 2,000 of the 25,000 people who began the march arrived alive. On the way, Simone saw her father marching in another convoy.

"A German officer told me to embrace him. As we were about to meet, they shot him in the head," she said. "It wasn't Barbie who pulled the trigger, but it was him who sent us there."

Ennat Leger, who lost her sight at Ravensbruck after her arrest, was hoisted to the witness stand in her wheelchair by four policemen.

She was a Resistance fighter nearly 50 years old when she was arrested in 1944, she said, and Barbie and his men "were savages, brutal savages, who struck, struck and struck again."

"Have you heard of the Gestapo kitchens?" she quoted him as saying, in an allusion to the torture chambers.

Lise Lesevre, frail and upright despite her 86 years, described the defendant as "Barbie the savage," saying she recognized him decades later because of his "pale eyes, extraordinarily mobile, like those of an animal in a cage."

Lesevre, who belonged to a resistance group, said the Gestapo arrested her on March 13, 1944, while she was carrying a letter intended for a Resistance leader code-named Didier.

She said Barbie spent almost three weeks trying to learn if Lesevre was Didier, and if not, who was. She was inter-

rogated for 19 days, she said, and tortured on nine of them.

First she was hung up by hand cuffs with spikes inside them and beaten with a rubber bar by Barbie and his men. "Who is Didier, where is Didier?" were Barbie's main questions, she said.

Next was the bathtub torture. She said she was ordered to strip naked and get into a tub filled with freezing water. Her legs were tied to a bar across the tub and Barbie yanked a chain attached to the bar to pull her underwater.

"During the bathtub torture, in the presence of Barbie, I wanted to drink to drown myself quickly. But I wasn't able to do it. I didn't say anything.

"After 19 days of interrogation, they put me in a cell. They would carry by the bodies of tortured people. With the point of a boot, Barbie would turn their heads to look at their faces, and if he saw someone he believed to be a Jew, he would crush it with his heel," she said.

"It was a beast, not a man," she said. "It was terror. He took pleasure in it."

During her last interrogation, she said, Barbie ordered her to lie flat on a chair and struck her on the back with a spiked ball attached to a chain. It broke a vertebrae, and she still suffers.

"He told me, 'I admire you, but in the end everybody talks.'" But she never did, and she heard Barbie say finally, "Liquidate her. I don't want to see her anymore."

She was condemned to death by a German military tribunal for "terrorism" but was placed in the wrong cell and deported to Ravensbruck concentration camp, where she survived the war. Her husband and son did not. She said they were both deported to their deaths by Barbie.



Klaus Barbie.

## LOST IN THE HOLOCAUST: EXPERTS PLUMB NEWLY OPENED ARCHIVE

BY MELISSA EDDY, AP

A mother and child separated. A father's war wound. An uncle's name on a list.

The unrelated and disparate items are among the discoveries made by 40 Jewish genealogists who are plumbing a trove of Nazi documents made public after 60 years.

For genealogists of Jewish families, the Holocaust is both a tragedy and a black hole, because so many of the 6 million Jewish victims disappeared without a trace. For years, researchers hoping to fill the gaps have longed to dive into the more than 50 million documents held in the German spa town Bad Arolsen and entrusted to the International Tracing Service, or ITS.

"The Nazis took away our names and gave us numbers. Our role is to take away the numbers and give back the names," Gary Mokotoff, a genealogist who helped organize the group from Israel, the U.S., Britain and Australia, said. "There is a wealth of information here."

For decades after World War II, the files were used only to help find missing persons or document atrocities to support compensation claims. But in last November, the last of the 11 countries that

govern the archive under the auspices of the International Committee of the Red Cross cleared the way for public access.

Since then, interest has skyrocketed. Erich Oetiker, deputy director of the archive, said while the staff of 400 continue to process some 1,000 tracing requests per day, there are now also near daily visits from historians, or individuals eager to trace a lost person's fate or view an original document.

American genealogist Sallyann Sack suspected for years that the collection held answers to questions about her family.

In the 1980s, she put in a request trying to trace the birth parents of her adopted cousin, who had survived *Buchenwald* as a 9-year-old, then been brought by her aunt and uncle to the United States. A form letter came back saying the search had turned up nothing.

But digging deeper during her time here, Sack was able to cross-reference the woman's second given name and access records of search requests made to the ITS since it opened in 1955 — often detailed letters by individuals who reveal nuggets of family history while seeking a missing loved one.

"I found here that his mother, who was separated from him when he was less than five years old, also had survived,"

she said. "She came to the U.S. in the same year that he did, in 1949." The mother, if alive, would be 93 and Sack presumes she is dead. The cousin is in his 70s and still alive, but Sack asked not to identify him.

"They never found each other," Sack said of her cousin and his mother, her voice breaking. "If these records had been opened earlier, they might have found each other. I could have found those documents 20 years ago, when she was still alive."

Oetiker says the archive is in constant contact with the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington D.C., as well as Israel's Yad Vashem — both of which hold digitized copies of part of the collection — along with the Polish Institute for National Remembrance.

The Washington museum has drawn up a list of more than 150 German keywords with English translations to use in computer searches: Arbeitslager (slave labor camp)... deportiert (deported)... mosaisch (Jewish)... auf der Flucht erschossen (shot while trying to escape).

Historians are trying to map out the archive's unexplored contents and help determine how best to use the information.

Yet for some, who have struggled to piece together a seamless family picture,

even the smallest discoveries can be moving. Tom Weiss of Newton, Mass., found his uncle's name on a yellowing Gestapo list of Jews arrested in France.

"When you see his name on these original lists it has an emotional impact," he said. "It sent chills down my back."

Opening to the public has brought about several key changes — digitization, bright new research rooms, ITS staff eager to share their intimate knowledge of the documents with those seeking and often making a human connection through a find.

Esther Mandelayl, an American who immigrated to Israel two years ago, came to research the fate of Jews from Lublin, Poland. Instead she made an unexpected personal discovery.

Her parents survived the war, but her late father never talked about what happened to him or why he had a long scar down his neck.

But her unusual family name came up on an index card from a displaced persons camp in Italy. It contained detailed information about her father. "It listed every place he had been," she said — from Russia, to Tashkent, to surviving a shot to his neck by the Nazis by falling into a cellar and being left for dead.

She said she could barely believe it: "I have every answer to all my questions about my father's story — the scar, everything."

## HITLER'S RELATIVE FOUND HAPPINESS IN ISRAEL

Some descendants of Nazis have decided to wash off the sins of their ancestors by converting to Judaism and finding new life in Israel.

The descendants of war criminals are often marked by the sins of their ancestors. We can find examples of that across the globe and throughout human history. Somewhat more rare are cases of descendants who decided to flee from the past by running off to join the descendants of the victims of their ancestors.

A reporter for the *Guardian*, Tany Gold, discovered this paradox after reading a magazine for Orthodox Jews. The son of a notorious SS officer converted to Judaism and moved to Israel, where he served the army. She also found dozens more of such examples. So she travelled to Israel to find out what exactly made them make such a change in their lives.

Aharon Shear-Yashuv is ashamed of his father and the fact that he took part in the Holocaust, so he decided to become a Jew.

— During my theological studies at university it became clear that I couldn't be a minister in the church. I concluded that Christianity was paganism. One of its most important dogmas is that God became man, and if God becomes man then man also can become God. Hitler became a kind of god — Aharon explained, adding that later he went to study Judaism in America. He then moved to Israel where he found his peace.

He did not want to mention his father, the only thing he would say is that his father was a Nazi and that he had renounced him as a son after he found out Aharon had moved to Israel and converted to Judaism. Describing these details he did not show regret, but compared it to Germany today.

My father is living a long-lost ideology with no future. Such is the whole of Germany, acting proud, but in fact dying, he said.

— People there don't get married, and if they do they have one child. But the Turks and the other foreigners have many children. So it is a question of time that Germany will no longer be German. I think it is a punishment for the Holocaust. Germany will leave the stage of history, no

doubt about it. All the great cultures have left the stage of history. The Romans, the Greeks, the Egyptians, the Babylonians. But this little people, who gave so much to the world, do not — he said.

Aharon is not the only convert in Israel. There are many of them, but the society has never accepted them. Psychologist Dan Bar-On confirmed this. He claims that converts are trying to run away from the past instead of dealing with the past, thus not solving anything.

While Aharon said his name, the others did not wish to do so because their anonymity is important, both because of the past life and their present life. It is interesting that all of them decided to convert to Judaism when they were young. A 24-year-old convert from Germany is an interesting example.

The young man is actually a model of all the other examples because they all went through his youthful rapture and anger. He did not want to reveal his reasons for converting, although they are obvious. The reason is that both of his grandfathers and grandmothers were Nazis.

All these converted Germans are not at all as interesting as the great-great nephew of Adolf Hitler, a person called in Israel "the Jewish Hitler". His great grandfather was the half-brother of Adolf Hitler.

— I have neither any blood nor DNA from Adolf and his family. I was not socialised by that family — he says, adding that the only person he recognised was his mother because she denounced Nazism during the war and she suffered for it.

His motives for moving to Israel and converting to Judaism are therefore, obvious. Like Aharon, he studied theology to find peace and he found himself in Judaism. He remained in Israel after he spent six months there studying. But fate is a strange thing. As he was trying to run away from his ancestors, his descendants surprised him.

— Two of my sons are chauvinists and one of them is even partially racist. I can't listen to fascistic discourse. I don't suffer that — He disclosed a somewhat of an irony and sent a strong message about what running away does to a man's destiny.

## NEW DEBATE OVER LOOTED JEWISH ART IN VIENNA MUSEUM

A controversial art exhibit in Vienna has again raised the debate over the presence of looted Jewish property in Austrian public collections, ahead of the 70th anniversary of Austria's annexation by Nazi Germany.

Critics say the exhibition at Vienna's Leopold Museum of works by Tyrolean painter Albin Egger-Lienz, a key figure in early 20th-century Austrian art, features over a dozen works of dubious origin.

These include a 1910 painting of two peasants, stolen from a Jewish architect, Oskar Neumann, and presented by the local Nazi leadership to Adolf Hitler on his birthday in 1939.

The opposition Green party has already described the exhibit as "the greatest display of looted art in Austria in years" and has called for the paintings to be restored to their previous owners.

Meanwhile, the president of the Austrian Jewish community, Ariel Muzicant, went a step further and called for the Leopold Museum to be shut down until it complies with legislation on the restitution of looted Jewish property.

Austria passed this law in 1998 after a US court seized two Egon Schiele paintings, apparently stolen from their previous Jewish owners, at a New York exhibit. The artworks came from the Leopold collection.

Since then, the law has enabled the restitution of thousands of artworks, including five major paintings by Gustav Klimt, four of which were auctioned off in New York in 2006 for a total sum of over 190 million dollars.

But the renowned Leopold Museum, which has some 5,000 artworks, including sketches in the world, has managed to avoid any restitutions.

Founded by Rudolf Leopold, the museum is categorized as a private foundation, even though it was bought up by the Austrian state in 1994 in exchange for building and funding it.

Muzicant has asked that the law be modified so that it may apply to this institution as well, and the president of the High Administrative Court, Clemens Jabloner agrees.

"On principle, everything of dubious origin should be returned," Jabloner said.

The culture ministry also said it was "the



Founded by Rudolf Leopold, the museum is categorized as a private foundation, even though it was bought up by the Austrian state in 1994 in exchange for building and funding it.

Republic's moral duty" to ensure that stolen artworks are returned to their rightful owners.

Austria's annexation by Nazi Germany in 1938 led to the systematic looting of Jewish property and assets, many of which were subsequently found in national public collections.

However, the 82-year-old Leopold, who sees himself as "the greatest Austrian collector of the 20th century" and "the re-discoverer of Schiele," has always denied knowingly acquiring stolen Jewish objects.

"Works bought legally and in good faith should be able to remain in Austria," he told the weekly magazine *Falter*, adding that heirs were "only interested in money."

The Austrian National Fund for the Victims of National Socialism will submit proposals to improve the restitution process.

## THE RAPE OF EUROPA

### MOVING DOCUMENTARY DETAILS NAZI ART THEFT

It's common knowledge that Adolf Hitler was a third-rate painter before becoming a Third Reich leader. His contemporary, famed painter Oskar Kokoschka, once joked that if Hitler had made it in the Vienna art scene, he would have done a lot less harm, and Kokoschka would have run Europe very differently.

But when the little painter that couldn't started his march across Europe, he systematically looted cities of their art treasures, carting the best of them back to Germany and destroying or selling off anything he deemed degenerate or not Aryan enough.

*The Rape of Europa*, directed by Richard Berge, Bonni Cohen and Nicole Newnham, is a sobering look at how manic but also efficient the Nazis were when it came to art collecting.

The sheer numbers are staggering. When the Allies entered Germany at the end of the war, they found a salt mine that contained, alongside the collected gold reserves of the Third Reich, a cache of 400 tons of art. In another mine, Hitler had salted away a trove that took more than a year to remove and was eventually packed into dozens of rail cars for transportation back to from where it came.

Nazi Germany seems to have almost contained a ministry of plundering, with art lover and *Luftwaffe* commander Hermann Goering as its unofficial head. The government went so far as to draw up lists of great art abroad, the better to steal it when they invaded. Hitler was an avid personal collector, commissioned a gallery in Munich to house his ill-gotten gains and planned an even bigger museum in his hometown of Linz, Austria.

*The Rape of Europa* also chronicles the efforts of the rest of Europe to hide their art from the Nazis. In Paris, 300 trucks were used to carry the collected works of the Louvre to castles across the country. There was even a special, climate-controlled ambulance to transport *La Joconde*, also known as the *Mona Lisa*. In Russia's Hermitage museum, art was taken to the cellars to spare it from bombing; 46 curators died of cold and hunger during the siege of the city.

The Allies did what they could during the war, but in one tragedy, the art-laden monastery of *Monte Cassino* in Italy was destroyed when it was assumed the Germans were using it as an observation post; in fact, they had never been there. Pilots attacking other cities carried maps of no-bombing zones where ancient statues and other treasures were located.

Of course, the most tragic element of this story is not the art destroyed or lost, but the Jewish families robbed of not only their heritage but their lives. The filmmakers interview a German historian who is trying to return Jewish religious art to its owners or their descendants. Reparation can be difficult, as governments often see themselves as the rightful or most adept curators of fragile artwork.

The filmmakers do a good job covering all the elements of wartime art theft, repatriation and reparation. *The Rape of Europa* may be a straightforward documentary, with talking heads, archival footage and photographs, but its subject is important and still timely, as even today looted works occasionally resurface and must be returned to their rightful owners.

First published in *Ottawa Citizen*

## NAZI ATROCITIES, COMMITTED BY ORDINARY PEOPLE

(Continued from page 12)

eastern city of Halle, in Hannover and later in the capital Berlin. The main purpose of rapid rotation in high-ranking positions, typical of the Gestapo, was to provide opportunities to gather repressive experience.

Starting on March 1, 1941, Blume headed the personnel department in Division I of the so-called *Reichssicherheitshauptamt* (Reich Security Main Office, or RSHA). His first assignment was to assemble suitable personnel for one of the murder commandos of the so-called *Einsatzgruppen* (Special Action Groups), a force consisting of roughly 3,000 men, known as the "Gestapo on Wheels." This group followed Hitler's army as it marched eastward and was charged with the immediate liquidation of "Jewish Bolshevism" and the "excision of radical elements."

Blume himself led a unit known as Special Commando 7a, which was part of *Einsatzgruppe B*. According to Blume's own records, his unit killed roughly 24,000 people in Belarus and Russia between June and September 1941. A short time later, Blume returned to the RSHA, where he was promoted to the position of division head and SS banner leader. In August 1943, he went to Athens, where he



Arrival of Jews into the Theresienstadt Ghetto.

and two associates of Adolf Eichmann organized the deportation of Greek Jews to the Auschwitz extermination camp.

Blume was placed on trial in Nuremberg in September 1947, together with 22 other men, whose regular occupations qualified them as members of upper-class civil society. They included a dentist, a professor, an opera singer, a Protestant pastor, a teacher — and a few journalists. Fourteen were sentenced to death, but



only in four cases was the sentence carried out. US High Commissioner John McCloy pardoned the rest, including Blume, and they were gradually released from prison over the years. Blume went on to become a businessman.

Most of the perpetrators were never punished. There have been 6,500 convictions to date, and only 1,200 of them were for murder or manslaughter.

## WOMAN WHO SAVED LIVES OF 2,500 POLISH JEWS DIES AT NINETY-EIGHT

Fate may have led Irena Sendler to the moment almost 70 years ago when she began to risk her life for the children of strangers. But for this humble Polish Catholic social worker, who was barely 30 when one of history's most nightmarish chapters unfolded before her, the pivotal influence was something her parents had drummed into her.

"I was taught that if you see a person drowning," she said, "you must jump into the water to save them, whether you can swim or not."

When the Nazis occupying Poland began rounding up Jews in 1940 and sending them to the Warsaw Ghetto, Sendler plunged in.

With daring and ingenuity, she saved the lives of more than 2,500 Jews, most of them children, a feat that went largely unrecognized until the last years of her life.

Sendler, 98, who died of pneumonia in May in Warsaw, has been called the female Oskar Schindler, but she saved twice as many lives as the German industrialist, who sheltered 1,200 of his Jewish workers. Unlike Schindler, whose story received international attention in the 1993 movie "Schindler's List," Sendler and her heroic actions were almost lost to history until four Kansas schoolgirls wrote a play about her nine years ago.

The lesson Sendler taught them was that "one person can make a difference," Megan Felt, one of the authors of the play, said.

In 1965, she was recognized by Yad Vashem, Israel's Holocaust authority, as a Righteous Gentile. In her own country, however, she was unsung, in part because Polish anti-Semitism remained strong after the war and many rescuers were persecuted.

Her status began to change in 2000,

when Felt and her classmates learned that the woman who had inspired them was still alive. Through the sponsorship of a local Jewish organization, they traveled to Warsaw in 2001 to meet Sendler, who helped the students improve and expand the play.



Called "*Life in a Jar*," it has been performed more than 250 times in the United States, Canada and Poland and generated media attention that cast a spotlight on the wizened, round-faced nonagenarian.

Last year, Sendler was honored by the Polish Senate and nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize, which brought dozens of reporters to her door. She told one of them she was wearying of the attention.

"Every child saved with my help is the justification of my existence on this Earth," she said, "and not a title to glory."

Sendler, who was the last living member of her group of rescuers, is survived by a daughter and a granddaughter.

## THE HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS FACING WAR-CRIMES TRIALS

(Continued from page 6)

threatening to Holocaust survivors now in their eighties. "This is very shocking and upsetting," he says. "My cousin, as well as the other two people involved, are all quite elderly now, and it's very unfortunate that they have to deal with this at this stage of their lives. It's terribly unjust."

He adds that his cousin is now too scared to return to Lithuania. "She is worried she may get arrested."

Rachel Margolis's memoir, which has been published in Lithuania, contains a description of how a group of partisans, including Fania Branstovskiy, attacked a Nazi garrison in the village of "Kanyuki". She writes: "The partisans had surrounded the garrison, but the Nazis were exceptionally well-armed and beat off all attacks. They broke the flanks of the Jewish detachments, and the partisans withdrew precipitously. Then Magid jumped up on a rock and yelled: 'We are Jews. We will show them what we are capable of. Forward, comrades!' This sobered the men up; they ran back and won."

A willingness to prosecute alleged war criminals is something not often displayed by the Lithuanian authorities. Even though around 212,000 of its Jews were killed, the Baltic country has only ever brought three of its citizens to trial over war crimes, two of whom — Kazys Gimzauskas and Algimantas Dailide — were convicted, but were excused imprisonment, in Gimzauskas's case because of illness, in Dailide's because of advanced age. Dailide was 85, a year

younger than Fania Branstovskiy is now.

According to the Lithuanian embassy in London, there are currently no plans to prosecute Branstovskiy. In an emailed statement, Minister Counsellor, Deputy Head of Mission Jonas Grinevicius said: "There is no lawsuit against Mrs Branstovskiy and there are no charges by the Prosecution General against Mrs Branstovskiy, nor there is any other legal action against Mrs Branstovskiy initiated. Mrs Branstovskiy is only asked to appear in the court hearings as a witness in the case of the massacre by Soviet partisans of peaceful inhabitants of Kaniukai village in Salcininkai district. The killing of 38 Kaniukai inhabitants occurred in January 1944, it was committed by 120-150 Soviet partisans."

Lithuanian denials do not impress Efraim Zuroff. He has written a strongly worded letter to Asta Skaisgiryte-Liauskienė, the Lithuanian ambassador in Israel. In it he accuses the Lithuanian authorities of "launching a campaign to discredit Jewish resistance fighters by falsely accusing them of war crimes in order to deflect attention from widespread Lithuanian participation in the mass murder of Jews during the Holocaust."

He says that this is a "malicious campaign against the innocent heroes of the anti-Nazi resistance. We are hoping the investigations will be dropped."

And so do Fania Branstovskiy, Yitzhak Arad and Rachel Margolis.

## VISIT FULL OF SURPRISES AND HOPE

BY PEGGY BROWN, NEWSDAY

Whatever Rabbi Barry Dov Schwartz and his wife, Sonia, expected to see at *Bet Chayim*, a Jewish cemetery on Havana's outskirts, it wasn't the grave of an American soldier.

But there it was: a sepia-toned, oval photo set into a rectangular piece of pure white marble, leaning against a gravestone lined with bold Hebrew lettering.

"Isaac, son of Aryeh Leib Bender, who fell in a *mitzvah* war in Korea on the 5th day of *Sivan* [July] in the year of 1952, may his soul be bound up in the bond of life."

If the Bender family had brought their son's body back to his native Cuba after the communist revolution of 1959, they might not have been allowed to write those words on his tombstone — calling the Korean War, in which the West fought communist North Korea, a "*mitzvah*". Still, the dedication never was removed.

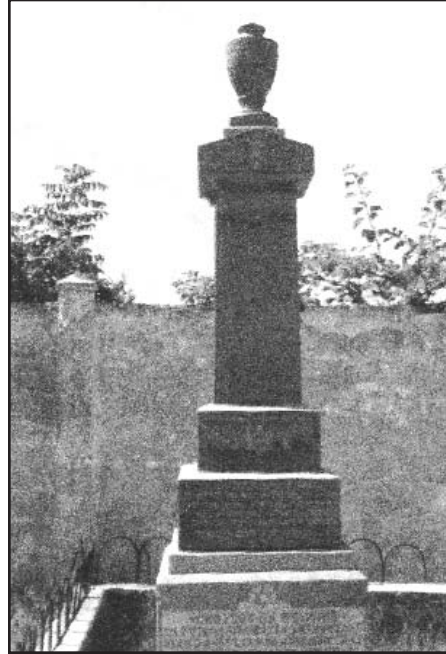
That cemetery visit was one of many touching, even astonishing, moments on the Schwartzes' recent mission to Cuba to help the country's small Jewish community — a mere 1,500 souls in a population of about 11 million.

Besides encouraging the practice of Judaism, the Schwartzes had an economic goal. "The Jews suffer like other Cubans because of being impoverished," Schwartz said. They stuffed their luggage full of over-the-counter and prescription medicines, school supplies and other essentials hard to find in Cuba. Other agencies had provided religious items, so they didn't pack any, Schwartz said.

Of course, not just anyone can go to Cuba. But the Schwartzes — she teaches seventh-grade social studies at the *Bais Yaakov Academy* for Girls, an Orthodox Jewish school in Kew Gardens; he's been spiritual leader of Temple *B'nai Shalom* for 36 years — applied for a religious exemption.

"There are a number of Jewish groups who go every year on a license to help," said Harry J. Silverman, executive director of the Southeast Region, United

Synagogue of Conservative Judaism, the trip's organizer. Cuba has six synagogues, including three in Havana, Silverman said; one is Orthodox, the others Conservative. At times, a rabbi from another country will supplement their lay leadership.



Holocaust Memorial in Cuba

The 1959 revolution changed nearly everything for Cuba's 15,000 Jews, with their history of nearly 500 years on the island. An "exodus" of 90 percent of them, most to the United States, occurred after Castro nationalized businesses, causing "a true demographic catastrophe for their community," according to "*The Chosen Island*" by Maritza Corrales, a Cuban historian who acted as guide for part of the Schwartzes' trip.

Yet, there is no Cuban tradition of anti-Semitism, the Schwartzes said.

"It's the only country outside the U.S. where you go into a synagogue and there are no security guards," Schwartz added. "It's totally safe."

Havana's main synagogue, *El Patronato*, was used "minimally" for reli-

gious purposes, Schwartz said, while being rented in the 1980s to the Ministry of Culture for a theater. "They had the building and the synagogue, but the people left," Sonia Schwartz added. "You didn't have enough people to keep it going."

But in 1992, the Cuban constitution was changed to permit the practice of religion. "Castro visited the main synagogue in Havana" then, the rabbi said. "They are very proud of that."

Now synagogue attendance is growing. "They flock there," he said.

In the city of *Cienfuegos*, "there are no synagogues, but there are groups of Jews who meet together to maintain their Jewishness," Schwartz said. "I think there are eight families who meet there. They have a little Hebrew school. It's amazing what they do to survive."

"They said they were very inspired by having us come to see them," Sonia Schwartz said. "They said it helps keep them going. It was like meeting your own family."

Just as there was a connection between American Jewish children and those of *refuseniks* in the 1980s — many *bar* or *bat mitzvah* children would read the name of a Soviet child who could study Torah only in secret — there are American children now helping Cuban Jews.

Silverman said some Florida students "learned to tie *tzitzit* on the *tallit*, and we presented them to the Sephardic synagogue in Havana. When we joined them for services on Saturday morning, we saw two men of the congregation wearing these *tallitot*."

While in Cuba, the Schwartzes received an invitation to the *bar mitzvah* of Alberto Mordecai Alvarez Fuentes.

"I saw this *bar mitzvah* boy as a symbol of the Cuban Jews," Schwartz said. "Before the '90s, it was unthinkable that a boy would study Judaism and know Hebrew and stand in front of Torahs — and, now, he is."

"That's the story of the Cuban Jews," he said. "They consider themselves part of the global Jewish community."

## NEW GERMAN FUNDS FOR SURVIVORS

In its annual negotiations with Germany, the Claims Conference obtained an additional \$320 million for programs for Holocaust survivors.

The additional funds to be distributed over the next decade are a combination of increased payments to survivors, inclusion of additional survivors in the pension programs, and funding for homecare needs of Jewish victims of Nazism.

According to a statement from the German Federal Ministry of Finance, about \$71 million has been committed for home care for needy and aging Holocaust survivors through 2009. The Claims Conference distributes the funds to agencies that provide such care to survivors around the world.

Retroactive to June 1, 2008, monthly payments from the Article 2 Fund and the Central and Eastern European Fund to 65,800 survivors worldwide will be raised 8 percent. Payment under the Article 2 Fund will increase to \$460 per month from \$427. Payments under the CEEF will be raised to \$341 per month from \$316 to survivors residing in European Union countries.

Monthly CEEF payments to survivors residing in non-EU countries will be \$281 per month, up from \$261. These increases will result in an extra estimated \$166 million pay out over the next decade. Currently, more than 52,000 survivors are receiving Article 2 Fund payments and more than 13,800 survivors are receiving CEEF payments.

The organization also secured an agreement to extend eligibility to Article 2 funds to some 2,000 additional Holocaust survivors originally from western European countries, who had survived concentration camps or ghettos, or who suffered Nazi persecution, who lost one or both parents and who received a one-time payment from the Global Agreement with Germany. The agreement will make some survivors eligible for the first time to receive a pension from the Claims Conference Article 2 Fund, totaling approximately \$83 million over the coming decade.

## JEWISH WOMEN PRISONERS OF RAVENSBRÜCK

(Continued from page 4)

What forms of resistance existed among the Jewish women of *Ravensbrück*?

Thus, we learn that the Jewish prisoners of *Ravensbrück* originated in 27 different countries, that the majority of *Ravensbrück's* prisoner population was actually comprised of non-Jews, and that among the countries of origin represented in the camp, Hungary rated the highest at 47.85 percent, followed by Poland at 24.06 percent, Slovakia at 9.92 percent, and Germany at 6.9 percent. We also learn that the largest age range represented was that of 19-25, which accounted for 31.7 percent of the prisoner population during the course of *Ravensbrück's* six-year-history. Among Buber Agassi's more surprising discoveries, was the fact that there existed many artists, writers, storytellers, actors, and especially singers among the female inmates of *Ravensbrück*. Storytelling, in particular, served multiple functions: it provided a creative context for social interactions between women prisoners, while enabling them to detach, if even temporarily, from their horrific surroundings.

As for the question of Jewish resistance — What forms did it take and why did it not occur on a broader scale? — Buber Agassi provides several logical explanations. For one thing, there were

no known attempts of sabotage among the Jewish prisoners; they were an isolated minority in the camp, and were not organized on a grand-scale level. Accounting for this lack of organization was the fact that Jewish women were a highly diversified group, bearing some 27 different nationalities and speaking multiple tongues, which frequently did not coincide with one another. This does not even begin to take into account the varying ideologies espoused by or the different religious backgrounds of this particular group of women. Furthermore, close to half of *Ravensbrück's* overall Jewish population had already been subjected to the horrors of Auschwitz, which must have taken a serious physical and emotional toll on these women. Finally, the simple truth of the matter was that by the latter part of the camp's existence — what Buber Agassi delineated as its fourth and fifth periods — the lack of nutrition, housing, and hygiene had reached devastating heights. Under these combined conditions, when taken as a whole, it is not difficult to understand why there were not more overt attempts at resistance.

In light of the aforementioned remarks, it is also important to consider the meaning of resistance, which took on various forms in the midst of even the most severe and horrific circumstances. According to many

Jewish survivors of *Ravensbrück*, one of their greatest concerns was that of retaining a "human face" and moral character — not succumbing to the utter state of animals — that was expected of them. In the words of one such survivor, Lotte S. the term "resistance" could be defined as follows:

In reality, anybody who strived to survive performed resistance. Any act of solidarity, any small piece of bread, each friendly and encouraging word was resistance. Any attempt to evade a blow of the stick of a guard was resistance. But equally so if one went to one's death with head held high and contempt for one's tormentors.

In her concluding remarks, Buber Agassi addresses the question of gender and the impact this construct — the matter of being women — had on the fate and behaviors of women in the Holocaust as a whole, in contradistinction to those of men, whose circumstances were comparable or similar. According to Buber Agassi, the few salient distinctions that emerge concerning the unique experiences of women during the Holocaust are steeped primarily in the physiological and socialization processes, which directly affected women.

For example, the fact that most women had less physical strength caused them greater danger than men, since they were

frequently and purposely made to carry out jobs which were physically taxing even for men. Furthermore, the Jewish women prisoners of *Ravensbrück* were frequently in maternal positions of having to care for children and young teenagers, something that was far less common among Jewish male prisoners during the Holocaust. Finally, natural factors such as menstruation, pregnancy, and the fact that women are much more prone to sexual assault and rape than men, also placed them in an extremely precarious — if not dangerous — situation, as compared to their male compatriots.

In conclusion, *Jewish Women Prisoners of Ravensbrück: Who Were They?* is an outstanding and impressive work of scholarship, which was clearly many years in the making. Moreover, given her own familial connection to the *Ravensbrück* Concentration Camp — a point which Buber Agassi, in my opinion, has perhaps gone too far to objectify — this project was undeniably part of the author's personal and lifelong calling. Buber Agassi's book, because of its fine attention to factual detail, would be better read in conjunction with some of the other works on *Ravensbrück*, particularly the survivors' own memoirs, which provide a greater illustration of the challenges and horrors with which these women were forced to contend on the day-to-day level.

# FUN IN THE SUN FOR A NOBLE CAUSE



On Sunday, September 14th, the Young Leadership Associates of the American Society for Yad Vashem held their fall event for young families. Over 150 people from across the tri-state area joined in apple picking at Penning's Orchard in Warwick, NY.

This event was planned by the Young Leadership as a Chesed project. As the participants settled down for lunch after picking from a variety of apples, all the children and parents helped to make *Rosh Hashanah* gift baskets. Included in each basket were apples picked fresh from the trees, some honey and a note crediting the American Society for Yad Vashem. The baskets were later delivered to DOROT – Generations Helping Generations. Thanks to all our families who came out and helped to make the holiday a bit more special.

**Martyrdom & Resistance**  
 Eli Zborowski, Editor-in-Chief  
 Yefim Krasnyanskiy, M.A., Editor

\*Published Bimonthly by the  
 International Society for Yad Vashem, Inc.  
 500 Fifth Avenue, 42nd Floor New York, NY 10110  
 (212) 220-4304

**EDITORIAL BOARD**

Eli Zborowski	Marvin Zborowski
Mark Palmer	Sam Skura**
Israel Krakowski	William Mandell
Sam Halpern	Isidore Karten**
Norman Belfer	Joseph Bukiet**

\*1974-85, as Newsletter for the American Federation of Jewish Fighters, Camp Inmates, and Nazi Victims  
 \*\*deceased

**International Society for Yad Vashem**  
**MARTYRDOM AND RESISTANCE**  
 500 FIFTH AVENUE, 42nd FLOOR,  
 NEW YORK, N.Y. 10110-4299  
 Web site: [www.yadvashemusa.org](http://www.yadvashemusa.org)

NON-PROFIT ORG.  
 U.S. POST  
**PAID**  
 NEW YORK, N.Y.  
 PERMIT NO. 10