ISAAC HERZOG
STATE OF ISRAEL MINISTER OF SOCIAL AFFAIRS AND SERVICES

Isaac Herzog, son of former Israeli President Chaim Herzog, was born in Israel in 1960. He completed his army service with the rank of major (res.). He holds a degree in Law and is an attorney by profession. Isaac Herzog served as Secretary of the Economic-Social Council (1988-1990), as Government Secretary (1999-2001), and as Chairman of the Anti-Drug Authority (2000-2003).

Elected to the 16th Knesset in 2003, as a member of the Labor Party, he has served as a member of the Knesset Finance, Internal Affairs and Environment, and Anti-Drug Abuse Committees, as well as Israel Labor Party Parliamentary Group Whip. He has chaired the War against Drugs Lobby in Israel, the Israel Tourism Lobby, the Lobby for Youth in Israel, and the Municipal Lobby.

In January 2005 Isaac Herzog was first appointed to a cabinet position in the Israeli government, and served as Minister of Housing and Construction. In this capacity he advanced important reforms and made significant achievements. In May 2006, he was appointed Minister of Tourism, and was successful in handling the acute crisis that faced the tourism industry in Israel as a result of the Second Lebanon War.

In March 2007 he was appointed Minister of Social Affairs and Services & Minister of the Jewish Diaspora, Society and the fight against Anti-Semitism. As Minister of Social Affairs and Services, Isaac Herzog has, since 2007, accomplished much in the economic and social spheres. His many achievements include significant development in the areas of children at risk, the absorption of people with disabilities into the workforce, enhancement of the quality of life of the elderly, the reinforcement of the social safety net, and more.

During Operation Cast Lead in Gaza (December 2008 - January 2009) Isaac Herzog was appointed by the cabinet to be the Israel Government Coordinator for the provision of humanitarian aid to the population of Gaza.

In February 2009 he began his second term as Minister of Social Affairs and Services.

Isaac Herzog speaks Hebrew, English, and Arabic, and has published articles in the Israeli and foreign press. He is married, and has three children.

GUEST SPEAKER ISAAC HERZOG
STATE OF ISRAEL MINISTER OF SOCIAL AFFAIRS AND SERVICES

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.

Sunday, November 8, 2009
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

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L’shanah Tovah!
SHOOTING AT THE HOLOCAUST MUSEUM

A 26-year-old Romanian man opened fire at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C., on Oct. 2, 2012, killing one person and wounding three others. The gunman was identified by law enforcement officials as Jared Lee Loughner, who had a history of mental health issues.

The gunman's motive is still under investigation, but it is clear that this was a premeditated act of violence.

NEARLY HALF OF ISRAELI ARABS DENY HOLOCAUST

More than 40 percent of Israeli Arabs reject the Holocaust as a fact, according to an annual University of Haifa survey of Jewish-Arab relations in Israel. Professor Sammy Smooha, who conducted the survey, said he believes the 40.5 percent denial rate reflects a protest more than an actual disbelief.

In fact, the survey found that 41 percent of respondents believe there is no clear, consistent trend of radicalization over the last 30 years, contrary to the prevailing view among the public and policymakers.

Mr. Smooha argued that this lack of substantiation long-term change shows that Arabs are adapting to Israel's existence.

Explaining why he thought the sharp increase in Holocaust denial reflected a protest rather than actual disbelief, Smooha said: "To the Arabs, the Holocaust is a loss of nation's right to exist as a Jewish and democratic state, and in 2006, only 28 percent denied the Holocaust.

Nevertheless, Smooha insisted that overall, "there is no clear, consistent trend of radicalization" over the last 30 years, contrary to the prevailing view among the public and policymakers.

Are there any other interesting facts about the Holocaust?

One sixth of all Jews murdered by the Nazis were children under the age of 16. This is a significant statistic, as it highlights the brutality of the Holocaust and the impact it had on future generations.

The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, one of the most visited sites in the United States, opened in 1985 and has become a major institution for educating the public about the Holocaust.

The museum has several exhibits, including the Hall of Remembrance, the Hall of Witness, and the Hall of Hope. These exhibits tell the story of the Holocaust and its impact on the individuals and communities affected by it.

The museum also has an extensive collection of artifacts, including photographs, documents, and personal stories. These artifacts help to bring the past to life and allow visitors to connect with the experiences of those who lived through the Holocaust.

In addition to its exhibits, the museum offers a variety of programs and resources, including educational programs for schools and community groups, virtual tours, and electronic resources for research.

The museum is a powerful reminder of the importance of remembering the past and preventing future atrocities. Through education and research, the museum serves as a beacon of hope and a call to action, encouraging people to stand against hate and prejudice.
THE “BRITISH SCHINDLER” MEETS THE HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS HE HELPED SAVE

S eventy years ago it was a ques-

tion of getting a lot of little children
together with the families who were going
to look after them.

“IT all worked out very well and it’s won-
derful that it did work out, because after all
I think could have made it very different.
He added: “It’s wonderful to see you all
after so many years – don’t leave it quite
so long until we meet here again.”

His grandson, Laurence Watson, 21, who
recently graduated from Cambridge
University with a degree in physics, spoke
of his pride at his grandfather’s actions.
He said: “There has always been bad
tings going on in the world and there has
always been wars and conflicts.

“See it every day in the newspapers.
Very occasionally you meet someone who
decides to do something about it.

What’s that my granddad did.
He said “Something needs doing and I am going to
do it.”

The timing of the reunion contains a sad
epitaph, however.

The ninth train, containing 250 children,
was due to leave Prague on 3 September
1939, the day British declared war.

The Germans never let it leave the stan-
tion, and most of the children never lived

Almost as remarkable as the scheme
itself, and a mark of Sir Nicholas’s mod-
edation, and most of the children never lived

to see 1945.

Sir Nicholas, who was knighted in 2002,
stepped off the Peppercorn A1 Pacific
class steam train that early morning to loud
applause from those he had saved,
now grey-haired, and their families.

The train had travelled from Harwich in
Essex, containing 22 evacuees and about
150 other passengers, on the last leg of
the 800-mile journey from Prague.

Each survivor was given a moment to
talk to Sir Nicholas.

Sir Nicholas Winton with fans at Liverpool Street Station, London.

A n international initiative to give
Holocaust victims interred in mass
graves a proper Jewish burial will
be launched in Eastern Europe.

The Dignity Return project is being
organized by members of the Russian
Jewish Congress, in cooperation with Rabbi
Marc Schneier, chairman of the World
Jewish Congress American Section.

The project’s mission is to bury the
remains of victims of mass execution from
Belarus, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova,
Russia, Ukraine, and Estonia in a manner
acceptable to their Jewish laws.

Kanner and Schneier expect the initia-
tive to inspire thousands of volunteers

from around the world, according to a joint
news release.

A new, comprehensive research proj-
ject called "Untold Stories" will make histo-
ries of Jewish identity.

Russia told a U.S. court on Friday that
judges have no authority to tell the
company how to handle sacred Jewish docu-
ments it is selling to a group called
Chabad-Lubavitch, which follows the teachings of
the Rebbe, Menachem Mendel Schneerson, who
recently graduated from Cambridge

A steam engine specially
requisitioned to re-enact
the last leg of
Essex, containing 22 evacuees and about
the Nazis and their collaborators in 51 differ-
ent areas of the former Soviet Union has been
chronicles the murders of thousands of Jews by the
Nazis during the Holocaust.

The "Untold Stories" is a project of Yad
Vashem’s International Institute for
Holocaust Remembrance, which tells the hith-
terto untold stories of the destruction of the Jews
of the former USSR. It is generously supported by Dr. Moshe
Kantor, Chairman of the Board of
Governors, Russian Jewish Congress
and Chabad, and uploaded on a virtual platform –
Vashem. “In some locations thousands of Jews were murdered in towns
and villages that remain relatively unknown," said
Avner Shalev, Chairman of Yad
Vashem. “In some locations thousands
were gunned down, in others a dozen
men and women tortured and killed.

This important project started on what was
described by War memorialists as one of the
most dangerous times in Jewish history.

RUSSIA WON’T PARTICIPATE IN JEWISH DOCUMENTS SUIT

RUSSIA WON’T PARTICIPATE IN JEWISH DOCUMENTS SUIT

By Stephen Adams, The Telegraph


deleted his March 1939 email to the friend,
Martin Blake. “I need you in Prague. Don’t
bring your ski.”

The young banker was so moved by
the war, saying unlike the German
Oskar Schindler, who saved about 1,200
Jews in the war, saying unlike the German

He also rejected the comparison with
his actions.

"As a result, it is increasingly up to those
who were born after the Holocaust to preserve
and protect their stories and these sites so
that Holocaust survivors will be able to change
history and our call of 'Never again'
will continue to resonate from one generation
to the next.”

The founders of the Dignity Return ini-
tiative will present details of the project
on Holocaust Remembrance Day, Jan. 27.
Inheriting the Holocaust: A Second-Generation Memoir  
by Paula S. Fass

T he author tells us about her parents, Bluma and Chaim Harry Fass. Before the war, both were married to others and had children with their respective spouses.  
When the war came, both — with their families — were imprisoned in the Lodz ghetto. Both were deported to Auschwitz. And by the end of the war, both of them, Bluma, liberated at Bergen-Belsen and Chaim Harry, at Ahlem, a labor camp, had lost their families — murdered by the Nazis. Bluma and Chaim Harry would meet after the war and marry in 1946. In 1947, they came to America.  
So how, with all the accompanying info, did this book — which was supposed to be about the author’s parents — come to be much more about the author? Since Fass was going to include herself in the work (the author was born eleven months after her parents married) she undoubtedly quickly realized that she was the protagonist of Appelfeld’s totally absorbing and shattering impact.

Inheriting the Holocaust is about to erupt with its furious and frustrated Gentiles look down upon the relatives of their ancestors, replaced by attachment to their forebears, and saw it as a source of their present-day bitterness. The envious immigrants, who were already defeated and frustrated by their own country, had nothing to lose. They saw the Holocaust as a second windfall that would destroy the very people who had brought them into this country.

The author also notes here the certain torque that affects all those who are victims of self-hate. The Holocaust experience. At the time of the Holocaust survivors, and the author of the Holocaust who aligned themselves with the Revisionist Zionists have come to light more and more in recent years. Moshe Arens’ new study of the movement’s adherents during the Holocaust, published under the auspices of the Red University.

BOOK REVIEWS

INHERITING THE HOLOCAUST

Mark My Words.
REVIEWED BY ROBERT ROZETT

S tones and stories of Jews during the Holocaust who aligned themselves with the Revisionist Zionists have come to light more and more in recent years. Moshe Arens’ new study of Betar’s role in the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising is a case in point. The memoirs of the Hasten brothers, Mark and Hart, are also clear examples of this trend. It can be said that being aligned with the minority group in the Zionist camp exerted a certain torque that affected the movement’s adherents during the Holocaust and beyond.

Born in the shtetl of Bochum, Germany, Mark and Hart Hasten paints an idyllic picture of his childhood. The life he led, surrounded by a loving family, was that which was well respected in the community, came to an end under the devastating impact of World War II. Most of the two thousand Jews of Bochum were murdered and the Jewish character of the shtetl obliterated; only a few dozen survivors remained to testify to what once was and can be no more.

Mark Hasten did not have an archetypal Holocaust experience. At the time of the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941, his perspctive father led the family to flight toward Kahler Markt. The Hasten family — Mark, his younger brother Hart and his father and mother, accompanied by four sons of their neighbors —

Friedmans — therefore never actually experienced Nazi rule and the Holocaust. As such they were spared the suffering and trauma that came with the Holocaust. Their stories are their own and are not intended to minimize the experiences of those who actually experienced the Holocaust. However, their stories do provide a unique perspective on the Holocaust and its impact on the survivors.

In Austria, Hasten became active in the Etzel, where his military experience held him in good stead. His political inclinations, however, twice brought him into sharp conflict with the dominant stream of Zionism. The first time, Hasten and his Etzel comrades, who were left out of Haganah operations in Austria, tried to muscle in on those operations. Forcing their way into their rivals’ headquarters, one of the Etzel men shot a Haganah man. The rest of the Etzel activists, including Hasten, fled for their lives, profoundly shaken by the death of a fellow Jew. Soon after the creation of the State of Israel, Hasten stayed only a short time in Palestine with other members of Etzel aboard a boat whose name would become

(Continued on page 14)
AUSCHWITZ BLUEPRINTS GIVEN TO NETANYAHU IN GERMANY

Axel Springer Verlag, the publisher of the newspaper Bild, obtained the Auschwitz blueprints last year from a German man who said he had found them when cleaning out an apartment in what was formerly East Berlin.

Germany’s federal archive has confirmed the documents’ authenticity.

The documents were displayed for several weeks this year in the lobby of Bild’s headquarters in Berlin. The newspaper’s editor, Kai Dittmann, said the publisher decided to give the sketches to Israel to ensure that as many people as possible could see them.

“These plans have an important function — they remind us of a crime that, with the passing of time, seems even more incomprehensible,” Mr. Dittmann said. “It is of the utmost importance to continue to be reminded of it.”

While they are not the original Auschwitz blueprints that still exist — others were captured by the Soviet Red Army and brought to Moscow — they will be the first for Israel’s Yad Vashem memorial, its chairman, Avner Shalev, said.

“T his set is a very early one, which was found here in Berlin, from the autumn of ’41,” Mr. Shalev said. “It brings a better understanding of the whole process, and the intention of the planners and designers, and from this perspective it is important.”

Mr. Shalev said the sketches would be on display in Jerusalem beginning Jan. 27 as part of a special exhibit marking the 65th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz.

The blueprints include general plans for the original Auschwitz camp and the expansion of the Auschwitz-Birkenau camp, where most of the killings were carried out. They were initiated by the head of the SS, Heinrich Himmler, and Auschwitz commandant Rudolf Hoess.

From left, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel; Kai Dittmann, editor of Bild; and Avner Shalev, chairman of Israel’s Yad Vashem memorial, looking at plans for Auschwitz.

Acknowledgments of the painful past that talk on the Middle East conflict with years later.

The Israeli leader was accompanied by his wife, Sara, whose father was the only member of his family to survive the Nazi genocide that killed six million Jews during World War II.

Also present was Yossi Peled, an Israeli cabinet minister and former general whose father was killed by the Nazis and whose mother survived Auschwitz in one of the barracks detailed in the blueprints. Mr. Peled was hidden until April 7 by an Austrian couple who raised him as a Christian. He discovered his Jewish roots in 1944 and was taken to Israel two years later.

In Germany for a visit that combined talks on the Mideast conflict with acknowledgment of a forgotten chapter of Holocaust history.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel and the Israeli president saluted the courage of survivors and researchers who unearthed a long-repressed story.

The project included an archive search, and the unveiling of blueprints for the Auschwitz concentration camp.

The German newspaper Bild's chairman, Avner Shalev, said the recover of the documents was a “very serious” example of rising right-wing tendencies.

Alois Lissl, chief of the Upper Austrian state security directorate, said the teenagers prosessed to be unaware that if convicted as youths, they could spend up to five years in prison for breaching the law that bans the Nazi party and any activities aimed at reviving it.

SEARCHING FOR HOLOCAUST MASSACRE VICTIMS

STEVE KETTMANN, SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE

E ach year, Peter Fischer drives from his Berlin home to this small rural town 75 miles away to keep alive what he says is a flame of truth.

In Jamitz, the 64-year-old Fischer pays respects to more than 1,000 Jews slain and placed in mass graves in early April 1945 in the Soviet Red Army closed in Berlin during the last phase of World War II.

The victims were survivors of the Auschwitz death camp in occupied Poland, forced by the Nazis to march to nearby Lieberose, a labor subcamp of the Sachsenhausen concentration camp, and killed in what Fischer fears will remain a forgotten chapter of Holocaust history.

Those who weren’t murdered at Lieberose were forced to walk to Sachsenhausen, north of Berlin.

“Most of the people got killed on the Death March from Lieberose to Sachsenhausen,” recalled Jan Czuker, a march survivor who now lives in Los Angeles.

Those who could walk — the elderly and the sick — were gunned down by the Nazi SS, according to multiple eyewitnesses. Among only 150 who arrived at the camp, with 589 victims, has been discovered. Historians believe more than 750 others were hastily thrown into a separate mass grave that has yet to be discovered.

It was a very public crime. Lieberose is part of the Holocaust,” said historian Gunter Morsch, director of the Brandenburg state memorial foundation in Berlin.

Fischer was born in London, after his parents fled the Third Reich. After the war, he returned to Berlin, growing up in East Germany and becoming a Communist Party member. His father was an ardent member of the Comintern — the international Communist organization in Moscow.

Fischer, who is an expert on aging, long-believed East Germans were above the anti-Semitism that had gripped the nation a generation earlier. But two things — the taunts of the son of a former SS member who told him that it was time to turn the ovens back on at Auschwitz, and a tour of the infamous Nazi concentration camp in 1987 — persuaded him to dedicate his life to the memory of Holocaust victims.

It was on a 1992 trip to Buchenwald — one of the largest concentration camps inside Nazi Germany — that Fischer first heard about the Lieberose massacre.

Over the years, he perceived the reluctance of East German authorities to search for the victims’ remains. Nevertheless, he and historian Morsch lobbied for forensic anthropologists to search for the mass graves.

One of the most likely areas, according to Morsch and other experts, was a plot on privately owned land whose owner had refused to allow any search, even though he had moved to the southern state of Bavaria. After a lengthy legal dispute, the unidentified farmer reached an agreement last fall with a Brandenburg state court over compensation, and a team began digging in late April.

On the first week-end, a man was announced, Fischer stood alone in the near-by village of Staakow on the site where the 589 victims had been discovered accidental- ly by a work crew in 1971, laying a barrened wreath of flowers at the site.

He then watched as workers boiled for three weeks, locating only the Lieberose barracks and silverware emblazoned with the SS insignia.

Fischer was downcast at first, fearing the lack of human remains would halt the project’s momentum. He was well aware that many Germans feel toward Holocaust matters after decades of public debate. Questions of national or collective guilt are far from the surface, but stories like the Lieberose massacre now tend to fall on the inside pages of the national press.

But Jörg Schönbohm, Brandenburg state’s interior minister, quickly put such fears to rest, saying the investigation would continue. “We cannot stop the search there, not after the findings of the latest excavations,” Schönbohm said, referring to the discovery of the barracks.

At the same time, Fischer says he will never stop lobbying for finding the remains of victims of a forgotten piece of Holocaust history.

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The survivors and others were attacked by a work crew in 1971, laying a barrened wreath of flowers at the site.
settled after the war. Elek, who was writing his autobiography, but the sentences are disjointed and there are no dates. “I wish I had listened to him more,” says Teitelbaum in retrospect.

Two years ago, she finally decided to write a book about her father’s exploits. She had been spurred to do so while on a visit to Jerusalem from her home in Los Angeles, California.

A conference at the Jerusalem Museum on hiding Jews had sparked her interest. Among the other attendees were a number of people who had lived in Bratislava during the war, and they spoke candidly about Rabbi Michael Dov Weissmandel, who had been a leading figure in Jewish rescue operations, and told how he managed to save many people including strangers,phans and children.

Teitelbaum commented that her father, who was likewise from Bratislava, had been active in rescue efforts. When she mentioned his name, there were several people who remembered him. Snatches of the stories she had heard in her youth began chasing each other in Teitelbaum’s brain, and subsequently whenever she encountered people from wartime Czechoslovakia, almost all of them had heard about Jacobs Eckstein, and some could even tell her about testimonies in which his name appeared.

The urge to find out everything she could about her father became ever stronger. Over the years, following her father’s death in 1971, she occasionally asked her Austrian-born mother, Valerie, known to one and all as Wally, to tell her about those dark days – but the conversations were episodic and lacking depth – as if her mother did not really want to remember. Now, she is no position to remember.

Teitelbaum has met with some of the people who were saved by her father, but they are of an advanced age, and she can’t really recall much. “When there’s nobody left to ask, you discover that you want to know,” she said ruefully.

Never afraid of research, she went to Yad Vashem expecting to find some information in testimonies given by people saved by her father. If such material does exist, it wasn’t cross-referenced, and Teitelbaum came away frustrated and none the wiser.

Because her son Benny is a reporter and editor at Israel Radio’s Reshet Bet, Teitelbaum is probably more aware than most people of the power of radio. It occurred to her that if she called Yaron Enosh, who has a daily program on Reshet Bet about people searching for their father’s name, and inside were testimonies, photographs and newspaper clippings. 

She remembered that in January 1966, her father had come to Israel on a visit and had spent more time in Tel Aviv, meeting people whose lives he had saved, than with his daughter in Haifa.

There was a clipping about the visit in the Hungarian-language newspaper Uliket. It was because of this article about Jonas Eckstein’s arrival in Israel that so many people sought him out.

Teitelbaum went through the files, photocopied almost everything, and then made a list of all the names, and began tracking as many people as she could. Some had died in the interim. Others had memory lapses and could not really provide a coherent version of the facts, and some simply refused to talk to her. But there were a few people who were willing to talk. She could remember, and with the help of her son, Teitelbaum started putting together a small collection of videotaped interviews. The article in Uliket noted that Jonas Eckstein had hidden as many as 40 people at a time at a bunkhouse home in Pressburg, the German name for Bratislava.

(Continued on page 15)
HOLOCAUST CLASSES ARE SOMETIMES EASY ON CHILDREN

BY SUSAN DOMINUS
THE NEW YORK TIMES

When President Nicolas Sarkozy mandated recently that every French fifth grader would learn the life story of a French child who died at the hands of the Nazis, the proposal didn’t exactly occasion the overhaul a modest but crucial one. It might have been expected from Holocaust educators in his country. “You cannot inflict this on 10-year-olds,” Simone Veil, the honorary president of the Foundation for the Memory of the Holocaust, told the Web site of the magazine L’Express. “The weight of this memory is much too heavy to be carried by children.”

As someone who attended Hebrew school at a Conservative synagogue in Westchester County during the late 1970s and early ’80s, I couldn’t help wondering what Ms. Veil would have made of the Holocaust education provided for Jewish children then. It wasn’t unusual, at the time, for kids in Jewish day schools and after-school programs to be expected to absorb a lot more than one tragic narrative. Or maybe, in some ways, a lot less: Rather than being asked to identify closely with the life and death of an individual child, many of us would have been shown films of mass murder, piles of bodies in camps, so much graphic detail that our nascent faculties of analysis froze. I can still remember the trembling rage of my Hebrew school teacher when two female students giggled, a bit glibly, about some private girlish intrigue, trotting into the familiar as images from the camps flickered across the screen. The Holocaust remained barred on the bulldozer scenes).

And although it already seemed like ancient history to us at the time, World War II was a generation closer, and even closer than that for our teachers. Explaining the complexity of the history to young children — a history so relevant to our own grandparents — might have been impossible, but at least, educators thought, they could convey some urgency of overwhelming visuals and statistics. At the time, I agreed with a philosophy that reality, even if it gave us nightmares. “Holocaust Tips for Children,” a survival guide for children terrified by the images, offers what he calls “a philosophy of memory, can serve as a remarkable tool.”

For some kids, that kind of message may have reinforced their Jewish identity. But the focus on Jewish isolation — long on graphic proof, short on historical context — actively repelled at least as many of my peers (including Mr. Shneygart and Mr. Auslander, as recent conversations with both made clear). “We were scaring kids half to death and then telling them, ‘You’ve got to embrace your Judaism,’” said Carol K. Ingall, a professor of Jewish education at the Jewish Theological Seminary in Manhattan. “It didn’t work.”

In the past 25 years, much has changed about Holocaust education in Jewish schools and in public schools, where it’s a more recent addition to the curriculum.

The previous mayor “had no great appetite” to see a museum there, explained Wolfgang Neusser, president of the Jewish Community of Thininga. “I was told to think about the image of the city. I answered, ‘One should have said that 70 years ago.’”

Topf und Söhne was an old family firm, he said, that “designed these ovens themselves to make practical use of energy.” Human bodies were the fuel. “It was absolutely perfidious.”

For decades, no one in Erfurt talked about this past. The same pattern was repeated in towns and cities across Germany. Few chose to recall what happened to the 500,000 Jews who lived in Germany before 1933. Nearly half had, though many would later be deported from other occupied countries. Only a few thousand German Jews were hiding in service. Even so, long after the end of World War II, there is still much history to uncover, said Dr. Ingall. After all, Europe’s Boston-based busi-nessman and philosopher who created the Obermayer Award after exploring his own family’s roots in Creglingen. The award hon-ors Germans who have tried to find out about local Jewish history and to establish contacts with Jews around the world.

GERMANS REMEMBER THE HOLOCAUST AND THE JEWISH LIFE

BY TOBY ALEXROD
JTA

Holocaust remembrance in Germany has many faces. In Erfurt, Germany’s capital city of Erfurt, illegal squatters hide from the camera but show visitors where the events of Auschwitz were designated. In Hameln, in what was West Germany, Bernhard Goldbrümmer has worked for decades “in the darkness” to return an identity to his town’s lost Jews. And in Euskirchen, Hans-Dieter Amitz has been bringing the light of day to the local history buried out of shame and guilt.

Such efforts contribute to a depth of remembrance in Germany at which official commemorations can only hint. To really find out, one has to visit towns and cities across Germany and seek out the local, sometimes unofficial, historians.

Some grassroots groups are “very creative,” said Walter Momper, president of Berlin’s House of Representatives, who spent this year’s Holocaust Remembrance Day hosting the ninth annual Obermayer German Jewish History Awards. “They force society to ask what was there ... and they confront people with what happened just next door.”

This is just the group of young squatters who has been doing in Erfurt. Since moving into abandoned buildings of the former Topf and Söhne factories, they’ve been building a community and a home, with a kitchen, a bed, and a shower.

But, Dr. Shandler added with understatement, “There’s a risk in offering an umbrella of such an argument: there is a direct line between being a bully and being complicit in mass murder.” And as for a new spate of Holocaust books for children that focus on kids who got out safely, highlighting the role of resistance, emphasizing only the inspirational, one can’t help wondering if this is an arena in which the message of self-esteem is insufficient. It seems appropriate that a chapter of history this important imposes what ever impossible challenges, especially for young children. Maybe 25 years from now, these curricular changes will be highlighted in satirical novels about the bill of goods they were sold in grade school about all those kids who survived.

Chances are, educators will still be wrestling with how best to approach the material. History’s facts are immutable, but what we want for our children — and from them — keeps changing.

There has been a shift, Dr. Ingall said, away from what she called “the parents’ con-}
anya Gottesfeld Heller is a Holocaust survivor, author, and philanthropist whose life story offers hope to all who have suffered through discrimination or the horrors of war. Born into a traditional Jewish family in a small Ukrainian village in 1924, Mrs. Heller and her family hid from the Nazi death squads with the help of two Christian rescuers. Beset by hunger, marked for death by her neighbors, and faced with the constant threat of discovery and execution, she miraculously survived to share her message of life and hope.

Mrs. Heller recently reissued her book under a new title, Love in a World of Sorrow. The new edition features an updated preface and epilogue which describe Mrs. Heller’s emotional reunion with the daughter of her rescuer, as well as some of the thousands of responses she has received from those touched by her story. The book, a candid portrait of her family’s struggle for survival and her relationship with her Christian rescuer, is part of the curriculum of courses at Princeton University, Yale University, the University of Connecticut and Ben-Gurion University of the Negev in Israel. Since the original publication of her book, Mrs. Heller has dedicated her life to sharing her message of tolerance and hope. In 1998 the New York State Board of Regents awarded Mrs. Heller the Louis E. Yavner Citizen Award in recognition of her outstanding contributions to teaching about the Holocaust and other assaults on humanity.

To give other educators the tools to effectively teach the lessons of the Holocaust, Mrs. Heller also commissions an annual conference on Holocaust education at the Museum of Jewish Heritage in New York City.

Mrs. Heller obtained a B.A. and an M.A. in psychology from Yeshiva University, Stern College for Women, the Program in Judaic Studies at Princeton University, the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, Mlikat – Shelter From Abuse, the Aleph Society, the American Jewish Agency for Yad Vashem, and the Museum of Jewish Heritage. She is a benefactor of the United Jewish Appeal’s ‘Project Renewal’ in Lod, Israel, the Benjamin and Charlotte Gottesfeld Chair in Talmud at Yeshiva University and the Fanya Gottesfeld Heller Floor at the Shaare Zedek Medical Center in Jerusalem.

Mrs. Heller lives in New York City. She has three children, eight grandchildren, and eight great-grandchildren.
TOVAH FELDSHUH

Tovah Feldshuh, the world-renowned actress, most recently starred on Broadway in Irena’s Vow. She played the role of Irena Gut Odzycke, a Christian rescuer during the Holocaust, for which she received the BroadwayWorld.com Theatre Fans’ Choice Award for Best Leading Actress in a Play. For her work on the New York stage, from Yentl to Sarafina! to Lend Me a Tenor to Golda’s Balcony, Tovah Feldshuh earned four Tony nominations for Best Actress and won four Drama Desk Awards, four Outer Critics Circle Awards, the Obie, the Theatre World Award and the Lucille Lortel Award for Best Actress (for Golda’s Balcony).

Ms. Feldshuh continues to receive acclaim for her roles on stage, film and television. On stage she appeared in Cyranos; Rodgers and Hart; Dreyfus in Rehearsal!; She Stoops to Conquer; Mistress of the Inn; Three Sisters; The Vagina Monologues; Talilah Hallejüjah!; Full Gallop; The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie: Hello Muddah, Hello Fadduh; and Tea at Five. Her one-woman show, Tovah: Out of Her Mind! sold out in London’s West End. The Boston Globe selected Tovah: Out of Her Mind as the best one-person show of 2000.

Her film appearances include Kissing Jessica Stein; A Walk on the Moon; Happy Accidents; The Corruptor; Daniel. The Idiomaker; Breuther’s Millions; Cheaper to Keep Her; Three Little Wulfs; Friends and Family; Old Love; Nunzio; The Believer; Life On The Ledge; The Alchemist; and Toll Booth. Most recently she appeared onscreen in O Jerusalem in which she plays Golda Meir, and in Lady in the Water for M. Night Shyamalan.

On television, she received her first Emmy nomination for her portrayal of the Czech free- dom fighter Helena in Holocaust. She also appeared in The Amazing Howard Hughes; Citizen Cohn; The Cosby Mysteries and The Cosby Show; and in The Education of Max Birchard. In 2004 she was nominated for her second Emmy for her work on Law & Order as defense attorney Danielle Melnick.

On the US West Coast, she starred at the Ahmanson as Regina in Lillian Hellman’s Another Part of the Forest, and served as a leading lady for Jack O’Brien and Craig Noel at the Old Globe Theatre in San Diego in such shows as Romeo and Juliet; Two Gentlemen Of Verona, Measure For Measure. At the Globe she was named an Associate Artist and won two Drama-Logue Awards for her Juliet and for her first one-woman show.

Ms. Feldshuh is a graduate of Sarah Lawrence College and a winner of the McKnight Fellowship to the Guthrie Theatre and the University of Minnesota. She has taught at Yale, Cornell and New York Universities and was awarded an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters. She is the recipient of the Eleanor Roosevelt Humanitas Award and the Israel Peace Medal. Ms. Feldshuh is married to New York attorney Andrew Harris Levy. They have two children.

HONOREE TOVAH FELDSHUH

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Afer surviving the Holocaust as a child, Israel Meir Lau — a former Israeli chief rabbi — spent decades searching for the man who saved his life.

That journey ended with a recently discovered Nazi document confirming the identity of the teenager who shielded him from German gunfire when his concentration camp was liberated.

In an emotional ceremony, the Holocaust memorial Lau now chairs posthumously granted Feodor Mikhailichenko Israel’s highest honor for non-Jews. “This closes a circle of 64 years. You look for this person, to whom you owe your life, and you don’t know whom to thank,” said Lau, 72. “He was my childhood hero. A man with a huge soul and a heart of gold.”

Lau had previously identified a fellow inmate, a non-Jewish Russian named Feodor, as his savior in the Buchenwald concentration camp, but he never learned the 18-year-old’s full name. He said Feodor stole and cooked potatoes for him, knitted him wool earmuffs to protect him from winter cold and lay on top of him as gunfire erupted when the camp was liberated on Apr. 11, 1945.

At the time, Lau was an eight-year-old boy nicknamed Lulek. “Feodor, the Russian, looked after me in the face of the tragedy that was happening. His concern and feeling of responsibility gave me a sense of security,” Lau wrote in his memoirs. Mikhailichenko grew so close to Lau that he wanted to adopt him as a son. But Lau later learned that his murdered family and emigrated to pre-state Israel on a ship of orphaned refugee children. He lost track of Mikhailichenko and despite many efforts could never trace him again.

The mystery began to unfold in June 2008 when Holocaust researcher Kenneth Waltzer of Michigan State University discovered the man’s true identity through a Nazi document he discovered in a recently opened secret archive in the small German town of Bad Arolsen. The document had been stashed away by in the face of the Holocaust’s atrocities.

“Looking at a diversity of media and geographic areas, the workshop will help clarify such questions as what bystanders ‘really knew about the Holocaust during the Holocaust and, when the Holocaust was marginalized in the press, was this the case?’” Prof. David Bankier, head of the International Institute for Holocaust Research, said in a statement.

“Some research has looked at post-WWII media in relation to the Holocaust,” he said. “For the first time, this workshop brings together serious research on real-time media coverage of the Holocaust. Some of the research that will be presented was undertaken specifically for this workshop.”

The workshop, which took place in July, included presentations by Holocaust scholars from Israel, Canada, Germany, Italy, Belgium, the UK, Hungary, Russia, Holland, and the United States.

“We are dealing with one of the crucial questions of the attitude of the bystanders,” said Bankier, in an interview with The Jerusalem Post.

Former Israeli chief rabbi and one of the country’s most prominent spiritual leaders Rabbi Israel Meir Lau, second left, introduces his son, left, to Yulia Selutina, right, and Yelena Belayeva, second right, daughters of Feodor Mikhailichenko from Russia, who saved him as a child during the Holocaust, during a ceremony posthumously honoring him as a Righteous Among the Nations, outside the Hall of Remembrance at the Yad Vashem Holocaust memorial, on Aug. 4, 2009.

Mikhailichenko was already a veteran inmate of the camp, having been arrested by the Gestapo in 1942 with other Russian refugees. He knew the ropes and watched over Lau. When Buchenwald was liberated by American troops in January 1945, he helped Lau escape as gunfire erupted. He knew the ropes and watched over Lau.

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Mikhailichenko returned to Russia after the war and became a prominent geologist. He died of cancer in 1993 at the age of 66. Despite that, his daughters, Yulia Selutina and Yelena Belayeva, were quickly tracked down and confirmed that their father often spoke lovingly about a young Jewish boy named Lulek in Buchenwald.

“We really want to know what was the reaction of different populations in occupied Europe and the free world to the Jewish plight.”

“We are not only dealing with Roosevelt and Churchill; we also want to know what the ordinary Canadian or Hungarian saw when he went to the movies and saw the newsreel. If the Jewish question wasn’t included, can we see any reactions by the public?”

Bankier said much information about public reaction to the news could be gleaned from police records and reports of conversations that took place after the newsreels were shown in occupied European nations.

“Between the screening of the news-reel and the film, people went out to smoke a cigarette or have a coffee, and they would comment on what they had just seen,” he said. “The state was under Gestapo control, and recorded those comments.”

“People were not arrested for saying something the state didn’t like, but it was recorded by Gestapo agents. This then included, can we see any reactions by the public?”


“We want to get a better understanding of what was covered and what wasn’t,” said Estee Yaari, foreign media liaison for Yad Vashem. “Hopefully they can get a window into this and really open an window into this issue. It’s some-thing that unless you’re researching it, people don’t know about.”

Yaari said the workshop was the initia-tive of the International Institute for Holocaust Research.

“At this time there are no plans to make a film or a book around this, but a presentation of research,” she added.

HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL HONORS RABBI LAU’S SAVIOR

BY ARON HELLER, AP

YAD VASHEM EXAMINES HOLOCAUST-ERA MEDIA OUTPUT AND RESPONSES

JESSICA LEVING,
THE JERUSALEM POST

Walking through the dimly lit corridors of Yad Vashem in Jerusalem, visitors often find themselves asking: How could the world have stood idly by in the face of the Holocaust’s atrocities?

A workshop for international Holocaust scholars at Yad Vashem’s International Institute for Holocaust Research sheds some light on this question by examining newsreels, films, radio broadcasts, and political cartoons from the Holocaust era (1933-1947), as well as news commentaries and police reports that might reveal public reaction to the news.

“Looking at a diversity of media and geographic areas, the workshop will help clarify such questions as what bystanders ‘really knew about the Holocaust during the Holocaust and, when the Holocaust was marginalized in the press, was this the case?’” Prof. David Bankier, head of the International Institute for Holocaust Research, said in a statement.

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USING DNA TO TRACK HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS

BY STEWART AIN.
THE NEW YORK TIMES

For years, Allen Rosenberg, a real estate developer from Hewlett Bay Park, has had a nagging thought: What if a first or second cousin survived the Holocaust and didn’t know it?

“Maybe my cousin was placed in a displaced persons camp on the other side of Germany or in Poland,” said Mr. Rosenberg, who is 45.

As far as he knows, Mr. Rosenberg said, his father, who went into a hospital in Germany after World War II and died in 1988, was the only member of his family to survive the Holocaust. Still, he said, “there is that slim chance.”

Until recently, Mr. Rosenberg could do no more than wonder. Then he learned of the DNA Shoah Project, which seeks to reunite families torn apart by the Holocaust.

The nonprofit project is asking survivors, their children and grandchildren to provide a DNA sample to build a genetic database of Jewish Holocaust survivors and their immediate descendants. The database may eventually be made available to European forensic experts attempting to identify remains of Holocaust victims.

More than 500,000 Jewish Holocaust survivors are believed to be alive, according to the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany, an organization founded in 1951 to negotiate reparations for the Holocaust.

Syd Mandebaum of Cedarhurst, a co-founder of the project, is looking for any trace of his grandfather Shlomo Barber, who was 42 in 1942 when he disappeared while a slave laborer in Germany. Mr. Mandebaum said his three other grandparents were murdered at Auschwitz.

Mr. Mandebaum said that about 1,000 DNA samples had been collected since the project, which is free to survivors, began three years ago. Lynn K. Davis, the project’s information specialist, said about 10,000 samples are needed for the database to be scientifically significant.

“Once you get close to 10,000, you start getting hits,” she said.

Ms. Davis said the DNA samples are taken using two cotton brushes to scrape the inside of a participant’s cheeks for 30 seconds. Kits, using two cotton brushes to scrape the inside of a participant’s cheeks for 30 seconds. Kits, which participants, began three years ago. Lynn K. Davis, the project's information specialist, said about 10,000 samples are needed for the database to be scientifically significant.

Auschwitz.

As a result, estimates of the number of Jews killed in the Holocaust fluctuate between 5.1 million (Raoul Hilberg), 5.75 million (Martin Gilbert) and 5.9 million (Yehuda Bauer). These figures may have to be raised once Father Desbois has completed his research.

When the Germans were driven out of Russia and Ukraine, Soviet investigators were sent to the villages to take witness testimony, photograph the sites and make an estimate of how many died in the usually unmarked sites in fields and forests. It was not until some years after the collapse of Communism that it was feasible to check the Soviet documentation.

It was a task Father Desbois took on as a holy mission. His curiosity was stirred as a child because his grandfather had been a prisoner of war in a German camp in Ukraine.

The priest went to what was left of the camp — a small memorial stone — and discovered that 7,500 Jews had been killed in the area. The deputy mayor organized the local old people to meet the priest and the stories, unburied for more than 60 years, tumbled out.

Some had fathers who had used the farm’s horse and cart to carry away the clothes of the victims. At least one inter- vee was ordered to rip the gold teeth out of the mouths of the victims. In desert barns the priest discovered old farming machinery designed to sort potatoes from wheat — but used by the Germans to sift for valuables in the ashes of cremated Jews.

"It is a race against time," he says. "The witnesses who I am talking to were children at the time and are now very old indeed. So far I have talked to 950. One of his interviewees was Petrivna, a Ukrainian woman, in the village of Ternica. The Jews, she said, were gathered in the center of the village and taken to a large pit on the fringes of the community.

They were told to lie down, 20 at a time, and shot in the back of the head. "It's not easy to walk on bodies," Petrivna told the priest.

"Very calmly I asked her: You had to walk on the bodies of the people who were murdered?" "Yes, I had to pack them down . . . after every volley of shots. We were three Ukrainian girls who, in our fear, had to pack them down, the bodies of the Jews, and throw a fine layer of sand on top of them so that other Jews wouldn't discover the pits.

"More than 2,000 were killed in that single massacre and even larger numbers were killed across Ukraine. In the Lianish forest, outside Lviv, 90,000 were shot in six months.

"Not just a recreation area, part of the city. Lovers go there. And there are 57 mass graves in the woods there is not a single monument or memorial."

Using a powerful metal detector, the priest and his team worked out where to dig. After one visit to a massacre site they gathered up the German carriages and counted them on a restaurant table. They came to 600.

So far the priest’s investigations suggest that the Soviet reporting was accurate. This, he says, will help to thwart the Holocaust deniers.

"The commonly quoted figure of six million Jews killed during the Holocaust is derived from a claim by the senior SS officer, Martin Bormann, in an interview with a US reporter in Israel in 1961. It was the figure that he gave to Heinrich Himmler in 1944. Many historians believe it was an overestimate."

Raul Hilberg’s 1961 book, one of the first significant studies after the war, estimated that 5.1 million Jews were killed. The British historian Martin Gilbert, in his Atlas of the Holocaust, said it was 5.75 million.

Much of the controversy over the figures comes from different estimates of the numbers killed by roaming SS squads after Germany invaded Russia in 1941. Records of the number of Jews killed in open-air shootings in places such as Ukraine, Poland and Russia are far less definitive.

As Hitler’s armies pressed into Russia, the Einsatzgruppen — Operational Units — had to take in all the different factors — the geography, the transport available, the proximity of partisans — before organizing the most efficient massacre."
EXTENT OF NAZI CAMPS FAR GREATER THAN REALIZED

BY MONICA HESSE, THE WASHINGTON POST

A little more than a decade ago, researchers at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum turned to the undaunted task of creating an encyclopedia of concentration camps. They assumed the finished work would be massive, featuring 16,000 pages or more and reaching the shelves by 2005.

Their ultimate count of more than 20,000 camps — which they reached after a year of research — is far more than most scholars had known existed and might reshape public understanding of the scope of the Holocaust itself.

"What’s going to happen is that the mental universe of how scholars operate is going to change," said Steven Katz, director of Boston University’s Elie Wiesel Center for Judaic Studies. "Instead of thinking of main death camps, people are going to understand that this was a continent-wide phenomenon."

The Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos: 1933-1945 "is the first major reference work on the Holocaust," said Donald L. Glueck, director of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, "demanding the full of the U.S.S.R." — and the opening of many European archives, says Paul Shapiro, director of the museum’s Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies. As a result, more information was available to researchers than had ever been before.

Researchers analyzed documents in old books and used internet mailing lists to find historians who might possess tiny pieces of the puzzle.

Most of the sites included in the encyclopedia were known, says Geoff Megargee, the encyclopedia project director. "But they were known to one or two people. Sometime in the future there would just be a person who had done research on one prison."

The first volume focuses on SS-run camps and contains more than 1,100 entries written by some 30 contributors.

The Holocaust's horror always has been its precision and vastness: how many districts were occupied, how many countries fell to the Nazi regime. The enormous number of sites and the slight overlap of Holocaust literature is likely never heard of. The book is organized as a tradition- al encyclopedia, each camp or ghetto entry, some with photographs or maps.

Few people might realize, Megargee says, that each of the 23 main camps had sub-camps — nearly 900 sub-camps, each with thousands of stories with chillingly euphemistic entry, some with photographs or maps.

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Shapiro says that the sheer number of camps may end one of the lingering questions surrounding the Holocaust — that ordinary people knew nothing of the killing underway in their locales. "In most towns, there was some sort of prison, or holding area or place where people were victimized," Shapiro says. "Think about what this means. For anyone who thinks this took place out of sight of the average person, this shatters that mythology. There was one Auschwitz. There was one Treblinka. But there were 20,000 other camps spread through the rest of Europe."

"What is going to happen is that the mental universe of how scholars operate is going to change," said Steven Katz, director of Boston University’s Elie Wiesel Center for Judaic Studies. "Instead of thinking of main death camps, people are going to understand that this was a continent-wide phenomenon."

Three hundred Nazis are living in a plain sight in the United States, according to the world’s preeminent Nazi hunting organization.

Although the case against John Demjanjuk, the former Ohio auto worker who was identified as the "Ivan the Terrible," a guard at Poland’s Mauthausen concentration camp for women in Germany, is being called the last great Nazi war-crimes trial, Efraim Zuroff told The Post there are hundreds more suspects to be brought to justice.

"We don’t have much longer," said Zuroff, of the Simon Wiesenthal Center in Israel. "We have to go after them or they will be too sick to bring to trial."

Many of the Nazis who are elderly men who worked and raised families in the United States and whose neighbors were unaware of their past, including:

- Johann Leprich, a retired tool-and-die maker who was a "guard at a different Polish camp. He was a 'Death Head' guard at the Mauthausen concentration camp, where inmates were used as slave labor in a quarry and tortured and killed by gassing, hanging and electric shock."

- Mykola Wasylyk of update Ellenville, who ran a Catskills bungalow colony renting cabins to Jewish visitors. He served as a pernicious night guard at a labor camp in Poland. He proclaimed in a 2002 letter to the US attorney that he was forced to work at the camp. He was described as an "exemplary and law-abiding citizen," the Post found.

- Peter Egner, of Peter Egner, of the Simon Wiesenthal Center in Israel, a case would have to be brought on immigration issues in the United States.

At the end of last August, Zuroff asked for a probe into Egner, 87, on the grounds that as a member of the Gestapo during World War II, he had organised the execution of Jews and other civilians at a camp in Belgrade and another in a suburb of the city.

He is also suspected of participating in brutal death marches and other concentration camps in Belgrade in 1941 and 1942.

According to the Simon Wiesenthal Center, Egner is charged with 14,000 deaths for the deaths of about 17,000 people.

More than 24,000 died in the Staro Sremski, a concentration camp in Belgrade during the Nazi occupation of the city, and almost 80,000 were executed at Janjic in the suburbs of the capital.

Tens of thousands of Nazis are thought to have escaped the camp where 6,000 people were shot to death in one of the largest single massacres of the Holocaust.

-Eftihed Rinkel, who lived such a seemingly ordinary life as a San Francisco butcher that her Jewish husband knew nothing about her past. Rinkel worked as a guard at the Ravensbruck concentration camp for women in Germany, where malnourished inmates were forced to march to slave-labor sites daily and then kept in check by attack dogs.

The number of Nazis who came to the United States after World War II has been estimated from a few hundred to several thousand. Hundreds of thousands of Nazis are thought to have survived the war, many of them using false names.

Serbia set to prosecute Egner

Last year, prosecutors asked for a probe into Egner on the grounds that as a member of the Gestapo during World War II, he had organized the execution of Jews and other civilians at a camp in Belgrade and another in a suburb of the city.

The US ambassador to Serbia, Cameron Hunter, told a joint press conference, "American authorities are working with the US military in the way mentioned by Mr Vukcevic."

At the end of last August, Vukcevic asked for a probe into Egner, 87, on the grounds that as a member of the Gestapo during World War II, he had organised the execution of Jews and other civilians at a camp in Belgrade and another in a suburb of the city.

He is also suspected of participating in brutal death marches and other concentration camps in Belgrade in 1941 and 1942.

According to the Simon Wiesenthal Center, Egner is charged with 14,000 deaths for the deaths of about 17,000 people.
A COMBINED DAY OF COMMEMORATION FOR THE VICTIMS OF NAZISM AND COMMUNISM

BY RUTH ELLEN GRUBER, JTA

Poland's Jewish heritage is about more than just death.

BY FRANZ-URFORD: THE JERUSALEM POST

As hard as this may be to believe, it is true that for the first time in many years, Europe will no longer set aside a special day to commemorate the Holocaust. Instead, Europeans will mark August 23, the day of the 1939 MolotovRibbentrop nonaggression pact between the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany, which paved the way for the German and Russian invasions of Poland, as a day of commemoration for the victims of Nazism and Communism. Given the previous success during the past decade in Holocaust awareness and education, such a prediction might sound very unlikely, but if the campaign being currently waged by Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, with support from other post-Communist countries, to equate Communism with Nazism succeeds, that will be only one of many very problematic changes in the manner in which Europeans relate to the annihilation of European Jewry.

Perhaps the most disturbing aspect of the problem is the virtually total ignorance and apathy of Israel and the Jewish world in response to this campaign, which has been ongoing for well over a decade and has recently been upgraded with very worrying results. In July, for example, the Parliamentary Assembly of the OSCE (Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe), which met in Vienna, Lithuania, passed a resolution calling for the establishment of August 23 as a day of commemoration for the victims of Nazism and communism, with the opposition registered by Russia and a few European Communities.

This is in stark contrast to the “handwriting on the wall practically from the renewal of Baltic inde- pendence. Since 1991, in meetings with senior Baltic officials, in response to their demands that they acknowledge the extensive scope of Baltic collaboration in Nazi crimes, prosecute local Nazi war criminals, and the establishment of gerryc- cade or occupation museums which totally ignore local Holocaust crimes and Nazi collaboration, and the pattern becomes crystal clear.

A bout two years ago, embodied by the failure of the European Union, the United States, Israel, and the Jewish world to hold the Baltic states accountable in a meaningful manner for their manifold fail- ures in dealing with Holocaust issues (prosecution, restitution, documentation, etc.), these governments intensified their campaign to create official symmetry between Communism and Nazism.

Their first major success was the June 3, 2008 “Prague Declaration on European Confrontation of Nazism and Communism” signed by Vaclav Havel and numerous members of the European Parliament, which called for the establishment of August 23 as an offi- cial day of remembrance for Nazi and Communist victims “in the same way Europe remembers the victims of the Holocaust on January 27,” as well as an “Institute of European Memory and Conscience” to serve as a museum, research, and educational center on these crimes. The rationale presented for these steps points to the “substantial similarities between Nazism and Communism” and warns that “Europe will not be united until the whole world learns to recognize Communist and Nazism as a common legacy.”

One can sympathize with the legit- imate desire of the victims of Communist far recognition, there is nothing innocent about this declaration which clearly seeks to undermine the current status of the Holocaust as a unique historical tragedy. On September 23, 2008, more than 400 members of the European Parliament signed a resolution supporting the estab- lishment of August 23 as “European Day of Remembrance for Victims of Stalinism and Nazism,” and on April 2, 2009, a res- olution similar to the Prague Declaration passed in the same body. A month ago, however, when I asked the members of the Israeli global forum on anti-Semitism whether anyone knew of the Prague Declaration, not a single member responded positively.

But the campaign has come to start paying attention to this insidious campaign being conducted primarily by Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, supported by a new guilt for Holocaust crimes and replace the Shoah for the third time in the past several months. I have recently begun to see the fascination with the numerous important achievements of the Jewish press and media and education and forced to fight an uphill battle against a new and distorted World War II historical narrative.

Poland is filled with Jewish heritage sites, like this ornate ceremo- nial hall at the Jewish cemetery in Bielsko-Biala, that celebrate Jewish life, not simply death and the Holocaust.

There’s a puppet theatre now next door, where the Jewish culture center once stood. A courtyard, once occupied by the for- mer Jewish community building across the street. Its elaborate decoration, I was told, represents the seven fruits men- tioned in the Torah.

The Jewish cemetery, whose red-and- orange striped ceremonial hall is another Korn design, is well maintained and design- ated a cultural monument. Among the tombs is a poignant memorial to Jewish soldiers who fell fighting for the Austrians in World War I.

All these sites, and more, are noted in the “Jewish heritage bundle” offered by local guidebooks available at the tourist information office and the city museum. On sale in both places I found reproductions of old postcards showing the synagogue in all its glory as a major pre-war landmark. I have no way of knowing who follows these itineraries or purchases the post- cards. But, at least for tourists, they clear- ly acknowledge the Jewish contribution to the town and set Jewish history and her- itage here within the general matrix. A few blocks away, the Biala’s “Jewish heritage package” offered by one of the city’s Jewish centers.

Far from exploiting the rich historic con- tribution of Jews here, its itinerary is sim- ply a road trip to Auschwitz with “sight- seeing” at the memorial museum there, then dinner back at the hotel’s restaurant. Bielsko Biala is only 25 miles from Auschwitz. I would certainly urge anyone visiting the town to take a day and go there. But promoting a tour of the Nazis’ most notorious death camp as a Jewish heritage package banalizes Jewish heritage and the Holocaust, and both ignores and insults the memory of the generations of Jews who lived here (and often prospered).

In Bielsko Biala, Poles have begun to offer up a much nuanced take on history — Jewish and Polish. Unfortunately, how- ever, the Jewish heritage package heed only what their clients demands. Jews should take the lead in demanding more. Polonization of the community? We can no longer live any more, Jewish heritage must not be equated with its destruction. Nor, indeed, should the centuries-old Jewish experi- ence be defined solely in terms of death.
Shanghai's Jewish community celebrated in June the launch of a database that will document the stories of the thousands of refugees who found a safe haven in China's commercial capital during World War II.

So far the database lists the names of about 600 of the 30,000 Jews who fled to Shanghai in the 1930s and 1940s to escape Nazi death camps and other horrors of the Holocaust.

The database will give a record of the community, where its residents came from, their stories and struggles, where they have since moved and even how they might now be reached, said Israeli Consul General David Feigenbaum in a recent interview.

The database, supported by the Israeli and Chinese governments, is housed in a museum and exhibit themed as the city's former Ohel Moshe Synagogue.

"The independent state of Israel emerged out of the ashes of the Holocaust, making it a natural destination for such refugees," said Gutman.

Among the mostly European Jews who found refuge in Shanghai was Jakob Rosenfeld, who attended the celebration, and a former history teacher – said the database would be an important historical accomplishment.

As Shanghai has regained its status as a major international commercial center, the growing Jewish expatriate community has won support from local officials, some of which restoring some synagogues and preserving the Hongkou ghetto as a historic district.

After a painstaking refurbishment, the Ohel Moshe opened its doors several months ago for its first wedding in about 60 years.

The database K-101 is part of a three-phase project that included renovating a neighbor- borhood senior center and donating equipment to a social welfare facility.

The project is in touch with Jewish communities in Australia, the U.S. West Coast and elsewhere seeking information, Gutman said, although it is racing against time as many Jews who lived in Shanghai are now in their 80s or older.

There was no decision yet on whether the historical database would eventually be made available online, he said.

Donations from Israeli companies helped finance the creation of the database, which is just beginning to take shape. Those developing it have names and some other information on some 10,000 refugees.

Shanghai was a major trading center long before the war and had a well-established Jewish expatriate community, making it a natural destination for many of those fleeing persecution in Europe. And while in many cases Jews were welcomed to other countries, China was relatively open to refugees.

As the Japanese invaded and occupied many regions of China during the war, growing numbers of Jews migrated to Shanghai.

Many escaped with visas granted by Ho Fengshang, the multi-lingual consul general in Vienna who continued issuing the documents en masse even after he had been ordered to stop by his superior, the Chinese ambassador in Berlin.

Despite its willingness to take in Jews, the thriving refugee community in Shanghai was forced into a teeming riverside ghetto in the city's Hongkou distric during the Japanese occupation.

It gradually dwindled after the 1949 communist revolution, though refugees remained for years before leaving for the West or for the then-British Mandate of Palestine.

Historian Richard Breitman says President Franklin D. Roosevelt "tried to carry out some humanitarian steps" while considering politics.

Newly uncovered documents reveal that President Franklin D. Roosevelt worked quietly in the late 1930s to find havens for European Jews, contradicting the view that he ignored their plight in the years leading up to the Holocaust.

Roosevelt was "a master politician who tried to find some humanitarian steps while juggling political and military considerations," writes historian Richard Breitman, editor of Refugees and Rescue: The Diaries and Papers of James G. McDonald (1935-1945), released in May.

The book draws on papers at the Center for Jewish History in New York City.

McDonald was chairman of Roosevelt's advisory committee on refugees. He met Adolf Hitler in 1933 and was convinced the Nazi planned to exterminate Europe's Jews, prompting him to sound warnings. He later was the first U.S. ambassador to Jerusalem.

Despite FDR's popularity with Jewish Americans, the influential 1984 book The Abandonment of the Jews: America and the Holocaust argued that he didn't do enough to save their European brethren. Breitman says that he ignored papers that show, in 1938, Roosevelt:

- Cut red tape that kept immigration officials from being filled allowing entry for 27,370 Germans, most of them Jews.
- Hoped to settle millions of Jews from Central and Eastern Europe to other countries, mostly in Latin America. He called an international conference to line up money and support.
- Promised to ask Congress for $150 million to help resettle refugees if Britain allowed more Jews into Palestine and private funds could be raised.
- Roosevelt's efforts, including the conference in Evian, France, failed. Most countries refused to admit them, partly due to a depression and anti-Semitism, Breitman says. Opposition also was strong at the State Department and in Congress, which voted in 1939 not to let in 20,000 German Jewish children.

Breitman says Roosevelt is unfairly criticized for not supporting the bill and for refusing to admit 900 Jewish refugees in the St. Louis, which sailed from Germany 70 years ago. Cuba, the U.S. and Canada turned away those on the "voyage of the damned," and the ship returned to Europe. Hundreds of passengers died in the Holocaust.

Roosevelt "made a decision to go for big results," Breitman says, adding that the president viewed letting in small numbers of Jews as "a gesture, not a solution" to the larger refugee problem.

In 1940, after the start of World War II in Europe, Roosevelt's priorities turned to national security, Breitman writes.

Rafael Medoff, director of the Wyman Institute, which studies America's response to the Holocaust, says the book won't absolve Roosevelt. He says FDR failed to take "concrete steps" as such as giving Jewish refugees temporary haven in U.S. territories such as the Virgin Islands.

"Instead, sadly, the president who claimed to be a humanitarian and champion of the little man refrained from taking such life-saving steps," he says.

Deborah Lipstadt, a Holocaust studies professor at Emory University in Atlanta, says the book will force historians to rethink their conclusions. "This is consensus-changing," she says. "He may deserve a lot more credit than he is getting."

First published in USA Today.
The conference at the end of June also dealt with other pressing unresolved issues arising out of the Holocaust, including the restitution of communal and private Jewish real property, Nazi-confiscated and looted art, the preservation of Jewish cultural property, Nazi-confiscated and looted communal and private Jewish real property. This canard must finally be laid to rest. The declaration issued at the end constitutes a comprehensive road map of the final phase of the complex Holocaust reparations and restitution process. Its adoption, and the accomplishment of the efforts less efforts of Stuart Eizenstat, who denigration and trivialization.

Three organizations of Holocaust survivors are full signatories of the Claims Conference, and survivors are prominently represented on all of the organization’s committees to maintain the integrity of the sites of mass annihilation, and a categorical, unapologetic repudiation of Holocaust denial and trivialization.

The declaration issued at the end constitutes a comprehensive road map of the final phase of the complex Holocaust reparations and restitution process. Its adoption, and the accomplishment of the efforts of dedicated professionals who ensured that experts and stakeholders alike had access to all conference take-leadings. Among the critical catalysts in the latter category are the members of the Claims Conference, who are experts in Jewish Material Claims against Germany, popularly known as the Claims Conference.

Without question, the Claims Conference is the single most important and effective body providing assistance to Holocaust survivors throughout the world. It also is frequently under attack by individuals and groups that take issue with its process of allocating funds. No organization should be immune from criticism. However, some of the charges directed against the Claims Conference are out of control. Among those cited were Poland, the only country in the former Soviet bloc to have enacted a comprehensive anti-racism law; it also calls for more open and transparent restitution of art and private and communal property taken by force or under duress during the Holocaust, was approved at the Prague Holocaust Era Assets Conference.

The document, whose signatories include the 27 countries of the European Union, Canada, Israel and the United States, also calls for greater commitment to the care of Holocaust survivors, Holocaust education and Jewish cemetery preservation. Hundreds of representatives of government and Jewish organizations, along with experts and lawyers, participated in its drafting.

Worse, there are countries that simply refused to join the conference as particularly problematic. Among those cited were Poland, the only country in the former Soviet bloc to have enacted private restitution or compensation; Lithuania, which has no communal property restitution program; Germany, which has only begun researching its stolen art, and Russia, which closes most archives to researchers and has made it impossible for claimants to obtain looted art.

On June 26, 2009, the Lithuanian tabloid Tarybos žinios cast Rabbi Andrew Baker, top, as a villain in Holocaust restitution, saying: “The claim is false. Sadness and anguish. We do not accept them.” But Eckstein knew that the saving of life took precedence over the observance of the Sabbath — and he snuffed out the candle himself.

The Hitachdut Olei Czechoslovakia organized a reception in his honor and sent out invitations to all its members, and of course to Eckstein’s “children.” More than 300 people from all over Israel came to celebrate the occasion. Among those cited were Poland, the only country in the former Soviet bloc to have enacted a comprehensive anti-racism law; it also calls for more open and transparent restitution of art and private and communal property taken by force or under duress during the Holocaust, was approved at the Prague Holocaust Era Assets Conference.

The declaration states: “Noting the importance of restituting communal and individual immovable property that passed into the hands of the Nazi (Shoah) and other victims of Nazi persecution, the Participating States urge that every effort be made to rectify the consequences of wrongful property seizures, such as confiscations, forced sales and sales under duress of property, which were part of the persecution of these innovations, whose signatories include the 27 countries of the European Union, Canada, Israel and the United States, also calls for greater commitment to the care of Holocaust survivors, Holocaust education and Jewish cemetery preservation.

The declaration should be seen as a milestone in efforts to better monitoring of anti-Semitism, improved access to archives that facilitated loot art research, implementation of existing laws or creation of new systems to allow for the easier return of looted art, and the opening of a new center in the former Terezin concentration camp to collect information on countries’ implementation of the declaration.

Christian Kennedy, the U.S. government’s special envoy for Holocaust issues, said: “The real work hard goes over the next few years. It’s going to be a long process.”

BY MENACHEM Z. ROSENSAFT, JTA September/October 2009 - Tishri/Cheshvan 5770 MARTYRDOM & RESISTANCE Page 15

STOP PERSONAL ATTACKS

THE JEWS WHO SAVED JEWS DURING THE HOLOCAUST

(Continued from page 6)

It was not uncommon for Orthodox Jews to engage in sport there. Jonas Eckstein had been a member of the Hakolah Sports Club which was active in Austria, Hungary and Czechoslovakia. His favorite sport was wrestling, and he was good at it. According to the article in Uilek, his backhand as a sportsman had given him a number of invaluable connections, including with a Polish engine driver, which entitled his whole family to a free pass for travel on the railways. So the woman, who was then a young girl, bundled up the baby and travelled all over Czechoslovakia with her until she could no longer do so because the Gestapo mail trains aroused the suspicions of railway personnel. So she returned to Lamec, rented a room, and managed to keep the infant alive until her illegitimate child.

Meanwhile, both of Teitelbaum’s parents had been caught by the Nazis and sent to Theresienstadt. After the war, her father came to look for her and found her. There are many gaps in the story that Teitelbaum hopes to fill. She remains optimistic because almost everyone she speaks to gives her a lead to someone else, and every scrap of information is valuable.

The Jews in Czechoslovakia were well organized, she says, which is why people like her father were able to carry out their operations for a relatively long time. The combined network of contacts enabled them to foil the Nazis again and again, albeit not indefinitely. Teitelbaum intends to keep going with her project; not only for her family, but to honor all Jews, especially Orthodox ones with whom her family is close. History has not given them their due, she says, and erroneously portrays them as having nothing to do with the war. She wants to tell the other side of the story.

Worse, there are countries that simply refused to join the conference as particularly problematic. Among those cited were Poland, the only country in the former Soviet bloc to have enacted a comprehensive anti-racism law; it also calls for more open and transparent restitution of art and private and communal property taken by force or under duress during the Holocaust, was approved at the Prague Holocaust Era Assets Conference.

The First Comprehensive, Multi-Country Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany has Made Significant Progress in Overseeing Restitution of Lost Property, Creating New Pathways to Peace

By Menachem Z. Rosensaft, JTA

If you have any questions, please feel free to ask.
Jews Remain Stymied in Efforts to Reclaim Art Looted by Nazis

BY CRAIG WHITLOCK
THE WASHINGTON POST

Holocaust survivors and their heirs are still battling museums and governments for the return of hundreds of pieces of looted art, despite pledges made by dozens of countries in Washington a decade ago to resolve the claims.

At a major conference in Prague, delegates from 46 countries acknowledged that Jews continue to be stymied in their efforts to reclaim art that was stolen by the Nazis and later transferred to museums and galleries around the world, especially in Europe. An estimated 100,000 artworks, from invaluable masterpieces to works of mostly sentimental value, remain in Europe. And the process is not simple for them, according to art experts. Michal Klepetar, a real-estate project manager from Prague, has been trying for nine years to persuade the Czech National Gallery to relinquish 43 paintings that once belonged to his great-uncle, Richard Popper, a prominent collector who was deported to Poland and perished in the Jewish ghetto in the city of Lodz.

Popper’s wife and daughter also died in Nazi camps. Klepetar, 62, and his brother are their closest living relatives. But the art had always been anti-Semitic through the centuries, he said. "The only difference now is that it’s not politically correct. That’s the root of the whole problem.”

Klepetar’s great-uncle had amassed a collection of 127 artworks — mostly Flemish and Dutch paintings from the 17th and 18th centuries — which vanished after the war. In 2000, however, Klepetar said someone leaked him part of a confidential Czech government report listing the paintings, which were part of Klepetar’s family’s estate, in the National Gallery’s possession since the early 1950s.

The National Gallery later acknowledged it had the paintings but refused to divulge any details, such as how they were acquired, their condition or their precise location. Klepetar has pressed his claim in the Czech courts for several years but has lost repeatedly because he is not considered a direct descendant under the law.

Tomas Jelinek, vice president of the Czech Committee for Nazi Victims, said the government’s decision to pass the 2000 law that limits who can file claims for Holocaust assets was designed to protect public and private galleries and government institutions.

"You have all these people in charge of the museums, and they don’t want to lose their assets," he said. "There are always people who say, ‘Why should we give these valuable objects from our collections away?’"