

# MARTYRDOM & RESISTANCE



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## The American & International Societies for Yad Vashem Annual Tribute Dinner

**Eli Zborowski:**

### “OUR WORK IS EMBLEMATIC OF THE UNBROKEN CHAIN OF JEWISH DETERMINATION AND RESILIENCE”



In keeping with this year's theme *Sharsheret* — Chain — we gather to remember the chains of oppression which assaulted and pervaded our lives during the Holocaust and the chains that symbolically link successive generations of the Jewish people and have become a metaphor for our survival.

Our 2010 Tribute Dinner honors three generations who have made Holocaust remembrance a centrifugal force in their lives. Dr. Yitzhak Arad, Holocaust survivor, partisan, resistance fighter, IDF brigadier general, historian, scholar, author, and former Chairman of the Yad Vashem Directorate, was a central figure in the founding of the American Society for Yad Vashem. For more than 20 years, we have worked together to build the Society which has become a pillar of Yad Vashem. As an organization, we owe him a huge debt of gratitude.

Mark Moskowitz, a son of survivors and a successful businessman, has made time in his very busy life to become a devoted member of the Yad Vashem family. His recent commitment to the work of the American Society points to the importance of the continuing vitality of our organization. His participation with us is truly heartwarming. He is a bearer of the chain of remembrance, and The American Society for Yad Vashem is pleased to honor Mark Moskowitz this evening.

Of the many endeavors the American Society has undertaken in recent years, none brings us more pride than the growth and development of our Young Leadership Associates. Each year, for the past decade, they have sponsored a Professional Educational Conference on various themes relating to the Holocaust that attracts several hundred teachers from the Tri-State area and beyond. By transmitting the lessons of the Holocaust to present and future generations, YLA members are increasing awareness and fostering sensitivity in reducing hatred, intolerance, and prejudice.

We are pleased to honor the major leadership of this spectacular 800-member association. The Young Leadership Associates are the guardians of the future and constitute the essential link to ensuring our legacy.

It is now sixty-five years since the Liberation. In the commonly accepted narrative, the Holocaust began in 1939 and ended with the defeat of the Third Reich in 1945. But when we look at the Holocaust from the perspective of what happened to the Jews, we see a *Sharsheret* — a chain of events whose impact will extend for generations to come beyond the liberation. It is imperative that efforts be put forth to research and study the post-Holocaust period throughout the world.

The first in-depth exploration of this period took place last month at Yad Vashem at the inaugural conference of The Diana Zborowski Center for the Study of the Aftermath of the *Shoah*. I would like to acknowledge the support for this endeavor of Avner Shalev, Chairman of the Yad Vashem Directorate, and recognize the presence of Dr. Bella Guterman, Director of the International Institute for Holocaust Research at Yad Vashem, who coordinated the conference, a truly historic event.

This conference created a model for future study on survivor communities worldwide.

Yad Vashem has lit the lamp on the importance of the post-Holocaust period. For the Holocaust to take its proper place in history, the influence of the chain of events that link us to the past must be documented, understood and accepted.

The Yiddish phrase, “*di goldene kayt*” — the golden chain — is a symbol in Jewish lore of the continuity of traditional beliefs and values. By involving successive generations, our work in the American Society for Yad Vashem is emblematic of the unbroken chain of Jewish determination and resilience.

**Yitzhak Arad:**

### “OUR NATIONAL LESSONS SHOULD BE OUR CHAIN OF REMEMBRANCE”



Thirty years have passed since we established the Society for Yad Vashem. The pushing force to establish the society was Eli Zborowski. The first members were mainly survivors of the Holocaust; many of them are no more with us. But I am happy to see here their children and grandchildren, who are continuing the work their fathers started. This proves more than anything else the success of the Society.

We, the generation of grandfathers, remember the days of liberation which we met with deep feelings of joy and sadness. Joy of survival and the defeat of Nazi Germany. The sadness emanated from the fact that only after liberation we began to understand the full extent of our tragedy, that we remained few and alone, most of our families murdered, our communities devastated and destroyed, surrounded by an indifference to our suffering.

For the overwhelming majority of the Jewish people, liberation came too late. They did not survive Auschwitz and *Treblinka*, neither the pits of *Ponary* and *Babi Yar*. But we the survivors have to be grateful, to the Red Army, to the British and American Armies, and to the other Allied forces, for crushing Nazi Germany and liberating us. Many Jews were among the Liberators. Approximately one and a half million Jews served in the ranks of the Allied armies, and 250,000 of them fell in battle.

Each and every survivor will never forget the date and circumstances of his liberation. I was one of the lucky who not only experienced liberation but also fought as a liberator. I fought against Nazi Germany for close to three years, until the last days of the war. I encountered my liberation step by step. My first feeling of liberty was when I succeeded in smuggling a short-barreled rifle, which I stole from a German store, into the ghetto. It was February 1942. Keeping the weapon provided me with a feeling of strength, that I am no longer at the mercy of the Nazis, I can fight back. I experienced the feeling of liberty for the second time. It was when I escaped from the ghetto and joined the partisans in the forest. Now I was a fighter. It was March 1943.

On July 6th, 1944, I entered my hometown *Sventiany*, from which I had escaped a year before. Ever since the rainy night when I escaped from the ghetto, I had been dreaming of this moment. And here I was. But I found no more Jews in my *shtetl*; only the stoves and chimneys of the burned wooden houses stood as monuments to a flourishing Jewish community. Outside the township I stood by the pit where the town's Jews were shot and buried, among them dozens of members of my own family. This is what I liberated.

The final stage of experiencing liberation was the night of December 24, 1945, when I illegally reached the beaches of the Land of Israel on a small boat, and joined the ranks of the fighters of our independence.

Tonight's dinner focuses on the chain of remembrance. A tree cannot grow without roots, so we Jews, in order to exist as a people, have to preserve our roots. Among our roots is Holocaust remembrance and its implications and lessons. One of the universal lessons gained from the Holocaust is our duty to fight against racism, narrow-minded nationalism, and anti-Semitism.

We Jews should not forget that Hitler and Nazi Germany aimed to murder all the Jewish people, to erase and eradicate their very existence. The current Iranian president uses the same language. Therefore an additional lesson which we must embrace is our obligation to preserve and strengthen our Jewish identity, and our links to our ancient historical homeland, the land of Israel. These universal and our national lessons should be our chain of remembrance.

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*At Chanukkah  
and always,  
wishing you  
deepest happiness  
and peace,  
and the richest  
of life's blessings.*

## The American & International Societies for Yad Vashem Annual Tribute Dinner

Jeremy Halpern:

**“WE ARE CHOOSING TO FOLLOW YOUR PATH.”**



I feel honored to represent a group of young men and women who have taken on the charge to continue what our parents and grandparents have started. The third generation has an incredible responsibility. The third generation must make a decision. Do we carry forward the heritage and traditions of the past? Or do we go out to make our own mark on the world?

The originators, in this case the survivors, our grandparents and great grandparents, saw the atrocities and felt the pain themselves. They were forced to learn the incredibly hard lessons that came with living through the Holocaust. They reacted and chose to move forward and reignite the light of the generations that came before them. They kept Torah and Yiddishkeit alive. They fought to create the State of Israel. They built communities with synagogues and Jewish day schools. They chose to honor all of those that perished by forging ahead.

They formed Yad Vashem and taught us the importance of remembrance and education.

Our parents, the second generation, lived through much of the rebirth their parents dreamed about. They saw the hard work and sacrifice firsthand and had a direct understanding of the history and faith their parents represented and exemplified.

We, the third generation, have grown up in an easier world. We have seen the fruits of our grandparents' labor without the majority of the sacrifice.

Therein lies our challenge.

Certainly we have studied the history and attended events that perpetuate our grandparents' experiences. But are we just being kept warm by the flames of our parents and grandparents? Do we have what it takes to build our own fire?

Even more importantly, will our children!?

G-d willing they will never have to be a firsthand witness to anything like the Holocaust. However, that is all the more reason that we must step up and cement the heritage being passed down through our lineage.

There are but only a few years to teach an entire generation. If we lose the next one, we lose it all.

Thank G-d as we stand here tonight, the task is well underway. Eli Zborowsky recognized this problem many years ago. Over 12 years ago Eli, Caroline Massel and many others set out to confront it. They created the Young Leadership Society of Yad Vashem, the YLA. Caroline has worked tirelessly to push the agenda and grow the organization.

So how have they done?

Just look at some of the most active members being honored tonight. Attend one of the annual YLA gala events to witness an amazing sight. Over 800 young Jewish men and women gather to eagerly support Yad Vashem!

We can proudly say that our heritage and faith are strong. That the fire is burning bright and the third and fourth generations have been taught how to make it grow.

Together, Caroline, the entire YLA and I are proud to stand in front of our parents and grandparents and say *Toda Rabah* and "*Hineni*." We are here. We are choosing to follow your path. We have learned the lessons, and have started to teach them ourselves.

On behalf of my fellow honorees, I would like to thank Eli Zborowski and the entirety of Yad Vashem and the American Society for Yad Vashem. I would also like to thank Caroline Massel for her incredible work and achievements.

Most importantly, we thank our parents and grandparents for showing us how to ensure that the memory and the lessons of the *Shoah* are never forgotten. We hope to work hand in hand with all of you for many years to come.

Mark Moskowitz:

**“WE ARE A LINK IN AN ENDLESS, UNBREAKABLE CHAIN.”**



In 1948 in Berlin, a man who lost, among other family members, his wife and daughter, met and fell in love with a woman who lost, among other family members, her parents and twin sister. They married and had a family. My siblings and I are that family. We are a link in an endless, unbreakable chain.

I would like to start by thanking you for this honor, for which I am deeply moved. I also want to congratulate my fellow honorees, and join in their dedication and commitment to Yad Vashem and its mission.

Tonight's theme, *sharsheret* (a chain), is reflected throughout this room. Collectively, we represent a chain of strength and a history of prevailing as a people. It has been my life's mission — and that of my family — to keep that chain strong and growing.

Attending the official *Yom Hashoah* ceremony at Yad Vashem, in Jerusalem, has become an integral part of my life. Every year, it is held a week before *Yom Hazikaron*, the Memorial Day for fallen soldiers in Israel, and I am there to observe this most solemn day of remembrance. Together, these memorials provide a deep and historic connection between Israel and Jews worldwide.

In sharp contrast, like many other interesting juxtapositions in Israel, *Yom Ha'atzmaut*, Israel's Independence Day, follows immediately after. This is the time when we rejoice at the miracle that is the State of Israel, and we celebrate the unbreakable chain that links our fate as a nation all the way back to Biblical times.

These three events represent *sharsheret* on many levels. They provide consecutive days of reflection for us as individuals... as a country... and as a people. The understanding and insight — the spiritual connection — begins at Yad Vashem. This is where we begin to appreciate the history and ethos of the State of Israel and, in a greater sense, the heart of the Jewish nation.

I am the son of survivors. My brothers and sister and I were always strongly aware of our parents' tragic history and their remarkable survival. Even though our beloved parents, Henry *ob"m* and Rose, suffered unbearable losses, they imbued in us an unlimited sense of hope and determination, and a commitment to helping others achieve the life they found with one another...

Yad Vashem has been both an inspiration to me and an unparalleled resource. It has provided me with context for the stories I heard from my parents while growing up. As in the case of so many Holocaust survivors, they were understandably reluctant to talk about all the terrible details with their children. But the bits and pieces of information I gleaned growing up truly came to light, in their horrific truth, at the Museum; like so many individual links coming together, connecting the past with the present.

This remarkable center [Yad Vashem] provides us all with a critical eye on history. It is a history the world must never forget and never deny! In order to move forward as a nation and as a people, it is essential for us to maintain an awareness of the past.

My father believed that a true understanding of what happened during the Holocaust could be achieved only in the context of being in Israel. And I share that belief, wholeheartedly. The fact that Yad Vashem is centered in Jerusalem not only brings us a better understanding of the roots of the State of Israel and its importance to the Jewish People, it gives us a destination to view our history... and to secure our future.

The profound effect that Yad Vashem has had on me defies description. Actively participating in supporting and maintaining this center of history and remembrance has become a true "center" of my life. And being here tonight as part of a chain that is, inherently, defined by strength and spirit — standing amongst my mother, my siblings and some of my 10 nieces and nephews, the newest links in our strong family chain — is one of the greatest honors of my life.

## GREETINGS FROM ISRAEL

Dear Friends,

It gives me great pleasure to send warm greetings on the occasion of the American and International Societies for Yad Vashem's Annual Tribute Dinner.

Following their liberation, and in the shadow of their horrific experiences, the survivors of the Holocaust set out to reclaim and reconstruct not only their own lives, but also to rebuild the Jewish people and help reestablish the Jewish state.

The survivors taught all humanity that even the most appalling personal and collective experiences can become a source of inspiration and resolve.

The support and dedication of the American and International Societies for Yad Vashem ensures that these experiences will forever be part of our history.

We appreciate your commitment to this important cause. I wish you a meaningful and memorable evening.

Sincerely

Benjamin Netanyahu



Greetings from His Excellency the President of Israel,  
Mr. Shimon Peres,  
to the Friends of Yad Vashem

Dear Yad Vashem Friends,

I want to express my warm appreciation for your long-standing support of Yad Vashem and its meaningful mission.

Given the present trend of Holocaust denial, Yad Vashem related activities serve to draw public attention to a dark era that should never be forgotten, and nurture its memory in perpetuity. Today, emphasis on Jewish moral and ethical values and respect for human life are of the essence.

In the true Jewish tradition of mutual responsibility, whether in Israel or the Diaspora, it is our collective responsibility to continue bearing the torch of remembrance and passing it on to the generations to come, in tribute to those who have perished and those who survived. I thank you for joining in this effort.

Shimon Peres



## GENETIC SCARS OF THE HOLOCAUST: CHILDREN SUFFER TOO

BY JEFFREY KLUGER, TIME

The Holocaust is a crime that never seems to quit. Even as the ranks of survivors grow smaller each year, the impact of that dark passage in history continues to be felt. And it's not just the victims who feel the effects; it's their children too.

Psychologists have long been intrigued by the emotional profile of so-called second-generation Holocaust survivors. Parents who lived through the camps were forever changed by the horrors they witnessed. In the 21st century, many — probably most — would be recognized as suffering from posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Back then, the absence of such a diagnosis also meant the absence of effective treatments. As a result, a generation of children grew up in homes in which one, and sometimes both, parents were battling untold emotional demons at the same time they were going about the difficult business of trying to raise happy kids. No surprise, they weren't always entirely successful.

Over the years, a large body of work has been devoted to studying PTSD symptoms in second-generation survivors, and it has found signs of the condition in their behavior and even their blood — with higher levels of the stress hormone cortisol, for example. The assumption — a perfectly reasonable one — was always that these symptoms were essentially learned. Grow

up with parents afflicted with the mood swings, irritability, jumpiness and hypervigilance typical of PTSD and you're likely to wind up stressed and high-strung yourself.

Now a new paper adds another dimension to the science, suggesting that it's not just a second generation's emotional profile that can be affected by a parent's trauma; it may be their genes too. The study, published in the journal *Biological Psychiatry*, was conducted by a team led by neurobiologist Isabelle Mansuy of the University of Zurich. What she and her colleagues set out to explore went deeper than genetics in general, focusing instead on epigenetics — how genes change as a result of environmental factors in ways that can be passed on to the next generation.

The Holocaust is hardly the only life crisis that can shape behavior and genes. Survivors of Afghanistan, Iraq, or Darfur — or even those who grew up in unstable or abusive homes — can exhibit similar changes. But Holocaust survivors remain one of the best study groups available because their trauma was so great, their population is so well known, and so many of them have gone on to produce children, grandchildren, and even great-grandchildren. Humans, alas, may never run out of ways to behave savagely toward one another. But the better we can understand the price paid by the victims — and the babies of the victims — the better we may be able to treat their wounds.

## HOUSE RESOLUTION AIMS TO HELP HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS

The House of Representatives has introduced a resolution aimed at helping Holocaust survivors in the United States in need of in-home care.

U.S. Reps. Debbie Wasserman Schultz (D-Fla.) and Frank Wolf (R-Va.) introduced a resolution Sept. 29 to raise awareness of the social service needs of Holocaust survivors — specifically the need for them to be able to age in place.

The resolution, which was referred to the House Education and Labor Committee, expresses congressional support for efforts that help Holocaust survivors in America continue to live at home and applauds nonprofit organizations such as The Jewish Federations of North America for their work honoring and assisting Holocaust survivors.

It also urges the Obama administration and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to provide Holocaust survivors with needed social services through existing programs, and to develop and implement programs that ensure Holocaust survivors are able to age

in place in their communities and avoid institutionalization during their remaining years.

Of the approximately 127,000 Holocaust survivors living in the United States, more than three-quarters are older than 75 — a majority are in their 80s and 90s. Some two-thirds of the survivors in America are living alone, and many lack the financial resources for basic necessities such as proper housing and health care.

Most Holocaust survivors fall beneath the federal poverty threshold that would place them at risk of institutionalization. Institutionalized settings are especially difficult for Holocaust survivors, research has shown, because such environments reintroduce the sights, sounds, and routines reminiscent of their Holocaust experiences.

Wasserman Schultz said the United States has "a moral obligation to acknowledge the plight and uphold the dignity of Holocaust survivors to ensure their well-being in their remaining years."

## HOLOCAUST MUSIC CAPTURES CULTURE OF CAMPS

An ongoing project seeks to preserve and perform music written by victims of the Holocaust and other World War II prisoners.

A handful of the songs made their world premiere in Atlanta during "Testaments of the Heart," a program to help raise money to collect and preserve more music produced by captives of the Axis powers.

Some songs are slow, emotional, almost weepy symphonies. Others are driving and angry pub songs. A few are sarcastic jazz numbers.

Already thousands of the songs have been collected by Italian pianist and conductor Francesco Lotoro in a 20-year effort to ensure the music is preserved.



Francesco Lotoro collected thousands of songs. He plans to house the collection in Atlanta's Emory University once he raises the money to transfer it to the university's library.

## RUSSIA REFUSES TO TURN OVER JEWISH LIBRARY TO U.S.

Russia has rejected a United States court ruling to turn over a Jewish library to a Hasidic group in New York.

A U.S. judge last week ruled against the Russian government for its refusal to return thousands of manuscripts that once belonged to a Chabad-Lubavitch rabbi.

At issue are 12,000 religious books and manuscripts seized during the Bolshevik revolution and the Russian Civil War and 25,000 pages of handwritten teachings and other writings of religious leaders



Russian President Dmitry Medvedev, Russia's chief rabbi Berel Lazar, and president of Jewish communities of Russia Alexander Boroda, from left, visit Jewish library in July 2010.

seized by the Red Army in Nazi Germany as war booty.

Russia's Foreign Ministry said late Wednesday that the ruling is a rude violation of international law.

It said the library was nationalized because its owner, Rabbi Joseph Isaac

Schneersohn, had no heirs. Schneersohn was forced to leave Russia in 1927.

The ministry said the library is available for scientific study and worship.

Chabad-Lubavitch said it feared some manuscripts were headed to the black market.

Chabad sued Russia in 2004 after other efforts had failed in recovering its original texts.

The texts had been transported from Poland to Moscow by the Red Army at the end of World War II as "trophy documents" and "war booty" to the Russian State Military Archive.

In June, the Russian government said it would no longer participate in the lawsuit, telling a Washington district court that it had "no authority to enter orders with respect to the property owned by the Russian Federation and in its possession."

It added that the United States could deal with the dispute through diplomatic channels and Chabad should file suit in a Russian court.

"Russia is showing its contempt and disdain for international law, the American judicial system, and basic principles of fairness and justice," Nathan Lewin, a lawyer for Chabad, said in a statement.

The head of Lubavitch in Russia, Rabbi Berel Lazar, has said he favors a diplomatic solution to securing the return of the collections. "This is probably more efficient to convince the Russians," he said.

## IRANIAN HOLOCAUST-DENYING WEB SITE

An Iranian web site that uses cartoons to deny the Holocaust was launched by a nongovernmental cultural organization in the country.

The HoloCartoon site offers a parallel version of historical events in Jewish history using cartoons. The material reportedly is based on a cartoon book on the Holocaust published in Iran in 2008.

The web site, according to the Anti-Defamation League news release, is rife with anti-Semitic imagery, Jewish conspiracy theories, Holocaust denial and factual inaccuracies.

"HoloCartoon is a pernicious Web site replete with vicious anti-Semitism and caricatures of Jews fabricating the Holocaust story to advance their goals, and depictions of Jews as murderers and manipulative money worshippers," said Abraham

Foxman, ADL's national director and a Holocaust survivor. "Its pseudo-history makes a mockery of the Holocaust, and the site is little more than a virtual cesspool of anti-Semitism."

The book, which can be seen on the web site by clicking on a swastika icon to turn its pages, tells readers that Jews created the idea of the Holocaust and fabricated the existence of the gas chambers in order to receive reparations.

The site has English, Arabic and Farsi versions.

The ADL called on the United States to publicly denounce the Iranian regime's blatant anti-Semitism. Iranian authorities would have had to approve the creation of the web site but not its content, according to the Associated Press.

## HUNGARY, RAIL FIRMS SUED IN U.S. OVER HOLOCAUST ROLE

Hungarian survivors of the Holocaust and families of the victims sued the Republic of Hungary and its two rail companies in U.S. court, accusing them of collaborating with the Nazis to exterminate Jews during World War II.

The lawsuit accused the Hungarian government and rail companies of confiscating property of Jews and transporting them to ghettos and concentration camps where hundreds of thousands perished in Nazi-occupied Poland and Ukraine.

"The Jewish victims of the Hungarian Holocaust seek only what is due them — compensation and restitution for the atrocities they suffered at the hands of the defendants," the lawsuit said.

The lawsuit, filed in U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia, seeks class-action status and unspecified damages. It says at least 300 survivors have been identified as possible members of the class, but there could be more than 5,000.

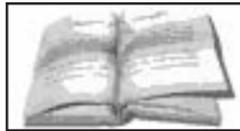
A lawyer for the individuals suing, Chuck Fax, said the claims likely total tens of millions of dollars and possibly more.

A Hungarian Embassy spokesman in Washington had no immediate comment on the lawsuit.

The case was brought under two federal statutes, one that provides exceptions to the Foreign Sovereign Immunities Act which allow individuals to sue foreign governments that typically have immunity from lawsuits.

The other statute permits non-U.S. citizens to bring claims against private foreign entities in American courts. The lawsuit targets the government, the Hungarian national railway and its cargo rail company which was privatized in 2008.

Fax said that the lawsuit was still timely because Hungary has yet to compensate the survivors or their families or return the assets to them.



# BOOK REVIEWS

## THE EMERGENCE OF HOLOCAUST EDUCATION IN AMERICAN SCHOOLS

The Emergence of Holocaust Education in American Schools.

By Thomas D. Fallace. Palgrave Macmillan: NY, 2008. 231 pp. \$80 hardcover.

REVIEWED BY DR. DIANE CYPKIN

It's natural to think that the larger the book, the more important information it has to offer the reader. But, that's not necessarily so . . . For example, *The Emergence of Holocaust Education* by Thomas D. Fallace is a slim volume — 231 pages — yet it is chock-full of valuable material meticulously gleaned by way of conscientious research, all of it absorbing and often quite thought-provoking.

Thus, in Fallace's work — just as the title promises — we read the history of exactly how Holocaust education came on the American scene. We see how, immediately after the war, there was a silence as regards the topic, very like the silence of the victims themselves. Interestingly, we note how the silence was broken in the 1960s as a result of the media's coverage of the Adolf Eichmann trial and Israel's subsequent Six-Day War, a war which frightened many into thinking that another Holocaust was "imminent." Then, in the

1970s we learn of the substantive affect prize-winning writer and Professor Elie Wiesel had on furthering interest in the Holocaust. Finally, we realize the tremendous and determined impact the April 1978 NBC miniseries *Holocaust* had. Indeed, this miniseries stunningly captured the attention of millions of Americans . . . and squarely focused this attention on the Holocaust.

Not surprisingly, Fallace goes on to tell us, concomitant with the above, study of the Holocaust grew and with it curricula on how to teach it . . . along with problems, problems many could never have imagined. Why?

"Genocide consciousness crossed [paths] with another ideological current called the 'affective revolution.'" In the 1960s and 1970s this, in pedagogical terms, meant that teachers were exceptionally concerned with making all they taught "relevant" to the lives of the students in their

classrooms. This, more specific to our discussion, meant that simply transmitting the facts of the Holocaust was not enough. It

meant that Holocaust curricula would frequently include comparisons to other genocides. It meant that Holocaust curricula would often use the subject to engage students in a greater study of morality and ethics.

In short, complaints about the curricula came fast and furiously. For example, some felt strongly that the Holocaust was "unique" and not to be compared to any other genocide in any way. To these individuals comparison was sacrilegious.

In the meanwhile, others were upset that more genocides weren't included. And, along the same lines, still others felt that the Nazis were being unfairly presented as "the only ones who committed crimes against humanity and that the Jews were the only ones who suffered to any great extent." Then, too, there was the whole ques-

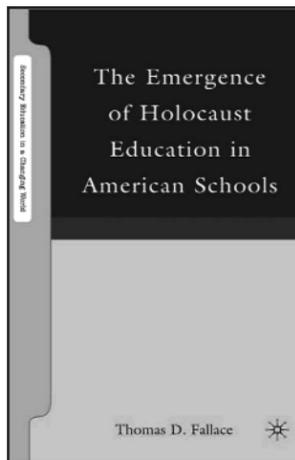
tion of whether history should be used to teach morality. Could it? Should it?

Furthermore, there was the question of just who was doing the teaching. Did they know the subject matter well enough? Did they have their own agenda? Did this agenda affect the teaching? Just what were students learning?

At first glance, the teaching of the Holocaust seems a simple matter. But, there is much, much more to it. And this, in fact, makes *The Emergence of Holocaust Education in American Schools* a book that should most especially be read by students of the Holocaust, teachers of the Holocaust, and teachers generally. For many issues Fallace focuses on have to do with the teaching of history generally.

By the way, particularly interesting in all this is the fact that Holocaust education in American public schools was not initiated by any Jewish organization. It was a "grassroots movement" initiated by teachers themselves. Moreover, those dedicated to the teaching of the subject have included both Jews and non-Jews.

*Dr. Diane Cypkin is a Professor of Media, Communication, and Visual Arts at Pace University.*



## A HATRED THAT RESISTS EXORCISM

REVIEWED BY EDWARD ROTHSTEIN, THE NEW YORK TIMES

Is there anything left to be said about anti-Semitism? By now surely the outline is clear: how hatred of Jews grew out of early Christianity's attempts to supplant Judaism; how the demonization of Jews in the Middle Ages turned violent; how the hatred was given its name by a 19th-century German journalist; and how it reached cataclysmic fulfillment in the Holocaust.

There are other landmarks: the expulsion of the Jews from England, Spain and Portugal; intermittent massacres in Muslim lands; the construction of European ghettos; the pogroms of Russia and Eastern Europe; the Dreyfus Affair; the Nazification of Europe; Stalin's purges and show trials.

And then, of course, there are the triumphs that act as a kind of remonstrance: the Enlightenment success of Jews in secular European societies, the myriad opportunities in the United States, the birth of modern Hebrew, and, after a half-century of settlement, land purchases, and institution building, the creation of Israel, whose founding principles incorporated both democratic and Judaic ideals.

Why then lately have new tomes been published devoted to the hatred of Jews? *A Lethal Obsession: Anti-Semitism from Antiquity to the Global Jihad* (Random House) weighs in at about 1,200 pages, a compendium of a career's research by Robert S. Wistrich, professor of modern Jewish history at Hebrew University in Israel. And more than 800 pages are devoted just to British anti-Semitic history in *Trials of the Diaspora* (Oxford) by Anthony Julius, a learned British lawyer whose

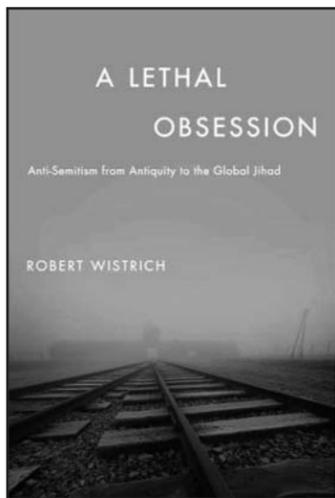
clients included Diana, Princess of Wales, and whose book on T.S. Eliot's anti-Semitism was widely praised for its supple understanding.

Surely this attention is a bit overwrought? Aren't we in an age that must be "post" all such sentiments — post-modern, post-Auschwitz, and post-anti-Semitic? Haven't many anti-Semitic doctrines (or their consequences) been largely overturned? How many people today would advocate ghettos or extermination? Who still believes that Jews bake Christian children's blood into matzo? Many countries have forbidden hate speech; hasn't that enforced a decorous social tact? And while it is difficult to ignore the vulgar hatreds expressed by Muslim protestors or in the newspapers of the Arab world or even among Westerners, aren't those just frustrated expressions of justifiable political grievances?

Besides, anti-Semitism, we now understand, is a form of racism. Like all forms of group hatred, it is subject to reform and to the modern cure of sensitivity training. We learn about such hatreds in order to exorcise them. It seems every museum exhibition, textbook and children's story about racism provides a similar moral prescription: tolerance.

So isn't there something a little tasteless about bringing up anti-Semitism all the time, let alone drumming its theme page after page? Sure, racism may still flourish, but given the modern success of Jews, hasn't this particular form of it become an anomaly? Or worse, hasn't the term become a manipulative attempt to deflect judgment? As is often pointed out, criticism

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## IN THE ERA OF THE HOLOCAUST, 29 WHO MADE A DIFFERENCE

Diplomat Heroes of the Holocaust.

By Dr. Mordecai Paldiel. Introduction by Ambassador Richard Holbrooke. Preface by Rabbi Arthur Schneier. KTAV, 2006. 250 pp. \$29.50 hardcover.

REVIEWED BY PETER STEINFELS

The book is called *Diplomat Heroes of the Holocaust*, and perhaps the most telling thing about it is that it is very slim.

Richard C. Holbrooke, former ambassador to the United Nations, made that point during a ceremony, held at Park East Synagogue on Manhattan's East Side, to mark the book's publication.

During the years of Nazi persecution and then mass murder of Jews, Mr. Holbrooke noted, Europe's embassies and consulates were filled with thousands of officials, but very few of them proved willing to toss aside protocol and instructions to save the lives of people threatened with death in the camps.

*Diplomat Heroes of the Holocaust* is a documentary record of 29 exceptions. It was written by Mordecai Paldiel, director of the department at Yad Vashem that designates non-Jewish rescuers of Jews with the honorific title Righteous Among the Nations.

Stationed in cities either already or about to be under the control of the Third Reich, this small minority of determined and ingenious officials issued passports giving Jewish refugees new citizenship status, sometimes to unlikely places, like El Salvador.

They issued exit and entry visas and letters of protection so that Jews could pass

to safer territories. They accepted fake documents or even helped people procure them. They made up phony stamps and created new documents to impress local officials and border guards. They bluffed and they threatened and, in many cases, personally sheltered or hid Jews or accompanied them to border crossings.

Defying their own governments' policies against assisting refugees, and especially Jewish refugees, was often as necessary as defying German power. Feng Shan Ho, for example, China's consul general in Vienna after Austria be-

came part of the Nazi *Reich*, earned a reprimand and then loss of his post for freely issuing visas to Shanghai. Approximately 18,000 Austrian Jews actually escaped to China, while others used their visas to reach safety elsewhere.

Even stranger was the success of two diplomats in Lithuania, Jan Zwartendijk, a businessman serving as honorary Dutch consul general in Kaunas, and Chiune Sugihara, a consul general (and spy) for Japan

there. The two men issued thousands of documents providing for the entry of Jews into the Dutch-controlled Caribbean island of Curaçao and for passage through the Soviet Union and Japan to get there. Needless to say, the beneficiaries of this scheme neither had heard of Curaçao nor ended up there. They did, however, escape death in Eastern Europe.

The story of Raoul Wallenberg is now legendary. The charismatic young envoy was sent from Sweden (with the backing of President Franklin D. Roosevelt) to pro-

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## OLD PHOTOS REVEAL TALE OF JAPAN AND JEWS OF WWII

BY JAY ALABASTER,  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The young man's monochrome portrait is at least 70 years old, the whites all faded to yellow, but it is still clear he had style. His hair is slicked down, eye arched, suit perfect with matching tie and handkerchief.

He also had the good fortune to escape Europe in the early days of World War II. The photo, a gift to the man who helped him escape, is one of seven recently discovered snapshots that cast light on a little-known subplot of the war — even as Germany sought to seal Jewish Europeans in, a small army of tourism officials from its main ally, Japan, helped shepherd thousands away to safety.

"My best regards to my friend Tatsuo Osako," is scrawled in French on the back of the picture, which is signed "I. Segaloff" and dated March 4, 1941. His fate is unknown.

An effort is under way to find the people in these portraits or their descendants, all of whom are assumed to be Jewish. Personal photos of such refugees, who often fled with few possessions, are rare.

The photos were found in an old diary owned by Osako, who was a young employee of the Japan Tourist Bureau at the time, and died in 2003. Akira Kitade, who worked under Osako and is researching a book about him, has contacted Israeli officials for help and visited the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C.

The museum said he gave it about 30 photographs that he is trying to identify, and received a list of over 2,000 Jews who received travel papers that enabled them to reach Japan.

Nissim Ben Shitrit, the Israeli ambassador to Japan, says he has passed on the information to Yad Vashem in Jerusalem, which tracks and honors victims of the Holocaust, and is optimistic some of the individuals can be tracked down.

"I thought that we discovered almost everything about the horror of the Holocaust," Shitrit said. "And yet there is more to discover."

The photos shed further light on the story of Chiune Sugihara, a Japanese diplomat stationed in Lithuania who granted transit visas to several thousand Jews in the early days of the war. In doing so, he defied strict stipulations from Tokyo that such recipients have proper funds and a clear final destination after Japan.

He was one of a handful of diplomats such as Sweden's Raoul Wallenberg and Hiram Bingham IV of the U.S. who used their bureaucratic machinery, often without their government's knowledge, to issue the paperwork that would get Jews to safety.

Dubbed the "Japanese Schindler," Sugihara was honored in 1985 by Yad Vashem as one of the Righteous Among the Nations, a high honor reserved for non-Jews who saved Jews at their own personal risk from the Holocaust, Hitler's destruction of 6 million Jews.

A short movie about him, "Visas and Virtue," won an Academy Award in 1997.

Museums in his home town and in Lithuania are dedicated to his memory.

In league with Jan Zwartendijk, a Dutch consul in Lithuania, Sugihara worked non-stop on visas for Jews in the months until Russia annexed Lithuania in August 1940



Tatsuo Osako of the Japan Tourist Bureau.

and he was forced to leave the country. He issued thousands of documents and continued to slip blank visas out of the window of his train as it pulled away, according to accounts of his departure.

Visas issued by Sugihara, who died in 1986 at the age of 86, are estimated to have given around 6,000 Jewish refugees a lifeline out of Europe, though records are incomplete. These transit visas enabled them to travel through Russia on the

Trans-Siberian railroad, a harrowing journey over thousands of miles that could take weeks, into Japanese-controlled territory in Manchuria.

While the diplomat pumped out his visas independently, a much more organized and lesser-known effort was under way for Jewish refugees once they reached Japanese territory — which is where Osako enters the saga.

In 1940, the Japan Tourist Bureau, the country's main tourist agency, agreed to help Jews in the U.S. distribute aid money to refugees fleeing Europe. This would allow them to fulfill immigration requirements and help them function once inside Japan.

The decision was made despite Tokyo's close ties to Germany; according to JTB records the company had the permission of officials in the Foreign Ministry and other agencies.

The bureau assigned workers to help refugees at various stages of their journey, and Osako, in his second year of employment, worked as an escort and clerk on ships that took them across the Sea of Japan to the island nation.

Most would then go on to the port cities of Kobe and Yokohama and try to arrange passage onward.

"Sugihara has been praised around the world and is held in very high esteem, but Mr. Sugihara's great actions were supported by various individuals working unseen, in his shadow, and I'd like Mr. Osako's experiences to be known," said

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## THE HOLOCAUST AND THE LOST CARIBBEAN PARADISE

BY WILLIAM R. PERL, IMMIGRATION DAILY

It is widely believed that the Nazi "Final Solution" would have claimed fewer victims if the free world had shaken off its apathy and helped the Jews to escape. This theory, that the world stood passively by as the genocide was being committed, is now being challenged. Evidence has been produced that arrives at the shattering conclusion that the Western powers were more than passive, apathetic bystanders.

Contrary to popular belief, the problem for Jews during the Holocaust was not how to get out, but where to go. The key figures in most governments throughout the world, instead of liberalizing their immigration laws, closed their borders to the hunted Jews, or at most admitted token numbers only. The Nazis set the house aflame, and the free world barred the doors.

Some of the measures taken by the free world that contributed to the deaths of tens of thousands remain little known. Foremost among these was the thwarting by the United States Department of State of rescue plans that would have brought otherwise doomed refugees to the Caribbean, specifically to the sparsely inhabited U.S. Virgin Islands as well as the Republic of Haiti.

The U.S. Virgin Islands had been acquired by the United States from Denmark in 1917 for \$25 million. Most people are aware of only three islands: St. Thomas, St. Croix, and St. John. The group, however, consists of 68 islands of diverse sizes. Although most are tiny, they comprise 86,000 acres. At the time when their inhabitants invited refugees from Nazi barbarism, the islands had a population of approximately 25,000, most of whom were very poor and uneducated.

Many of the islands are quite mountainous, dotted with picturesque little ports and

cozy bays. The climate is ideal in the spring, fall, and winter, and quite comfortable in the summer as the trade winds provide a cooling breeze. Temperatures vary only slightly from the warmest to the coolest months. There is a rich diversity of native plant and animal life.

### RESOLVED: A HAVEN FOR REFUGEES

As early as November 18, 1938, the Legislature of the Virgin Islands adopted the following resolution:

*WHEREAS, world conditions have created large refugee groups, and*

*WHEREAS, such groups eventually will migrate to places of safety, and*

*WHEREAS, the Virgin Islands of the United States being a place of safety can offer surcease from misfortune.*

*NOW THEREFORE, be it resolved by the Legislative Assembly of the Virgin Islands of the United States in session assembled that it be made known to Refugee peoples of the world that when and if existing barriers are removed that they shall find surcease from misfortune in the Virgin Islands of the United States.*

*AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this Resolution be forwarded to the President of the United States, the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Labor, the Secretary of the interior, and members of the Press.*

The State Department immediately started action to obstruct the islanders' humanitarian efforts and to close this possible avenue of escape. On December 15, 1939, the Secretary of State sent a letter to all authorities possibly concerned, calling this resolution "incompatible with existing law."

The Department of the Interior and the Labor Department began a probe of the legal issues. The Labor Department announced on February 3, 1940, that the in-

vasion was "consistent with existing law and unobjectionable from the standpoint of policy."

It was November 6, 1940, almost two years after the announcement of the invitation, when the Solicitor of the Interior Department published his 22-page report. The report concluded that "the proclamation in question is, in all respects, legally unassailable." The Attorney General, however, who on October 16, 1939, was asked by the Secretary of the Interior for his evaluation of the legalities, refused on March 29, 1940, to study the issue "for the reason that the Secretary of State had not invited such an opinion."

### "DELAY AND DELAY"

During all that time, people who could have been rescued and living in a Caribbean paradise remained in the hell of Nazi Europe until they fell victim to the death camps. The effectiveness of this "delay and delay" policy was praised by the Assistant Secretary of State, Breckinridge Long. In a memo dated June 26, 1940, he wrote: "We can delay and effectively stop for a temporary period of indefinite length the number of immigrants into the United States. We could do this by simply advising our consuls to put every obstacle in the way and to resort to various administrative advices which would postpone and postpone the granting of the visas."

This policy was criticized by the General Counsel of the U.S. Treasury, Randolph Paul, as "murder by delay." He charged high officials in the State Department with forming "an American underground movement . . . to let the Jews be killed."

This strategy was in sharp contrast with the public statements of concern made by State Department officials. On October 17, 1939, at a meeting in the White House, speaking before the Intergovernmental

Committee on Political Refugees, Secretary of State Cordell Hull declared: "We do know that at this period there are an increasing number of people who are draining the cup of bitterness and of disappointment to its very dregs. We do know that they are on a level below that of the common animal, which is able to find something to subsist, to find some place where it can relax and sleep."

Lawrence H. Cramer, Governor of the Virgin Islands, surprised and frustrated by the turmoil created in Washington by his legislature's rescue attempt, finally signed on November 2, 1940, two years after the resolution had been adopted, a decree according to which 2,000 families were to be admitted initially. To appease State Department critics, certain requirements were imposed, but tens of thousands qualified.

The invitation's main purpose was to provide a haven for those who had applied for immigration to the United States and had obtained a quota number for their registration and eventual processing when their number came up. Waiting times were usually long, sometimes three years or more. The Nazis, of course, didn't abstain from arrests and deportations just because the victims had quota numbers, and thousands with such numbers perished. The islands were thus to have provided a refuge during the dangerous waiting period. As a prerequisite to entry, the refugees were not to become public charges—but that would have been no obstacle since many had relatives in the U.S. who were willing to provide such an affidavit, as were many major Jewish welfare organizations.

### A NEW WEAPON

Notwithstanding the thousand miles of ocean separating the U.S. mainland from the Virgin Islands, the State Department

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# SURVIVORS' CORNER

## MY FAITH: YOM KIPPUR 1945, IN A CAMP FOR HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS

BY STANLEY ABRAMOVITCH, CNN

In October 1945, I spent Yom Kippur in the displaced persons camp in *Landsberg* in Bavaria, Germany, as the representative of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC), working with displaced persons.

The liberated Jews who had been imprisoned in the nearby *Dachau* concentration camp, as well as those who had been forced to work in ammunition and other factories in Bavaria, were gathered into *Landsberg* and nearby *Feldafing* camps. Many Jews from other concentration camps had been force-marched to this part of Germany, where the U.S. Army liberated them.

In *Landsberg* there was a spacious German Army barracks confiscated by the U.S. Army, in which some of the liberated Jews were housed. Basic food and medical care were provided by the Army, supplemented by assistance from JDC.

The Jews elected a committee which assumed responsibility for the internal administration of the camp. Synagogues were organized for the high holidays by different groups, often on the basis of the origin of the participants.

I attended morning services in the synagogue for Polish Jews. The older generation was almost not there. They were the

first victims, since they lacked the physical strength to withstand the horrors of the camps. Few children survived. They, too, succumbed quickly. The survivors prayed, remembered, wept and found a little comfort in those tears.

After morning prayers, I decided to visit other synagogues and spend



Stanley Abramovitch (seated, second from right) with American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee staff at a German displaced persons camp circa 1945.

some time with other groups. I left the synagogue and walked across the half-empty streets. There were many people who remained in the street and refused to attend services. They were angry at G-d.

Among them were formerly religious Jews who could not accept the apparent indifference of G-d to the suffering, the torture, and the tragedy they had both wit-

nessed and experienced in their homes and in the camps.

They could not reconcile their former beliefs and convictions of an All-Merciful, Almighty Divine Being, with the catastrophe that had struck their communities. They would not pray. When they heard the recitation of the *Kaddish*, the special prayer of mourners expressing praise of the Lord, they reacted angrily that G-d did not deserve the *Kaddish*.

They were broken in spirit. They could not reconcile recent events to which they were witnesses with the contents of the Hebrew prayers.

These Jews roamed the streets. They wanted to express their anger, to show G-d that they defied Him, as he seemed to have abandoned them.

Some ate their food on the fast day publicly in the streets, as a gesture of defiance – of revolt.

In one of the streets, I saw a large group of people standing in a circle. I approached nearer to find out what was going on.

In the middle of the circle stood a seven-year-old girl, embarrassed, perplexed. She

could not understand why all these people stood around her.

She, of course, could not know that they were surprised to find a Jewish child. So they stood, silently, and just looked at this miracle of a Jewish child in their midst. They could not tear themselves away from this one child who said nothing and to whom nothing was said. They just stood and gaped.

A special prayer is normally recited on *Yom Kippur* for the departed members of one's family. It's called *Yizkor*, the memorial prayer.

As those people looked at the little girl, they remembered their own children, or their younger brothers and sisters, the nephews and nieces who at one time were their pride and joy, and who were no more. Each one of them looked and remembered, recalled the beloved children who were cruelly exterminated.

As they remembered, they recited without any words the *Yizkor* for all those who once were part of their lives and now were gone forever. This was a silent, most moving *Yizkor*, without words, without prayer books, recited in that street in *Landsberg*, by a group of Jewish survivors, watching a bewildered little Jewish girl.

It was the most moving, most eloquent, most heartfelt, most silent *Yizkor* I have ever heard.

## NEW ONLINE RESOURCE DEBUTS FOR NAZI-ERA LOOTED ART

The Nazis stripped hundreds of thousands of artworks from Jews during World War II in one of the biggest cultural raids in history, often photographing their spoils and meticulously cataloguing them on typewritten index cards.

Holocaust survivors and their relatives, as well as art collectors and museums, can go online at [www.errproject.org/jeudepaume](http://www.errproject.org/jeudepaume) to search a free historical database of more than 20,000 art objects stolen in German-occupied France and Belgium from 1940 to 1944, including paintings by Claude Monet and Marc Chagall.



In this April 24, 1945, photo released by the U.S. National Archives, an American soldier stands among German loot stored in a church at *Elligen*, Germany.

The database is a joint project of the New York-based Conference of Jewish Material Claims Against Germany and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C.

The database is unusual because it has been built around Nazi-era records that were digitized and rendered searchable, showing what was seized and from whom, along with data on restitution or repatria-

tion and photographs taken of the seized objects, the groups told The Associated Press.

The Claims Conference, which helps Holocaust survivors and their relatives to reclaim property, said it had used the database to estimate that nearly half of the objects may never have been returned to their rightful owners or their descendants or their country of origin.

"Most people think or thought that most of these items were repatriated or restituted," said Wesley A. Fisher, director of research at the Claims Conference. "It isn't true. Over half of them were never repatriated. That in itself is rather interesting historically."

Marc Masurovsky, the project's director at the museum, said the database was designed to evolve as new information is gathered. "I hope that the families do consult it and tell us what is right and what is wrong with it," he added.

The database combines records from the U.S. National Archives in College Park, Md.; the German *Bundesarchiv*, the federal archive in *Koblenz*; and repatriation and restitution records held by the French government.

By giving a new view of looted art, the database could raise questions about the possibly tainted history of works of art in some of the world's most important museum collections, experts said.

"I always tell people we have no idea how much is out there because nobody has ever bothered to take a complete inventory," said Willi Korte, one of the most

prominent independent provenance researchers of looted Nazi art. "I think all of those that say there's not much left to do certainly should think twice."

Korte has been at the forefront of the worldwide search for art looted by the Nazis, an undertaking that has accelerated over the past two decades, spurring court battles and pitting the descendants of Jewish families who were forced to give up their possession against museums and private collectors.

Among the works listed in the database is a painting by the Danish artist Philips Wouwerman, which had belonged to the Rothschild family and was discovered in the secret Zurich vault of *Reich* art dealer Bruno Lohse in 2007.

Korte, who was asked to develop an inventory of the works in the Lohse vault, said the Wouwerman painting "was clearly plundered."

No one knows exactly how many objects the Nazis looted and how many may still be missing.

The Claims Conference says about 650,000 art objects were taken, and thousands of items are still lost.

But the true number may never be known because of lack of documentation, the passage of time and the absence of a central arbitration body.

Some museum organizations have argued in recent years that most looted art has been identified as researchers focus on the provenance of art objects.

The database includes only a slice of the records generated by the *Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg*, an undertaking of Third *Reich* ideologue Alfred Rosenberg to seize archives, books, art, Judaica, home

furnishings, and other objects from Jewish families, bookstores, and collections. Records of the looting were disbursed to nearly a dozen countries after the war.



In this May 13, 1945, photo released by the U.S. National Archives, U.S. Army Sgt. Harold Maus of Scranton, Pa., looks over an engraving by German artist Albrecht Durer, which was found among other art treasures at a salt mine in *Merkers*, Germany.

The database is focused on ERR spoils shipped to a prewar museum near the Louvre, where they were often catalogued and sold back to the market, destroyed or integrated into the lavish private collections of top Nazi officials — including the military chief Hermann Goering.

Julius Berman, the chairman of the Claims Conference, said organizing Nazi art-looting records was a key step to righting an injustice.

"It is now the responsibility of museums, art dealers, and auction houses to check their holdings against these records to determine whether they might be in possession of art stolen from Holocaust victims," he said.

# DID STALIN CONDONE THE HOLOCAUST?

BY MICHAEL BURLEIGH, MAIL ONLINE

When a platoon of conquering German SS soldiers entered a remote village in Russia in 1941, their leader, Alois Knäbel, was told by an informer that the local cobbler was Jewish.

Knäbel had the man, his wife and three-year-old daughter brought to him and set the adults to work scrubbing his quarters. When they had finished, he led them outside and, while holding the child's hand, he shot them dead.

The toddler started screaming, and Knäbel picked her up, stroked her hair and muttered soothing words to her. Then, as he cradled her to his chest with one hand, he used the other to shoot her in the neck.

His fellow SS troopers were most impressed.

"Look how finely Knäbel did that," said one admiringly, "how he first calmed down the child and then killed her."

This single, small, sad incident demonstrates why — while I do not think any war has ever been good — I believe fervently that World War II was a necessary one.

The Nazis and their partners in crime tried fundamentally to alter the moral understanding of humanity — and with the likes of Alois Knäbel they succeeded. They did this by locating their murderous depredations within a warped moral framework that defined their violence as purifying, necessary, and righteous.

They thought they were a superior breed on a historic mission to eliminate the Jewish race, whose very existence they believed posed a threat. They were doing so, they claimed, on behalf of future generations of Germans.

In reality, they were participants in what Churchill called "the greatest and most horrible single crime ever committed in the whole history of the world." The war against the Nazis was, as the title of my new book says, very much a "moral combat."

What still chills me to the marrow is the realization that barbarism soon became an industrial process — in which the killers took a perverted craftsman's pride.

An SS officer named Friedrich Jeckeln proudly developed a new technique of packing down layers of victims to make the best use of trench space.

The killing squads started by lining up their victims in front of the graves in the manner of firing squads, but too often this required officers to deliver the coup de grace with their pistols.

They tried shooting standing victims from behind at close range, but gore flew back into their faces.

After technical discussions — carried on in earshot of the next victims in line — it was deemed easier to shoot people kneeling or lying down within the graves, which made for an easier clean-up.

In major operations — such as the slaughter of 33,771 Jews at *Babi Yar* in the Ukraine, which took days to accomplish — mobile field kitchens arrived with warm food and special rations of schnapps. Some of the units were so drunk they were sick while performing executions.

German Army spectators were welcome — since this further contributed to the perpetrators' sense of normality — but one SS officer who brought his pregnant bride along was considered to have crossed the line. That's how warped their sense of morality was. At least 2.9 million Jews were killed by men standing a few feet away from them. The genocidal regime tapped into, and empowered, the brutal streak of these cowards.

One such creature was the very drunk member of the Gestapo seen in a bar with a beer mat attached to his tunic, on which he had scrawled "1,000" in red ink. "I'm celebrating the thousandth shot in the neck," he slurred. He added that he'd shoot his own father if he was ordered to.

But it became increasingly clear to those in charge that new methods would have to be found before the larger project of killing all European Jews could be realized.

The scene was set for the next stage of industrialized mass murder — extermination camps.

In the autumn of 1941, trials began with carbon monoxide gas.

A vehicle resembling a furniture-removal truck was developed, into whose airtight interior exhaust gases could be fed.

But the technical breakthrough came when the commandant at Auschwitz experimented on Russian PoWs with the pesticide gas Zyklon B.

The Holocaust was underway. From now on, the fate of millions of men, women and children belched and burned from tall chimneys.

But to what extent did the outside world realize what was happening — and could more have been done to stop it?

This has been fiercely debated ever since the full horrors of the Holocaust were uncovered in the last months of war.

Britain and the U.S. are too often portrayed as having failed in their moral duty — guilty of not bombing extermination camps and guilty of not airdropping arms so the imprisoned Jews could fight back.

But the reality of what was happening on the far side of Europe was not obvious at the time. The Third Reich's extermination policy was camouflaged with euphemisms and shrouded in secrecy.

Any murderous orders not conveyed by word of mouth were read and then burned.

Nonetheless, units operating in the field made regular radio reports of their activities in a code that was broken by British cryptanalysts at Bletchley Park.

But since only a percentage of messages could ever be intercepted and decoded, the picture that emerged was patchy.



Tyrant: Soviet leader Josef Stalin.

## EVEN A TOLERANT COUNTRY CANNOT TOLERATE INTOLERANCE

RONALD LAUDER, PRESIDENT OF THE WORLD JEWISH CONGRESS

In July, firecrackers were thrown at the only synagogue in the Swedish city of *Malmo*, breaking three windows. The day before, a bomb threat had been left at the building, warning what would happen. Two weeks before, there was another attack against the same synagogue.

For months, *Malmo*'s Jews have testified to an increasingly hostile atmosphere, with many saying they are frightened to go out on the streets wearing anything that might identify them as Jews. Earlier this year, Daniel Schwammenthal, writing in *The Wall Street Journal*, explained why in the starkest possible terms: "Screaming 'Sieg Heil' and 'Hitler, Hitler,' a mostly Muslim mob threw bottles and stones at a small group of Jews peacefully demonstrating for Israel at this town's central square last year. Worshippers on their way to synagogue and Jewish kids in schools are routinely accosted as 'dirty Jews.'"

*Malmo* police say that, of the 115 hate crimes recorded in the city in 2009, 52 were aimed at Jews or Jewish institutions. Anti-Semitism is back, and what is taking place in *Malmo* is merely an extreme man-

ifestation of what is happening elsewhere in Sweden.

Let us recall that it was Sweden's top-selling newspaper, *Aftonbladet*, that published an anti-Semitic blood libel last year alleging that Israeli soldiers routinely murdered Palestinian children and harvested their bodily organs for sale on the international black market. The Swedish government responded with indifference, and worse: when the country's ambassador to Israel put up a note on the embassy's website distancing Sweden from such appalling calumnies, her superiors in Stockholm ordered her to take it down.

It is not just the media and the government fanning the flames of this hatred. In January, 2009, church officials in the town of Lulea cancelled a planned torchlight procession for Holocaust Memorial Day, with a spokesman saying that they were "preoccupied" and "grief-stricken" by Israel's operation in Gaza.

Cancelling Holocaust Memorial Day? Spreading blood libels, and acquiescing in them? Allowing a state of affairs in which Jews are frightened to leave their homes? This does not sound like the tolerant, fair and just society for which Sweden would like to be known. How has such a state of

affairs arisen, and what can be done to address it?

The first problem is that Swedish mainstream hostility to the state of Israel has clearly begun to cross the line into outright anti-Semitism. Of course, attempts to draw a distinction between hatred of Jews and hatred of Israel were never particularly convincing.

Israel is a specifically Jewish project, and to join the campaign of delegitimization against the Jewish state is to join a campaign of delegitimization against much of world Jewry, the vast majority of which either lives in Israel or regards it as a central component of Jewish identity. But one particular section of Sweden's population has never engaged in the pretense that there is a distinction between hatred of Israel and hatred of Jews.

Which brings us to the second major issue at play here: Sweden's Muslim population. While all manifestations of intolerance against Muslims must be firmly resisted, it is also vital to recognize the danger some Muslim immigrants have brought with them from their home cultures: extreme forms of bigotry against Jews and Israel.

When mainstream politicians, newspapers, and churches rail against Israel,

Besides, for those brought up with a post-Enlightenment belief in human progress, it was a giant emotional and intellectual step to get from these discrete facts to grasping that a civilized European country had reverted — with the aid of modern technologies — to wiping out an entire race.

There were other problems, too, in analyzing the material picked up by the code-breakers. While there was plenty of evidence of massacres, the victims were vaguely referred to as Bolsheviks, plunderers, partisans and so forth, rather than Jews. On the face of it, they did not add up to genocide.

Based on intelligence from Bletchley, Churchill broadcast to the British people in August 1941 stating what was known — that, as Hitler's armies advanced through the Soviet Union, "whole districts are being exterminated. Scores of thousands of executions in cold blood are being perpetrated by German police-troops upon Russian patriots. . ."

Many Jewish historians are exercised that he did not specifically mention that most of the victims were Jews. They also complain that the attention he gave to the dire circumstances of Jews throughout the war was intermittent to the point of indifference.

Some even believe that the Allies were colluding with Hitler because of an allegedly pervasive anti-Semitism, an insinuation first made by David Ben-Gurion, Israel's first prime minister.

But the harsh truth is that Allied policy had one priority — to defeat Nazi Germany. Nothing could be allowed to divert resources from that absolute aim.

Even when the first concrete reports emerged of a coordinated Nazi extermination policy, the U.S. State Department made it clear that there would be no deviation from this central purpose. "Whether the number of dead amounts to tens of thousands, or, as these reports state, to millions is not material to the main problem, which is the winning of the war," it said emphatically. "Other considerations must

(Continued on page 12)

many Swedish Muslims inevitably see this is a green light to unleash their own hostility toward ordinary Jews. They feel their anti-Semitism is acceptable.

A third layer of this problem is the increasingly symbiotic alliance between radical Islamist groups in Sweden and a left that has departed from the honorable social-democratic traditions for which the country is famous around the world. When the Israeli Davis Cup tennis team came to *Malmo* in 2009, it was forced to play against its hosts behind closed doors while a crowd of 6,000 rioted outside. With hate for Israel serving as the primary unifying factor, this alliance has grown into a new and dangerous force for intolerance within Swedish society.

Ultimately, change will not come unless and until Sweden's leaders address these problems. Officials and opinion shapers must understand that this perilous state of affairs will worsen if they fail to take their responsibilities more seriously, tone down their rhetoric and adopt a balanced approach toward Israel.

Above all, politicians must speak out when minorities become the target of hate crimes. Even a tolerant country such as Sweden must not tolerate those who preach intolerance.

# LIBERATION שחרור צ

## The American & International Societies



Avner Shalev, Chairman of the Yad Vashem Directorate; Yitzhak Arad, recipient of the 2010 Yad Vashem Remembrance Award; and Eli Zborowski, American & International Societies for Yad Vashem Chairman.



Eli Zborowski, Chairman, and Robert Bernstein, YLA Honoree.



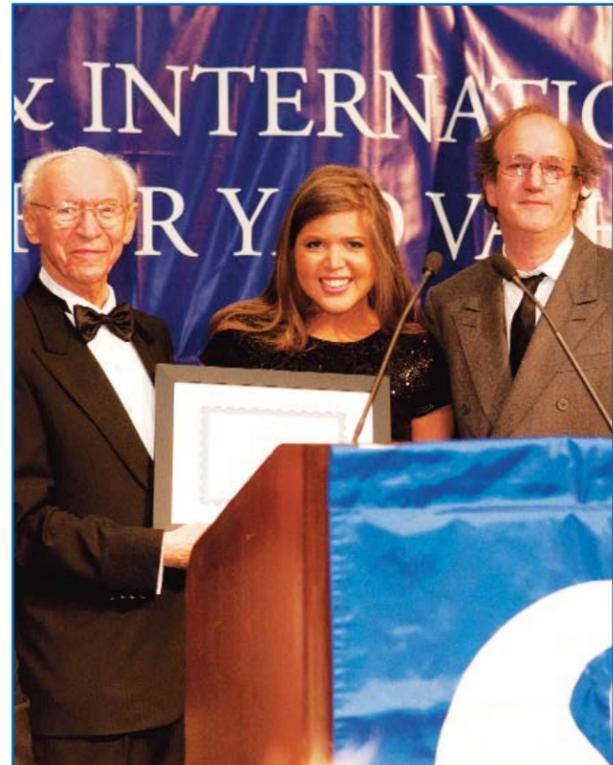
Eli Zborowski, Chairman, and Na...



Eli Zborowski, Chairman; Avi & Nicole Lieberman, YLA Honorees.



Eli Zborowski, Chairman; Abbi and Jeremy Halpern, YLA Honorees.



Eli Zborowski, Chairman; Rebecca Hanus, YLA Honoree; and Melvin Bukiet, Dinner Chair.



Marilyn Rubenstein, 2010 Annual Tribute Dinner Chair.



Eli Zborowski, American & International Societies for Yad Vashem Chairman; Jean and Eugen Gluck, and their grandsons Matthew Gluck and Michael Gluck.



Eli Zborowski, Chairman; Adam & Iris Lindenbaum, YLA Honorees.

# HAIN 65 YEARS LATER

## s for Yad Vashem Annual Tribute Dinner



David Besner, YLA Honoree.



Eli Zborowski, Chairman; Adina and Lawrence Burian, YLA Honorees.



Avner Shaley, Chairman of the Yad Vashem Directorate; Mark Moskowitz, recipient of the 2010 Yad Vashem Leadership Award; and Eli Zborowski, American & International Societies for Yad Vashem Chairman.



Mitchell Kahn, YLA Honoree; Eli Zborowski, Chairman; Ilana Kahn, YLA Honoree.



Eli Zborowski, Chairman; Barry Levine, YLA Honoree; and Melvin Bukiet, Dinner Chair.



Eli Zborowski, Chairman; Ilana Lifshitz, YLA Honoree; and Melvin Bukiet, Dinner Chair.



Eli Zborowski, Chairman; Caroline and Morris Massel, YLA Honorees.



Eli Zborowski, American & International Societies for Yad Vashem Chairman; Sam Halpern, Cheryl Lifshitz, and Gladys Halpern.



Leonard Wilf, 2010 Annual Tribute Dinner Honorary Chairman.



# REPORT FROM YAD VASHEM

## FIRST INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE AFTERMATH OF THE SHOAH

For decades the destruction of Polish Jewry has dominated the study of the Shoah, but it was only recently that the unprecedented challenges of the return to life of the surviving Jews have begun to attract sustained scholarly attention. Thus it was particularly fitting that the first international conference of the Diana Zborowski Center for the Study of the Aftermath of the Shoah, held at the beginning of October, concentrated on the many and different aspects of the repercussions of the Holocaust in Poland.

The conference, the initiative of the American Society for Yad Vashem Chairman Eli Zborowski and Prof. Feliks Tych of the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw, was attended by 22 researchers from Poland, each of whom has already contributed a chapter to the broad collection of studies that will make up *The Aftermath of the Holocaust: The Polish Case 1944-2010*, due to be published in English and Polish by the end of the year. Discussions were significantly enriched by the presence of two distinguished guests from North America — Prof. Antony Polonsky and Prof. Jan Tomasz Gross — together with a group of Israeli scholars in the field.

"The postwar effects of the Holocaust, especially in the years 1945 through 1947, require the attention of historians because it was precisely this period that was the most difficult for survivors who were trying to create for themselves something we might call a new normality, an attempt at self-determination after the tribulations of

war," said professor Tych in his speech at the conference.

"The topic of the returning survivors and the how they were received by residents of their hometowns is important because it offers the key to reconstructing the real social and moral circumstances in which the Holocaust took place," — continued Feliks Tych. "The series of postwar pogroms in Poland, Slovakia and Hungary show how far the Holocaust's shadow reached, and how deeply ran the conviction, birthed from the years 1941-1945, that a Jew may be killed without impunity."

"I was impressed by the seriousness of these researchers", Dr. Zeev Mankowitz, head of Yad Vashem's Zborowski Center, said in an interview.

"This is highly significant as it demonstrates a willingness to confront the past, face it honestly and deal with it. The only way you can neutralize some of the deep poison that has harmed Polish-Jewish relations is by relating to the collective memory of Polish people. The only way for a culture to probe the depth of its collective memory is for it to be done by the people who belong to that culture and not by outsiders."

The major themes tackled at the conference began with the survivors' first encounters with Polish society, and the memory of this period embedded in early personal letters and in the docudrama *Undzere Kinder* (Our Children). The focus was then broadened to embrace Polish attitudes towards the surviving Jews, the first steps in rebuilding Jewish life and the initial

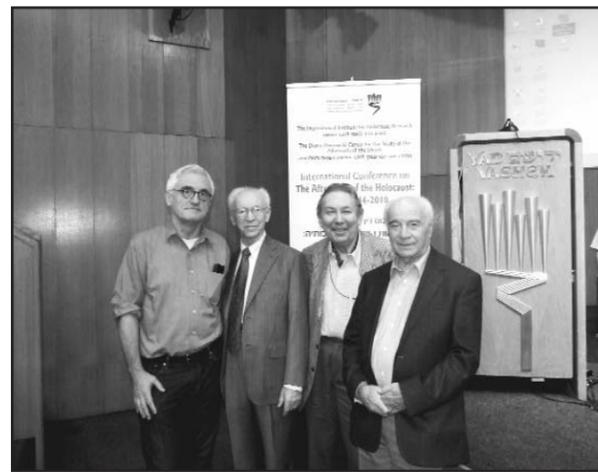
attempts to shape adequate forms of commemoration. The conference ended with a discussion on Polish-Jewish relations and attempts to access what remains of the Polish Jewish community. "The conference looked at how Polish society deals with the

undertaken in the past two years, and we look forward to broadening our scholarly investigations as a result of the conference."

"Our research project would not have been possible without the financial and emotional support of people and institutions," — said professor Tych in his acknowledgement remarks.

"The first acknowledgement belongs to Mr. Eli Zborowski, who has been our project's good genius from the beginning. His patronage gave us certainty that we will be able to complete the project, since he supported us both emotionally and financially. He always emphasizes that such comprehensive research projects should be undertaken in every country where the Nazi genocide has occurred and in every country where the survivors settled."

"We also express our gratitude to Mrs. Nancy Brumm, who has founded and chaired the American Society of Jewish Heritage in Poland. Another organization that recognized the importance of our project and contributed to its financial support is the inter-governmental Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research."



Prof. Jan Tomasz Gross, Princeton University, NJ; Eli Zborowski, Chairman of the American Society for Yad Vashem; Prof. Antony Polonsky, Brandeis University, MA; Prof. Feliks Tych, Jewish Historical Institute (ZIH), Warsaw.

fact that their country was the main arena for the murders," explained Dr. Bella Guterman, Director of the International Institute. "We examined the immediate postwar events — extreme anti-Semitic expressions and pogroms — through the Communist era and then from the fall of Communism until today. Much of what was presented was new research and findings

## MYTHS AND TRUTHS

BY EETTA PRINCE-GIBSON,  
THE JERUSALEM POST

Historian Jan T. Gross is building a new history of the Holocaust, based on relations between Poles and Jews before, during, and after World War II.

Jan T. Gross begins his keynote lecture by projecting an old photograph onto the screen behind him. He promises to talk about it at the end of the presentation, knowing that the picture, ostensibly a somewhat commonplace snapshot of Polish peasants resting on their tools behind their harvested crops, is disturbing. The picture is fuzzy, and the lunar-like landscape is too desolate, the harvest too meager, the colors too gray.

The overflow audience at Yad Vashem listens intently to Gross's lecture, entitled "Opportunistic Killings and Plunder of Jews By Their Neighbors — A Norm or an Exception in German-Occupied Europe?" while distracted by the image.

At the end, as promised, he relates to the picture. "Is this not," he challenges, "a familiar scene, a snapshot of summer vacations with distant relatives in the countryside?" But then he points to what is only vaguely visible in the enlarged image seen from a distance — "the crops scattered in front of the group are skulls and bones. In this photograph we see a bunch of peasants standing atop a mound of ashes. These are the human ashes of 800,000 Jews gassed and cremated in the Treblinka extermination camp between July 1942 and October 1943. The Euro-

peans captured in the photograph have been digging through the remains of Holocaust victims, hoping to find gold and precious stones that Nazi executioners may have overlooked, despite carefully checking the body cavities of the murdered Jews... And while the scale of the *Treblinka* excavations was unique, the practice of digging up Jewish remains from the sites of mass murder to strip them of valuables was common."

He continues, "Not only the Poles: many peoples across the continent have benefited from the Nazi policies of stripping Jews of civic and property rights and eliminating them from public life, and, ultimately, from life. [I present you with] a question and an answer to frame the photograph: What do a Swiss banker and a Polish peasant have in common? And the answer to this question would be, a golden tooth extracted from the jaws of a Jewish corpse."

The exercise, like much of Gross's work, is powerful and complex, the dramatic manipulation underlining the historical points he makes.

Gross, 63, a professor of history at Princeton University, was in Jerusalem, in early October, for an international conference entitled "The Aftermath of the Holocaust: Poland 1944-2010," which was sponsored by the Diana Zborowski Center for the Study of the Aftermath of the Shoah, a part of Yad Vashem's International Institute for Holocaust Research.

In his lecture Gross discusses his research, which focuses on the killings and plunder of Polish Jews by their fellow citi-

zens. His research goals, he makes clear, are broad and ambitious: to create a new historiography and, through this, to rewrite the history of the Holocaust.

Gross was born in Poland to an ethnic Polish mother, who had been a member of the Polish resistance, and a Polish-Jewish father. He came to the US with his family in 1968, at the age of 22, as an émigré escaping the rising anti-Semitic wave of repression in Poland. As a student of physics in Warsaw, he had been involved in the protest movement, expelled from the university and jailed for several months. Resettling in the US, he earned a PhD in sociology from Yale University, beginning his distinguished academic career.

He came to international prominence with the publication of two books that forced Polish citizens to face painfully precise mirrors of Polish history. In *Neighbors*, first published in English in 2001 and in Polish in 2002, Gross describes in passionate, almost vulgarly brutal prose, the massacre of Polish Jews in the town of *Jedwabne*, in July 1941. Contrary to Polish common wisdom, the massacre, he shows, was committed by the Jews' Polish neighbors and not by the German occupiers.

In 2006, he published *Fear: Anti-Semitism in Poland after Auschwitz*, in which he argues that Poles attacked Jews who returned to Poland after the Holocaust and details the story of the *Kielce* pogrom in July 1946, when ethnic Poles murdered 37 Jews; *Fear* was published in Polish in 2008.

Gross's basic thesis contends that these anti-Semitic acts stemmed from the fear of the Polish people that they would have to

give back properties to the Holocaust survivors, but were also a reaction to their own sense of guilt and to the barbarization of Polish society inflicted by the Nazis.

The facts of the pogroms in *Jedwabne* and *Kielce* were known in Poland, but they had been obscured, both by the Soviet regime that created a "permissible" version of history and by Polish collective identity, which is based on a self-image as victims, not perpetrators. Poles' reactions to the publications of *Neighbors* and "Fear" were intense and varied; some saw the revelations as Poland's opportunity to come to terms with its murky past, but others were incensed. Polish officials even investigated the facts of the case in order to consider prosecution of Gross for defamation of the Polish population, although no charges were ever brought.

Gross says that he knows that the discussion is painful for Poles, but insists that it is necessary. "My identity as a Pole includes a profound sense of siding with the persecuted. And few have a better right than Poles to feel persecuted. But being Polish, whether we want to or not, carries a responsibility, a need to sort out what we have done. We cannot base our self-identity on lies or half-truths. We did these things. They happened in the streets and villages, where everybody could see. The anti-Semitism is incomprehensible, it is beyond the pale. It is a blemish on our humanity, a scandal to our minds."

The events that he describes, Gross says, cannot be dismissed as deviant or marginal behavior. "Regular" members of the com-

(Continued on page 15)

## SUSPECTED NAZI WAR CRIMINAL ELUDES GERMAN JUSTICE SYSTEM

BY JÖRG DIEHL, SPIEGEL ONLINE

The suspected Nazi war criminal Klaas Faber, who is number five on the Simon Wiesenthal Center's most-wanted list, is enjoying a quiet retirement in Bavaria. While some alleged former Nazis are facing trial in their old age, the 87-year-old has managed to slip through the cracks in the German justice system.

Klaas Faber and his wife were nice people, the affable neighbor said on the phone; apparently they "kept themselves to themselves" but were "very decent." They went walking a lot, had three sons, and drove around in a red Audi. "He used to work in an office," the woman says. "He can tell you the rest himself."

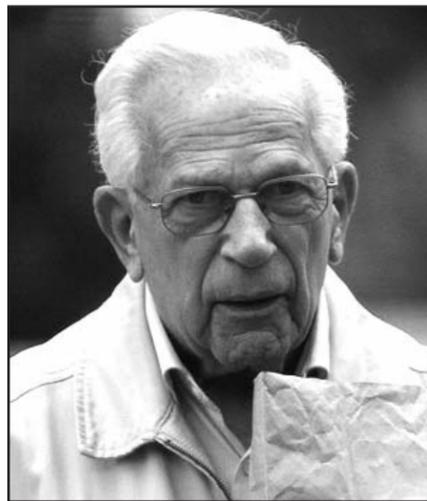
Klaas Faber ranks number five on the Simon Wiesenthal Center's list of the 10 most wanted Nazi war criminals. In 1947, Faber was sentenced by a Dutch court to life in prison for multiple murders during World War II. But the former Nazi collaborator escaped from prison with a gang of fellow inmates and fled across the border into Germany.

The former menswear salesman, who was born in *Haarlem* in the Netherlands, has lived in an apartment building in *Ingolstadt* in the German state of Bavaria since the 1960s. While other suspected Nazi criminals such as Heinrich Boere, 88, and Ivan Demjanjuk, 89, have to face charges relating to their roles in World War II atrocities despite their old age, Faber no longer has anything to fear from the German justice system.

"I no longer consider this an injustice, but a scandal," Arnold Karskens, who is chairman of a Dutch foundation that investigates war crimes, told *Spiegel Online*. "He has kept a low profile for decades and that seems to actually have worked. It must be unbearable for the relatives of his victims."

Dutch court documents showed that Faber volunteered for the *Waffen-SS* in July 1940 of his own accord.

During questioning after the war, Faber said it was "quickly made clear ... that one



Klaas Faber.

would be incorporated into the SS when the training came to an end. I did not want that." He would later tell prosecutors that he had refused to take the oath "to the *Führer*" and had, after a few months, gone back to the Netherlands.

There, Faber, whose father and brother were both also ardent Nazis, joined the *Weerbaarheidsafdeling*, which was similar to the Nazis' *Sturmabteilung* (SA) storm troopers in Germany. For 18 guilders a week, Faber served the Dutch Nazi leader Anton Adrian Mussert as a bodyguard and came across as someone who was suitable for higher-level duties. Faber "has proved himself to be a conscientious and reliable employee," noted one superior, according to the documents. He did not have a problem with "alcohol abuse and/or debts," the document noted, "as far as is known."

Faber went on to become a constable in the state police. In September 1944, he was assigned to the SS's Security Service in *Groningen* in a support function. According to statements by several former comrades, Faber is said to have executed several Dutch resistance fighters during this period. In March 1946 he confessed to his interrogators that he had "shot one of the detainees" during an execution in the *Westerbork* transit camp.

After 1945, a Dutch court initially sentenced Klaas Faber to death, but that sentence was later commuted to life imprisonment. But he did not stay in prison for very long. On Dec. 26, 1952, Faber and six other convicted Nazi war criminals escaped from prison in *Breda* while a film was being shown.

They crossed the Dutch-German border at *Ubbergen*. The following day, the district court in *Kleve* fined the men 10 marks each for illegal entry — but a court employee gave them the money and even added a little extra for their onward journey. "They were all comrades in the court," recalled one of the escaped prisoners in a 1997 interview with the German magazine *Stern*.

Two days later, the Dutch authorities in Germany again sought the extradition of the fugitives — without success. Bonn refused, citing a 1943 decree by Adolf Hitler, according to which all members of the *Waffen-SS* were automatically German citizens. But didn't Faber claim he had refused to swear the oath of allegiance to the *Führer*? Was he therefore definitely a member of the SS or not? The questions remained unanswered.

Then in 1957, the *Düsseldorf* District Court also refused to initiate proceedings against the escapees, claiming that there was insufficient evidence against them. For Faber it was exactly the kind of free pass that he needed. He moved to *Ingolstadt* and lived a suitably respectable,

bourgeois life in the prosperous West Germany of the "economic miracle" era.

In 2003, the Dutch government, under pressure from the victims' families, requested that Faber serve in Germany the life sentence that he had been given in 1947. But the *Ingolstadt* District Court, which now had jurisdiction over the former SS member, said the request was inadmissible. After all, a German court — in the form of the *Düsseldorf* District Court in 1957 — had already let Faber off the hook.

Then the Central Office for the Investigation of Nazi Crimes in *Dortmund* got involved, as its director Ulrich Maass confirmed. The office's investigators had managed to gather "heaps of material" against Faber in Germany and the Netherlands. A fresh indictment on the basis of this evidence might have been possible, says Maass.

However, the public prosecutor in *Munich* that was responsible for the case, who had received the files on Klaas Faber from Maass in 2006, had a different view of the matter. In his opinion, Faber had shot his victims in the conviction that he was carrying out valid death sentences against resistance fighters. In Faber's case, there is no evidence of the base motives which, under German law, are a defining characteristic of murder, said Thomas Steinkraus-Koch, a spokesman for the *Munich* public prosecutor. In which case, one had to give the defendant the benefit of the doubt and assume it was manslaughter, Steinkraus-Koch explained. But in the case of Faber, the crime of manslaughter would have become time-barred in 1990, he added.

Unless new evidence that supports the suspicion of murder turns up, the case is now closed for German investigators, Steinkraus-Koch said. The Chief Public Prosecutor's Office has repeatedly confirmed the termination of the proceedings, the last time in May 2008.

## VON RIBBENTROP'S WATCH

Art Deco watch and left the shop twenty minutes later wearing it on his wrist.

"I couldn't stop staring at it, though never once did I wonder who it belonged to or why it was in the shop window," he says.

Returning to London after less than a year as an expat in LA, Laurence opted for a change of watch and bought one at auction, placing the Longines in a safety deposit box in a London bank where it stayed for five years.

Deciding to revive the Longines watch, Marks realized that it had started to lose time and took it to a City of London repair shop. Three weeks later he received a call asking him to come into the shop.

"The watch repairer asked me if the watch was a family heirloom," Marks recalls. "I told him it wasn't, but asked him why he asked."

"He removed the back of the watch, handed me an eyeglass, and said 'Well? What I saw were the initials 'JVR.'"

Nothing strange in that. But in addition to the initials there was a small elegantly engraved swastika, under which was engraved a date: 1930.

"I asked the watch repairer who JVR was," says Marks, "but he had no idea. He said that if I was really interested I should take the watch to Sotheby's. They would be able to tell me."

After 16 weeks, Sotheby's Watch and Clock department confirmed that the watch was genuine, was bought in Berlin in 1930, belonged to Joachim von Ribbentrop and was exceedingly valuable.

"I knew Joachim von Ribbentrop was Hitler's friend and fixer, as well as his foreign minister. And wasn't he the man who signed the Von Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact,



Von Ribbentrop's watch, found by Laurence Marks.

which effectively allowed the start of the Second World War?

"So I asked how much it was worth and was told anywhere between £40-50,000, maybe more, depending how badly a collector wanted it.

"It didn't occur to me at that time that this watch would attract dormant Nazis, who would pay a fortune just to get a little closer to a regime that they wished had survived and flourished.

"Apparently, von Ribbentrop, whilst not a first-division Nazi, was very collectable. And the fact that he was the first Nazi hanged at Nuremberg could well increase the watch's value," Marks says.

How the watch ended up in a second-hand watch shop in California is anyone's guess, although Sotheby's suggested a US guard may have stolen it from von Ribbentrop as he awaited execution in his *Nuremberg* cell.

When Marks told the news to his friend and writing partner Maurice Gran, Gran said he couldn't possibly sell the watch because he would effectively be pocketing Nazi money.

"As a Jew," Marks says, "I could see Maurice had a point."

"What if I sold it and gave the money to a Jewish charity? A synagogue that needs a new roof, perhaps? A Jewish youth club community hall?"

"I did enquire to one or two Jewish charities about making a substantial donation, but once they heard where the money was going to come from, they either said a polite 'No, thank you,' or slammed down the phone.

"And of course I could understand that the Von Ribbentrop Community Hall attached to a north London synagogue could be seen in bad taste.

"So I was left with this dilemma for many months."

Maurice Gran finally suggested writing a play about the dilemma: what does a Jew do with a Nazi watch, particularly if he needs the money?

"I immediately could envisage what a good play this would make and after three or more years of discussion we wrote *Von Ribbentrop's Watch*," says Marks. "What else could we call it?"

"I then did as Maurice suggested and put the watch away in a safe and there it will remain. No fascist or Nazi sympathizer will ever get their hands on it.

"But the bigger question remains: What would you have done in my position?"

BY SEAN O'HARE, TELEGRAPH

What would you do if you were Jewish and had bought a second-hand watch for £150, only to find out that it once belonged to Hitler's right-hand man and as a result was worth £50,000?

In 1985 British screenwriter Laurence Marks was given a Hollywood mansion, wrote comedy for Paramount Studios, drove a red convertible, and was deeply unhappy.



Laurence Marks, right, and his writing partner, Maurice Gran.

He hoped an afternoon's shopping trip and the purchase of a \$200 second-hand watch on Los Angeles's Melrose Place would lift his mood.

"I felt isolated. I had everything but I pined for London, its culture, and my friends. It was the loneliest time of my life and I thought spending some money would cheer me up," he tells me.

In the second-hand watch shop's window display, Laurence spied a simple Longines

## DID STALIN CONDONE THE HOLOCAUST?

(Continued from page 7)  
be subordinate thereto."

The evidence continued to mount of the evil the Nazis were perpetrating. In addition to intelligence intercepts, another trickle of information came from organizations such as the Jewish Agency and the World Jewish Congress.

Based in neutral Switzerland, they collated reports from across Nazi-occupied Europe and relayed them to Jerusalem, London, and New York.

In mid-1942, a Polish underground group got a message to their government-in-exile in London that 700,000 Jews had been killed there between June 1941 and April 1942. This led to the first article on German mass murders of Jews to appear in any British newspaper. On June 25, a *Daily Telegraph* headline declared: "Germans murder 700,000 Jews in Poland." A few days later, the *Daily Mail* reported, "Greatest pogrom — one million Jews die."

By the following month, there was testimony that these killings were being centrally orchestrated by the German authorities when a dissident German industrialist reported to a contact in Geneva that the Nazis intended to kill all the Jews in Europe.

In November, a hundred or so Jewish prisoners were exchanged for Germans interned by the Allies. Their stories shattered any illusions that a continent-wide atrocity was not underway.

That month, too, one of the most courageous men of the war, Polish underground courier Jan Karski, travelled across Occupied Europe with a precious key in his pocket. Welded inside it was the micro-filmed testimony of two Jewish leaders, smuggled out from the Warsaw ghetto, about the horrors happening there.

Karski also had his own eyewitness information, obtained when he took the enormous risk of donning a guard's uniform and slipping in disguise into a holding camp for Jews. They were being marshaled there before being sent by train to camps with gas chambers, such as *Sobibor* and *Treblinka*.

One of the Warsaw ghetto leaders whose testimony he brought back told him: "I know the English. When you describe to them what is happening to the Jews, they will probably not believe you." It was an accurate prediction.

When Karski's report was given to leading British civil servants and politicians, including the Foreign Secretary, Anthony Eden, they seemed more interested in the heroic details of his escape than in what he had to tell them.

Nonetheless, on December 17, 1942, an international declaration condemned Nazi atrocities that had claimed the lives of "hundreds of thousands" of Jews. By that time, in reality, two million Jews were dead.

But there was no reference to Auschwitz, which was regarded erroneously as a concentration camp exclusively for Christian Poles.

Besides, what could be done about it?

The two Jewish underground leaders who spoke to Karski wanted the Allies to add stopping the killing of the Jews to their stated war aims.

They also suggested issuing a public warning to the German people that they would be held collectively responsible for what was being done in their name.

If the extermination still did not stop, there should be retaliatory bombing of German targets in Poland and the execution of any self-proclaimed Nazis held by the Allies.

But the RAF pointed out that the extreme distances meant bombers would have to carry so much fuel they would be able to deliver only a token payload. As for reprisals against German POWs, this would not only violate international law but lead to retaliation against British POWs.

With direct action ruled out, all that was left were increasingly threatening warnings. In March 1944, the Foreign Secretary rose in

the Commons to express the British people's "detestation of Germany's crimes."

Churchill instructed that anyone associated with such murders should be tracked down, tried, and executed.

Meanwhile, two remarkable escapees from Auschwitz were on their way to the West with the first inside account. Their report reached London in July 1944.



Survivors of Auschwitz after their liberation on January 27, 1945.

Armchair moralists continue to condemn the Allies for inaction after this. But they ignore the practical difficulties and the extremely remote prospect of success — largely because a raid might only have killed those it was intended to save.

And by 1944, the Allies' priority was their biggest military gamble of the entire war — establishing a foothold in France. Ahead of D-Day, Bomber Command was fully occupied trying to wreck the rail network of northern France to stop German reinforcements arriving. After D-Day, it had a crucial job giving air support to the troops on the ground.

The RAF had developed expertise in low-level attacks using the new, fast and astonishingly versatile Mosquito aircraft. In February 1944, a sortie mounted at the request of the French resistance smashed the walls of the Gestapo prison at *Amiens*.

The outcome was not good. One hundred prisoners were killed during the raid,

and most of those who escaped were recaptured and shot.

Could a Mosquito force have undertaken such an operation against Auschwitz, 750 miles further away? Some argue this would have been morally important even if it had not succeeded. The air crew who would have died might have begged to differ.

In July 1944, with evidence emerging that Jews were being deported in vast numbers from Hungary, the Western Allies have been accused of culpable negligence for not performing an operation that would almost certainly have ended in disaster, yet the Soviets have received a pass for their failure to make the slightest effort to destroy gas chambers that were in easy reach.

One thing the Soviets couldn't claim was an inability to get their heads round what was happening. The Holocaust would not have caused Stalin and his associates any difficulties of comprehension. They tortured and murdered people all the time.

They knew all about concentration camps, since, in their own gulags, they operated the largest camp system in the world at the time and had the equivalent of major urban populations behind barbed wire.

They were also familiar with deporting entire ethnic groups, as the Chechens, Crimean Tatars, Poles, and Volga Germans discovered. They also persecuted people for their religious beliefs, as well as for their class or nationality.

An inordinate amount of criticism has been focused on the Western Allies for not doing anything about the extermination camps, yet there has been a remarkable dearth of books about the Soviets' inaction.

Every study of the Allies' response to the Holocaust either omits the Soviet Union entirely or appends the Soviets as an afterthought, even though a third of the USSR's five million Jews perished at Nazi hands.

No one seems to ask why Stalin did not use his huge air force to bomb the camps or drop paratroops who would have made short work of the SS men running the death camps. If there are sins of omission to be accounted for, then here may well be where the blame truly lies.

## THE HOLOCAUST AND THE LOST CARIBBEAN PARADISE

(Continued from page 5)

ment went into even higher gear when it learned that Cramer had signed the proclamation. Breckinridge Long contacted his friend Representative Martin Dies, Chairman of the House Committee on Un-American Activities. The weapon they used was the old canard that spies would arrive among the refugees. That not a single such case had been proven mattered little to Long and Dies. President Roosevelt, "informed" by Long of the undoubted arrival of spies among the refugees, was won over.

Finally, to clinch the matter, Long had a brilliant idea. He went to see Admiral Alan G. Kirk, Chief of Naval Intelligence. "If the Navy could declare it [the Virgin Islands] a restricted area for strictly naval reasons," Long explained, "[that would] prevent the raising of the political questions involved in this refugee and undesirable citizens traffic which is going on [Then] we would have no more trouble."

This settled the case. Nobody in wartime could defend an issue that threatened the security of the United States. The attempt to tear a few thousand of the doomed from Moloch's jaws had been sabotaged. This victory by the State Department was achieved 20 months after the *Kristallnacht* pogrom and nine months after the Nazi massacres began in Poland.

Heavy pressure was mobilized against Haiti when it planned to admit 100 refugee families. The Haitian President was accused of undermining the American war effort and thus the safety of the United States. The usual contrivance — the claim that there would be spies among the refugees — in the case of Haiti was extended to the misinformation that (although they might not be straight Hitlerites) all refugees were "at the least" pro-German. The American Minister to Haiti, on September 30, 1940, received the following telegram from Secretary of State Cordell Hull:

*The Department desires you to discourage at every opportunity and in a manner which can leave no doubt in President Vincent's mind all projects for bringing additional European refugees to Haiti under the circumstances that have prevailed in the past . . . The Department therefore would deplore further interest by the Haitian Government in the admission of refugees among whose numbers will doubtless be found elements prejudicial to the safety of the Republic of Haiti and this country . . .*

The Chargé in Haiti, fully understanding what his superiors expected of him, lost no time. On October 2 he wrote to the Secretary of State:

*I made the following points: One, all refugees from Germany are at most only*

*anti-Hitler . . . Therefore, we regard these refugees as suspects and cannot view with approval their migration from place to place. I added that since my Government is spending in excess of twelve billion dollars for the defense of the United States, and the Western Hemisphere, it would be unreasonable to expect that we would view without concern the uncontrolled movement of alien suspects.*

During all the time that the State Department was thwarting the refugees, letters arrived from those who had heard of the possibility of escape. On May 20, 1941, Robert M. Lovett, Acting Governor of the Islands (Lawrence Cramer had resigned) wrote to James McDonald, Chairman of the President's Committee for Refugees: "I have been overwhelmed by correspondence of a most poignant nature."

### "OUR LAST CHANCE"

Of the dozens of pleading letters in the National Archives, one by Gerhard Neumann, who writes for himself and six others, is particularly tragic. The letter, dated February 14, 1941, was written from *Camp Gurs*, a collecting place in France for shipment either via the infamous *Drancy* camp, or directly to the annihilation places in the east.

Neumann wrote: "We should be very much obliged to you, if you could improve our actual situation by giving us the permission to stay in your territory till we can immigrate to U.S.A. We are aware, that we do an extraordinary step in applying to you. But that is our last chance."

On March 25, 1941, Robert Lovett answered: "I regret to inform you that a procedure for giving effect to the plan of affording temporary refuge in the Islands has not been worked out by the State Department and the Department of the Interior."

Another applicant awaiting deportation was Walter Bruehl. He wrote: "We are still a small number of passengers on the steamboat *St. Louis*, departing from Hamburg May 13, 1939 [on the infamous Voyage of the Damned], to Havana, Cuba who after an adventurous crossing were forced to return to Europe . . . Please, Honorable Sir, let me know what we can do. I shall act immediately in the required direction."

On May 20, 1941, Lovett answered: "I regret to inform you that the State Department has refused permission to put into effect the plan proposed for the reception of the refugees . . ."

Each of the applicants' letters, preserved in the National Archives, is a mute witness to the inhumanity of man against man.

## POLISH ARCHIVE, ISRAELI SPAR OVER FATHER'S HOLOCAUST DIARY

The Israeli daughter of a Holocaust survivor who kept a diary in hiding during World War II wants it back from a Polish-Jewish archive, but officials refuse. It belongs to the nation, they say.

Composer Ella Milch-Sheriff told AFP she was appealing to Warsaw's Jewish Historical Institute to give her the crucial chronicle of the Nazi German occupation of Poland made by her late father Baruch Milch.

Milch-Sheriff said she does not want it for herself, and aims to donate it to Israel's Yad Vashem Holocaust memorial.

"I would like the diary to be in the best hands and in exhibitions, so that people, including family members, will be able to see it," she said.

The document is a snapshot of Nazi Germany's World War II occupation of Poland, which became the epicenter of its drive to wipe out Europe's Jews. It also bears witness to Milch's personal suffering. In one entry, he recounts the shooting death of his three-year-old son — who would have been Milch-Sheriff's half brother.

But Polish officials say they are bound by strict rules covering historical records — including those made by private individuals.

"The diary of Baruch Milch is important evidence of the past, a document presenting the life and tragic fate of Polish nationals of Jewish origin," national archive chief Slawomir Radon said in a statement.

"It is an archive document and, as such, cannot be taken from Poland permanently," he said.

A long history of war and occupation — and consequent destruction — means Poland guards its remaining national archives hawkishly.

Milch, a doctor, wrote the diary while being hidden by Poles who faced death if found out.

Between July 1943 and March 1944, he recounted his pre-war life and also detailed atrocities which claimed his entire family, including the tiny son.

Pre-war Poland was Europe's Jewish heartland, with a thriving community of

some 3.2 million, or 10 percent of the population.

Around half of the six million Holocaust victims were Polish Jews. Most perished in death camps the Nazis set up in Poland, such as Auschwitz-Birkenau.

After the war, many of the few hundred thousand survivors headed to what is now Israel. Milch and his second wife emigrated in 1946, and Milch-Sheriff was born there.

Before leaving, he gave his diary to a Polish Jewish group recording Holocaust history.

"He realized his records constituted an important document and that is why he entrusted them," Eleonora Bergman, head of the Jewish Historical Institute, told AFP.

But Milch-Sheriff said her father had wanted the diary kept safe temporarily.

"The only testimony to what happened to his family and friends was there in his diary, and he was afraid that if he took it with him, it would get lost, damaged or destroyed," she said.

Milch died in 1989.

Towards the end of his life, he wrote his memoirs in Hebrew and asked Milch-Sheriff and her late sister Shosh Avigal to have them published.

Shortly after his death, a Polish researcher contacted them for permission to publish extracts of the Polish-language manuscript from the archives.

"This was the first time my sister and I heard about the original diary. My mother knew about it but never spoke with us about it until that moment," said Milch-Sheriff.

In 1990, her sister went to Poland seeking the diary, but only got a copy.

Bergman explained why.

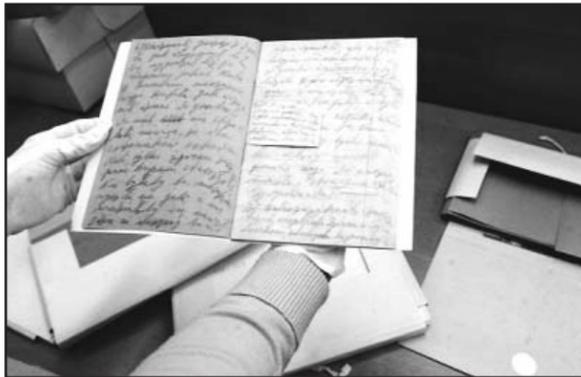
"We are always ready to give a family a copy of documents. But the mission of our institute is to record history, often based on the private notes of individuals," she said.

Milch's family spent the next few years reconciling the Polish and Hebrew texts. Their edited version was issued in Hebrew in 1999 and English in 2003, while the original was published in Poland in 2002.

Milch-Sheriff said she is determined to pursue her claim and could turn to the European Court of Human Rights.

Polish academic and lawyer Ireneusz Kaminski is considering representing her, saying it is a test case.

"While the authorities do regard her as the heir to her father's diary, the law pre-



A worker of the Jewish Historical Institute holds part of a diary by Holocaust survivor Baruch Milch.

vents her from enjoying its ownership," Kaminski said.

"To date, there has been no balance between the public good and ownership rights which are disproportionately limited," he explained.

Two years ago, another Holocaust diary sparked controversy.

Written by Ruth Laskier, 14 — who later died in Auschwitz — it chronicled three months of 1943 in the southern town of Bedzin.

A childhood friend, Stanislaw Sapinska, kept the diary secretly for decades before revealing it to a local newspaper, which published it in 2006.

It was immediately compared to the diary of Dutch-Jewish teenager Anne Frank.

In 2007, Sapinska donated it to Yad Vashem on a trip organized by officials from Bedzin, who claimed they were unaware it was against the law.

## OLD PHOTOS REVEAL TALE OF JAPAN AND JEWS OF WWII

(Continued from page 5)

researcher Kitade. The messages on the photos given to Osako are in languages that reflect the Nazi advance through Europe: German, Polish, Norwegian, French.

Kitade said the images left a strong impression on him. "It was 70 years ago, so the people in the pictures may no longer be alive, but if possible, somehow I'd like to find even their families and show them," he said.

Historians have various theories as to why Japan allowed Jews to pass through, and others to settle in its Manchuria territories. Some say it was done on purely humanitarian grounds, while others say the country wanted to gain educated citizenry for its newly conquered lands and curry favor with the U.S. in the years before the two countries went to war.

In 1938, as Germany's persecution increased, government ministers in Tokyo issued a statement that Japan would treat the refugees humanely. At the same time,



This photo given to Japanese tourism official Tatsuo Osako shows a woman and a brief message written on the back of the picture.

Japan was slaughtering and enslaving others in its territories throughout Asia — actions for which postwar Japanese leaders have repeatedly apologized.

Osako's daughter, Mie Kunimoto, now 62, was surprised to learn about the photos.

"I never heard about this, and neither had my sister. He wasn't the type of person to talk about the past."

Like many of his generation, Osako didn't talk much about his wartime experiences, although he wrote briefly about them in 1995 for a college alumni publication.

"The Jews that I saw at that time had no passports and were stateless, they were refugees that had fled Europe and were generally downcast, some with vacant eyes that projected the loneliness of people in exile," Osako wrote.

But he also had time to make friends along the way — he notes that some were very helpful in his duties, and he recalls seeing Jewish women "of a rarely seen beauty."

"A souvenir to a very nice Japanese man," reads the Polish message on another of the photos from his diary, this one of a dark-haired young lady with a slightly furrowed brow. The signature looks like "Rozla." Her fate is also unknown.

First published in *The Washington Post*

## VICHY GOVERNMENT TOUGHENED ANTI-JEWISH LAWS

The head of the French government which collaborated with the Nazis during World War II personally made harsh anti-Jewish legislation even tougher, a leading Nazi hunter said, citing a newly unveiled document.

Serge Klarsfeld, decorated for his work to bring Nazis to trial, said Philippe Petain penciled harsher measures into a Statute on Jews issued by his Vichy regime exactly 70 years ago.

First World War hero Petain signed an armistice with the Nazis in 1940 which divided the country, leaving the north in German hands. Petain created a government to the south in unoccupied France with its capital in Vichy.

According to the Statute, which Klarsfeld said had been handed over anonymously to the Holocaust Memorial in Paris and authenticated by its experts, Petain penciled in his own notes drastically worsening conditions for Jews in France.

"We didn't know until now that Petain had made changes to the text of Oct. 3, 1940, and that he had made it more strict," Nazi hunter and founder of the Association of the Sons and Daughters of Jews Deported from France Serge Klarsfeld told reporters.



The French historian Serge Klarsfeld with a draft law dated Oct. 3, 1940 and annotated by hand by Marshal Philippe Petain.

The Vichy government helped in deporting about 80,000 Jews to concentration camps from France between 1942 and 1944.

The amendments "completely redrafted" the nature of an already extremely anti-Semitic text, Klarsfeld added.

"It shows this was the desire of Petain himself," he said of the document, which went on display a few days earlier. The original text had excluded the descendants of French Jews born or naturalized before 1860, but the notes showed Petain had crossed this out, making all Jews targets for discrimination.

Petaín also widened the exclusion for Jews in society, barring them completely from jobs in education and the justice system and preventing them from standing for elected posts.

Until now, there has been little documentation on Petain's Vichy government and his stance towards the Jews.

His defenders have always said his policies aimed to protect French Jews by assimilating them into the local culture and converting them into Catholics.

"That argument collapses with this document," said Klarsfeld, awarded the Legion of Honor by then-President Mitterrand for his work seeking prosecutions for Nazi war crimes.

Petaín was tried after the war and sentenced to death for treason, but his sentence was commuted to life imprisonment on an island off the Atlantic coast. He died in 1951.

## A FILM UNFINISHED: THE WARSAW GHETTO AS SEEN THROUGH NAZI EYES

BY RICHARD Z. CHESNOFF,  
THE HUFFINGTON POST

Aside from Auschwitz and other Nazi death camps, nothing epitomizes the horrors of the Holocaust more than the infamous Warsaw Ghetto.

Surrounded by a barbed-wire-topped 10-foot-high brick wall, it was into this tiny corner of the Polish capital that the Nazis



Jewish ghetto police round up Jews for the Nazi cameraman.

herded up to 400,000 Jewish prisoners at a time, systematically starving them with barely 181 calories of rations per day, leaving them to die of hunger or disease, or simply leaving them to languish while they unknowingly awaited shipment to Hitler's gas chambers.

It was here too that in the spring of 1943, a small band of heroic Jewish fighters

launched a desperate uprising against their Nazi captors, a battle that ended only when the overwhelmingly powerful German forces leveled the ghetto and reduced it to rubble.

Yet barely a year before, in May 1942 — two and half years after the Warsaw Ghetto was established and shortly before the Nazis sent the ghetto's first 300,000 Jews to the extermination camp of *Treblinka* — the *Reich* dispatched a crew of German soldiers to film Jewish life in the Warsaw Ghetto.

Their perverse propaganda goal: to record for posterity examples of the religious practices and "sub-human culture" of the soon-to-be-eliminated *judische Rasse*, everything from a circumcision ceremony to a burial service, from the extreme poverty of the many to the supposed lack of concern of those few Jews who still had some assets.

Parts of this nefarious Nazi propaganda film were heart-wrenchingly real; the Nazis had no compunction about showing Jews suffering. But other parts of it were carefully staged, a German Potemkin Village movie honed for propaganda and construed to discredit the Jews.

Horrifying snippets of it have appeared over the years: a starving child dying on the streets of the ghetto while other Jews walk by or still others dine on meals at well-stocked restaurants that never existed; Nazi-appointed Jewish ghetto police brutalizing fellow Jews.

Yet mysteriously the Nazis' propaganda film was never finished. For more than 50 years, the silent, unedited reels lay hidden in a secret East German film archive in boxes marked simply, "The Ghetto."

Then along came Yael Hersonski, a young Israeli documentary maker whose own grandmother had survived the



Film maker Yael Hersonski.

Warsaw Ghetto. After gaining access to the long-abandoned footage via the current German government, Hersonski wrote and directed *A Film Unfinished*, a staggering 90-minute documentary of the atrocities of life in the Warsaw Ghetto as filmed by the Nazis themselves.

Two-thirds of the 31 year old Hersonski's film consists of the original Nazi propaganda footage — including outtakes. The rest is composed in part of the wrinkled faces of a handful of Warsaw Ghetto survivors grimly watching an actual screening of the film and offering commentary (some clearly remember the *Whermacht* camera-

men at work). Using an actor, Hersonski has also re-enacted the actual postwar testimony of one of the film's original German cameramen (now deceased).

But in this viewer's mind, the most fascinating parts of the unfinished film are its outtakes, which at times clearly show the cameramen themselves caught in the shot (see photo at beginning of piece) or demonstrate how scenes were staged, then re-shot to produce a "better" anti-Semitic result.

*A Film Unfinished* has already won well-deserved international plaudits. It was the 2010 Sundance Film Festival Winner for World Cinema Documentary Editing, the 2010 Hot Docs Winner for Best International Feature, and a prime selection at Germany's 2010 Berlinale.

For some obscure reason, the Motion Picture Association of America — which lets our youth be bombarded by meaningless entertainment and violence — has decided to give *A Film Unfinished* an R rating because of "disturbing images of Holocaust atrocities, including graphic nudity," the latter in a Nazi-coerced scene of young women in a ritual bath.

The rating, which prevents anyone under 17 from watching the film unless accompanied by a parent or adult guardian, will not block the commercial screening of the film. But it will prevent the film from being shown in high school classes as an educational tool, to the particular disappointment of its creator Yael Hersonski, who looks barely 17 herself and says she made it "not only for now but for future generations."

## IN THE ERA OF THE HOLOCAUST, 29 WHO MADE A DIFFERENCE

(Continued from page 4)

tect the Jews in Budapest who had survived the annihilation, overseen by Adolf Eichmann, of half a million Hungarian Jews in the course of 1944. With a staff of hundreds, most of them Jewish, Wallenberg worked night and day distributing passports and providing safe housing, food and medical care while the pro-Nazi Arrow Cross movement committed anti-Semitic outrages and the Red Army closed in on the city. Wallenberg was to disappear forever in the hands of the Soviet forces, his exact fate debated for decades.

But the diplomat hero that Mr. Holbrooke highlighted in his remarks was Aristides de Sousa Mendes, an aristocratic Portuguese consul general in Bordeaux, France, from 1938 to July 1940. In May 1940, he faced pitiable crowds of refugees from the German invasion of France, many of them Jews camped in the streets and parks and desperate for visas allowing escape into Spain and Portugal.

He also faced an absolute prohibition by Portugal's dictator, António de Oliveira Salazar, against issuing transit visas to refugees and especially to Jews.

In mid-June, the consul general agonized for several days, cutting himself off from the world, at one moment agitated, at the next despondent. Suddenly he proceeded to his office and announced: "I'm giving everyone visas. There will be no more nationalities, races, or religions."

The next days were frenzied. All day and into the night, visas were issued. Fees were waived. No one filled in names. Sousa Mendes traveled to the Spanish border to make certain that refugees were able to cross. He confronted Spanish border guards when needed — and continued to sign visas.

Lisbon was upset and on June 23 stripped him of his authority. Returning to his property in Portugal the next month, he only disturbed the authorities more by acknowledging his deeds and defending them straightforwardly on humanitarian and religious grounds. Dismissed from the diplomatic service and with 12 children to support, he had to sell his family estate and eventually died in poverty, supported by an allowance from Lisbon's Jewish community, where he ate at a soup kitchen.

The book relates its dramatic stories in relatively undramatic fashion. Rather like a legal record, it quotes testimony given to Yad Vashem; the names and words of people who were rescued come and go with only a quick glimpse at who they are and what became of them later. And yet those names are reminders of the preciousness of each woman, man and child in the ranks of those caught up by the millions in this nightmare.

The book can refer only in passing to what motivated its diplomat heroes. Some spoke of humanitarian duties, others of Christian beliefs; both groups cited simple human feelings. "Our father told us that he had heard a voice, that of his conscience or of God," recalled a son of Aristides de Sousa Mendes.

The book also recognizes that the inherent tension between a diplomatic profession resting on following instructions and the moral demands arising from unforeseen and overwhelming human suffering has not gone away. In his introduction to the book, Mr. Holbrooke mentions refugees from Vietnam and Darfur.

First published in *The New York Times*.

## GERMANY'S TOP NAZI-HUNTER FINDS NEW LEAD IN BRAZILIAN ARCHIVE

German investigators trying to track down Nazi criminals before they die may have had their best break in years after discovering a trove of Brazilian immigration files more than half a century old.

Kurt Schrimm, the top German justice official hunting Nazi fugitives, said his team stumbled on archives identifying several hundred Germans who moved to Brazil in the decade after World War II and who may be linked to Nazi crimes. Though only a fraction are still likely to be alive, Schrimm plans to follow up on the lead with Brazilian officials.

Previous leads have included sifting through 1945 war trial documents from Soviet archives involving German prisoners of war and Soviet collaborators. A military-history archive in Prague was found to contain complete files on the Nazi *Waffen-SS* up to 1943. In 1990, Italian court documents on SS atrocities were discovered after having disappeared in the 1950s.

The Brazilian files focus on suspected Nazi criminals entering on provisional passports. Schrimm and his team followed up leads from a Brazilian source who came across letters warning the authorities of Nazis trying to slip into the country with travel documents issued by the Red Cross. Little was done to bar their entry, Schrimm said.

South America became the refuge of several high-ranking Nazi officers after the Third Reich's collapse, including Holocaust architect Adolf Eichmann, death-camp doctor Josef Mengele and Gestapo member Klaus Barbie.

"As hopeful as we are about the Brazil findings, just 5 percent of the suspects may still be alive and able to stand trial," Schrimm said. "The Nazi commanders are all dead, but that doesn't make the crimes of their younger subordinates any less prosecutable."

Schrimm's unit currently has about 20 investigations open. Schrimm's Central Office works alongside such organizations as the Los Angeles-based Simon Wiesenthal Center. The Wiesenthal Center graded Germany with a B in its 2009 ranking of efforts to bring Nazi criminals to justice. The U.S. received an A.

Schrimm dismissed the rating, saying his Central Office doesn't like being graded like a school kid.

"As long as there's a possibility that these people are alive, we'll continue our work," Schrimm said in an earlier interview.

Schrimm, whose team taps on computers in two work rooms, gave a tour of one of the dusty file spaces piled to the ceiling with dog-eared documents detailing Nazi crimes that took place more than six decades ago. The quiet setting was a far cry from the 1960s and 1970s, when the unit was at its busiest tracking down Nazis. Since its foundation in 1958, the Central Office has conducted more than 7,400 investigations.

The case against Demjanjuk came about after an investigator accidentally stumbled on a report on the Internet that the U.S. was seeking to revoke his passport. Demjanjuk's name was known because he had been convicted in 1988, charged with being the *Treblinka* death-camp guard known as Ivan the Terrible — only to be acquitted in 1993 by Israel's Supreme Court after doubt about his identity emerged.

The Central Office, suspicious about his true identity, followed up on clues gained from already scheduled visits to Israel and the U.S. Once Schrimm's team assembled what it thought was enough information to convict, they turned it over to state prosecutors.

"A few years ago nobody talked about Demjanjuk any more — he fell into the memory hole," Schrimm said.

## MYTHS AND TRUTHS

(Continued from page 10)

community took part in them, not miscreants or 'marginal people.' In fact, the participation by the local elites and by upstanding members of the community, who remained in good standing after the events, bestowed upon these crimes a kind of official imprimatur. These were quasi-normal events, and even remained a subject of conversation for years to come at local gatherings. The plunder was a widespread social practice, sanctioned by norms."

After the war, he notes, Western nations were able to reflect on what had happened, but Stalinism crushed any public discussion in Poland about the war, the Holocaust, anti-Semitism or Polish culpability, enabling Poles to entrench their view of themselves as noble, heroic victims.

Throughout his writings, Gross emphasizes greed as a motivating factor for the anti-Semitism. But can greed alone provide the explanation? "The direct motive to commit the majority of murders and denunciations of Jews hiding in the countryside was the desire to plunder them, to take over their belongings, which were imagined to be considerable," Gross answers. "This was a pernicious consequence of a stereotype of Jewish riches. People imagined that by killing these people, they would get hold of their riches."

"But the barbarism was released by the Nazis," he says. "The war in the East was very different from the war in the West. In the East, it was a more brutalizing experience. The Nazis regarded the Poles with overt contempt, as if they were subhuman."

Everyone was a witness to horrible violence. It was dehumanizing."

Yet, he notes, there were some who helped and rescued Jews. "There were some who, even though they were anti-Semitic, helped Jews. One woman called on



her fellow Poles, saying, 'The Jews are our enemy, but in this situation, we, as Christians, cannot be passive observers of murder.' A woman in *Kielce* hid Jews from the pogrom; she later told a journalist that she is a devout Catholic and that when she is not working, she is praying.

"But there were not enough people like this."

Gross rejects the idea, however, of collective responsibility. "There is no such thing as collective responsibility. I do not bear responsibility for the actions of the Holocaust. But we do have a collective sense of identity, and, as a Pole, that identity must include not only Polish victimhood, but also Poles as perpetrators. It is possible to be both a noble hero and a villain, and we have been both. We must accept this."

The Holocaust, says Gross, if studied at all, was not integrated into Polish national history. "For Poles, the history of World War II has not included the Holocaust, as if it were a separate part of history. Jewish historians also kept it separate, as if it were only their responsibility, and as if there were no interface between Poles and Jews."

This foundation, he says, is simply wrong. In rewriting the history of World War II in Poland, Gross is also introducing a new historiography, based on narratives and testimonies. He is learning, he says, from his own experience.

"I came across the testimony of Szmul Wassersztajn, who described the crime in *Jedwabne*, by chance. And yet, somehow, I was unable to accept that it wasn't an exaggeration, but a pretty faithful description of what had happened. The events he was describing didn't register in my mind. It took me years to comprehend and accept."

Historians of the Holocaust have tended to rely on institutional documents, following the lead of one of the founders of the field of Holocaust studies, Raul Hilberg, who dismissed the importance of personal testimonies. Furthermore, says Gross, "Information provided by Jews about the fate they suffered during the war has been viewed with incredulity — this is a consequence of the unbelievable scope of the crimes the Nazis committed against the Jews. The survivors themselves often repeated that they could not believe what they had seen."

The disbelief was also augmented by the memory of the Allies' propaganda hoaxes in the First World War and the pervasive demeaning stereotype of the Jews in Christian cultural tradition.

Yet gradually, historians have come to realize that these testimonies often provide the only information available. They were deliberately written, Gross contends, "in order to provide an exact account of the catastrophe. Since it appeared impossible to save the mass of Jewish people methodically annihilated in the Nazi-organized killing process, a sense of obligation grew among the Jewish record-keepers to at least preserve the evidence of the very process of destruction, to produce an account of what had happened, without embellishing the story, even having to overcome their own incredulity at what was happening around them."

To this day, many Jews often repeat that "the Poles were worse than the Germans" in their treatment of the Jews. Gross sighs as he answers, "Everyone knows that it was the Germans who invented the Holocaust and built the camps. But I think that the sense of betrayal is much stronger with regard to the Poles. For Jews, relationships with the Poles are much more complicated than with the Germans. They were neighbors. There is a terrible sense of betrayal because these were murderous attacks, including torture and unspeakable barbarity, perpetrated by people they knew. And many Jews also felt a nostalgic love for Poland, which had been their homeland for so many generations."

## A HATRED THAT RESISTS EXORCISM

(Continued from page 4)

of Israel is not necessarily anti-Semitic any more than criticism of any particular Jew is.

But spend some time submerged in these books — by no means a pleasant or an easy task — and these notions recede into irrelevance. Mr. Wistrich's volume presents itself as an encyclopedic history, and is so full of details and citations, it overwhelms. We hear from a 17th-century Viennese preacher ("After Satan Christians have no greater enemies than the Jews"), Karl Marx ("What is the worldly cult of the Jew? Huckstering. What is his worldly god? Money"), and the Hezbollah secretary general, Hassan Nasrallah ("If we searched the entire world for a person more cowardly, despicable, weak, and feeble in psyche, mind, ideology, and religion, we would not find anyone like the Jew").

Mr. Wistrich offers less a history, though, than a contemporary indictment with historical background. This makes his book difficult to read. Its approach is one of cumulative examples culminating in jihadists and their apologists. Its rosterlike style can become tedious but the examples are powerfully dispiriting.

*Trials of the Diaspora* has a similar effect, though Mr. Julius is more focused and analytical, dissecting types of enmity, the nature of anti-Semitic myth, and its influence on the greatest examples of English literature. From his analysis, we begin to see too just how different anti-Semitism is from other forms of racism.

Racism attaches negative attributes onto people bearing a particular biological heritage. Such characteristics are passed on; they are inherited. The hatred is focused; the perceived threat can be excised. In a way, racism is a materialist or physical passion: the problem and the solution are concrete.

While anti-Semitism has tapped into racial hatreds in modern times, Mr. Julius and Mr. Wistrich highlight its traditional reliance on conspiracy: the hidden plot. Anti-Semitism isn't just a matter of asserting unpleasant or reprehensible attributes. It sees the Jew as an antinomian threat, overturning all ethical laws. The Jew works in secret, creating invisible alliances, pulling elaborate strings, undermining society's foundations. This is why the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* has found such a fertile international ground. That 19th-century document purports to be the secret minutes of such a plotting ensemble of Jews. It is the counterfeit confirmation of a long-held belief.

Anti-Semitism is a metaphysical passion, not a materialist one. It doesn't even require a Jewish presence.

One reason anti-Semites have been so obsessed with the issue of finance in the modern world is that money is the circulatory system of capitalist society. It is mysterious, manipulable: the Jew's perfect instrument. The Jew, first seen as a theological spoiler, becomes a metaphysical and monetary spoiler. The medieval image of the Jew was related to the vampire, Mr. Julius shows; the modern anti-Semitic vision sees the Jew as a guzzler of a society's lifeblood.

This amplifies virulence as well: the Jew, for the anti-Semite, is not just a danger, but the greatest danger exerting the greatest powers. In current paradoxical parlance, the Jew is, in essence, a Nazi. The Jew

does not just devour a Christian child's blood, but the blood of all innocent children, and more completely, the blood of all innocents.

Is any evidence needed? Appearances are irrelevant; argument is illusion. What use is visible fact when the power of the Jew is in the web woven below the surface? Jewish autonomy is itself evidence of Jewish threat. Moreover, confrontation requires courage. Anti-Semitism never sees itself as a hatred; it views itself as a

revelation. An attack on the Jew is never offensive; it is always defensive. This is precisely how the Nazis portrayed it. It is precisely how Islamist ideology does as well, evident, for example, in the principles and founding documents of Hamas and Hezbollah.

In a recent book, "Nazi Propaganda for the Arab World" (Yale), the historian Jeffrey Herf shows how Nazi propagandists literally taught Arab audiences the language of anti-Semitism through popular radio programs in Arabic. Nazi ideology bears many resemblances to that of contemporary Islamic extremism, some the consequence of careful teaching. That teaching is still present in the Arab world, amplified by political leaders and imams, often annexed to denigrations of Jews taken from Islamic sources

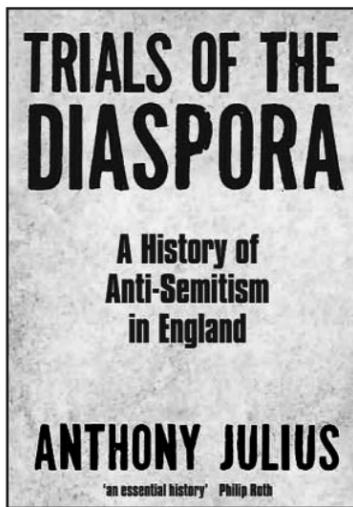
The result, Mr. Julius and Mr. Wistrich recognize, has been one of the most historically noxious forms of anti-Semitic mythology, which has also fed into political debates in the West and cannot be overlooked or easily dismissed. It is easy

enough to discern when responsible criticisms of Israel veer into something reprehensible: the structure of anti-Semitic belief is not subtle. There is a wildly exaggerated scale of condemnation, in which extremes of contempt confront a country caricatured as the world's worst enemy of peace; such attacks (and the use of Nazi analogies) are beyond evidence and beyond pragmatic political debate or protest. Israel's autonomy — its very presence — is the problem. Mr. Julius writes, "Israel is the only state in the world whose legitimacy is widely denied and whose destruction is publicly advocated and threatened; Israelis are the only citizens of a state whose indiscriminate murder is widely considered justifiable."

But even if we leave aside such manifestations, it is clear enough that anti-Semitism requires much deeper understanding than it usually gets. Last week, for example, Hannah Rosenthal, the United States' special envoy to monitor and combat anti-Semitism, spoke in Kazakhstan, asserting the similarity of anti-Semitism and Islamophobia.

This is not an uncommon assertion (and cases of unwarranted discrimination are always similar), but Islamophobia is a concept developed within the last two decades by those who wish to elevate Islam's reputation in the West; anti-Semitism was a concept eagerly embraced and expanded by haters of Jews. One was constructed by a group's supporters, the other by a group's enemies.

Moreover, much of what is characterized as Islamophobia today arises out of taking seriously the impassioned claims of doctrinal allegiance made by Islamic terrorist groups and their supporters. Anti-Semitism, though, has nothing to do with any claims at all.



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