

MARTYRDOM & RESISTANCE



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MAKING SENSE OF TROUBLESOME TIMES

ASYV FOURTEENTH ANNUAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE ON HOLOCAUST EDUCATION

The Education Department of the American Society for Yad Vashem and their Young Leadership Associates held its fourteenth professional development conference on Holocaust education. The Association of Teachers of Social Studies /United Federation of Teachers and the School of Education of Manhattanville College co-sponsored the program this year. Participants in this year's program, which included educators from all five boroughs of New York City and from the tri-state area, received In-Service credits for completing the conference. The program also included a panel display of the Legend of the Lodz Ghetto Curriculum created and developed by the International School for Holocaust Studies of Yad Vashem, Jerusalem.

Commissioner Salvatore Cassano of the FDNY and Dr. Samuel Klagsbrun, Executive Medical Director of Four Winds Hospital, were the keynote speakers. Carolyn Herbst, Past President/Past Chairperson of the ATSS/UFT talked about how this conference is a valuable resource for increasing awareness and sensitivity to intolerance and injustice. In her remarks to the conference participants, she emphasized the importance of learning from the lessons of the Holocaust and applying these lessons to teaching about human rights issues and making these messages meaningful to our students.

This year's theme, "Making Sense of Troublesome Times: Challenges and Solutions – A Retrospective – The Holocaust, 9/11 and More," presented educators with strategies on how to incorporate Holocaust studies into their lesson plans and curricula, making these themes and topics relevant when teaching about the events of 9/11. The workshop themes complemented the keynote speakers' remarks: "Strategies in Teaching about the Events of 9/11"; "Using Survivor Testimonies in the Classroom"; "Art of Children from the Holocaust – Studying an Artifact"; and "Propaganda, Character Development and Anti-bullying Behavior: Its Impact on Our Youth."

Eli Zborowski, Chairman of the American Society for Yad Vashem, said, "We put a

face on Holocaust victims in order to introduce a human element to the story. Transmitting these messages is our hope for the future. We are grateful to you, the teachers, whose responsibility it is to educate future generations about the Holocaust, when there will be no more survivors left to tell the story." Commenting on the 30th anniversary of the American Society, Mr. Zborowski

"What makes today very special for me is that my oldest child, Rebecca, who bears my grandmother's name, is here with me. It is the first time she has come to a Yad Vashem event. It is her first time beginning to learn about what her great-grandparents and their parents, cousins, uncles, aunts, sisters, and brothers lived through. It is time for her to begin to learn about the strength

standing up to lies and preserving the truth is imperative. I want her to know that over the years, we have had the privilege of touching, meeting, and educating thousands of teachers. And, through your dedication and work, tens of thousands of students across the New York City metropolitan area have been touched and have learned about the Holocaust.

"And why does it matter? Because as the years pass, people become more audacious in their claims that the Holocaust never happened. The lies abound not just in Iran, where the officials say that the Holocaust never happened, but right here in our great country... Most of all, I want to thank each one of you for being here. Your efforts and commitment are the building blocks that will protect all of us from ever seeing horrors like the Holocaust again."

Commissioner Cassano spoke about the importance of commemorating and learning about the events of 9/11 and the significance of education in preventing such horrific events from repeating themselves. He reminded us of the similarities in teaching about the Holocaust and the events of 9/11 because of the similar themes that should be considered: understanding human behavior, the dangers of extreme and baseless hatred, creating remembrance and public memory, commemorating the event, remembering and honoring the memory of the heroes and the victims, and ensuring they are not forgotten. Commissioner Cassano also talked about the challenges the FDNY continues to face in a post-9/11 era, how the events of 9/11 impacted the FDNY, and how these challenges are met. He also took questions from the audience.

Our first Conference was held in 1999. With each yearly Conference, we have moved towards our collective goal to empower educators with an educationally enriching experience so that they are better equipped to transmit the lessons of the Holocaust to their students. In 2002, when we offered educators the opportunity to participate in our first post-9/11 professional development program, Dr. Samuel Klagsbrun was our keynote speaker. Using

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Caroline Massel, Co-Chair, Young Leadership Associates; Rebecca Massel; Eli Zborowski, Chairman of the American Society for Yad Vashem; Dr. Marlene W. Yahalom, Director of Education; Tali Yahalom, Young Leadership Associates; Commissioner Salvatore Cassano, FDNY, keynote speaker.

added that continuing the efforts and accomplishments of the American Society in education and remembrance is critical to keep the memory of the Holocaust alive. He applauded the success of its Education Department and Young Leadership Associates in this venture.

Caroline Massel, Co-Chair of the Young Leadership Associates, welcomed the participants and spoke about the deep commitment she has, as a grandchild of Holocaust survivors, to the cause of Holocaust remembrance. She commended the attendees for their shared dedication to Holocaust remembrance through education by their presence at the program – dedicating a day off to join colleagues to learn more about strategies to teach about the Holocaust in the classroom.

of her people and her family. It is time for her to begin to learn about the unbelievable acts of kindness performed by countless Righteous Gentiles.

"For my family, today we begin the process of transmitting the stories of what my family lived through to the next generation.

"While my daughter will begin to learn about what happened to her family, today, I am hopeful that she will learn another lesson. Not everyone who learns about or teaches the Holocaust and its lessons has a direct familial connection to the Holocaust. What I hope she begins to learn today is that there are people, like many of you here, who have no connection to the Holocaust but are staunchly committed to the truth and to teaching the next generation what happened over 70 years ago. There are people who understand that

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RESEARCHERS MAKE NEW DISCOVERY OF JEWS MURDERED BY POLISH VILLAGERS DURING HOLOCAUST

One discovery has shown that twenty Jewish women were murdered in a small village after being "loaned" to Polish landowners by a nearby ghetto for agricultural labor. According to the Polish Institute of National Remembrance and Polish attorneys, the murders took place in 1941 in *Bzury*, a town in northeast Poland.

There is no certainty around whether the murderers are alive today, or whether it will be possible to locate and convict them. Public Attorney Radoslaw Igniatew, one of the leading researchers of the infamous *Jedwabne* pogrom, believes there is a fair chance of at least locating witnesses who, at the time the acts took place, were minors, which would likely shed light on details of the crime. According to Igniatew, there is no doubt that those who carried out the acts were Poles.

From documentation that was preserved since the rise of Communism in Poland – in 1948 – and was scanned by Professor Barbara Enkelking of the Polish Academy of Science, who has been dealing with matters like these for many years, it is evident that one of the murderers was, in his time, sentenced to life imprisonment. He perished in 1957. Enkelking also discovered that the murderers were rebuked by the Germans over the fact they did not return the women to the ghetto, per their agreement.

"There is no doubt that this was a pre-planned crime," Igniatew explained to the

press. "When the Jews were sent out to work, farmers ordered their weapons – clubs with iron heads – from the local blacksmith. Those clubs were used to beat the women all over their bodies until the last beating: a deadly blow to the head."

"Mass graves were dug in the forest, into which the corpses were thrown. Some of the victims were raped before being killed," he continued.

Igniatew said he could not explain the motivations for the murders, but that it was clear those men would not dare carry out such an act against Polish women. "As for Jews – everything was allowed and acceptable, and no one would be punished."

Meanwhile, an investigation is underway at the *Bialystok* branch of Poland's Institute of National Remembrance into two pogroms that took place in that region in the summer of 1941. In the town of *Radzilow*, local Jews were gathered in the market square and led by townspeople to a granary, which was subsequently set alight. An estimated 1,000 men were killed in the flames.

Another investigation is also being carried out into the murder of Jews in *Wąsosz*, where townspeople, inspired by the Nazis, killed about 100 of their Jewish neighbors. The State Attorney intends on digging up the corpses from their graves in order to assess the cause of death.

GERMANY APPROVES ONE-TIME GRANT FOR SURVIVORS OF NAZI GHETTOS

Germany will pay Holocaust survivors who worked in ghettos during World War II a one-time payment of 2,000 euros, in addition to the regular monthly stipends they receive from the German Ghetto

security, as well as a one-time payment of 2,000 euros.

In 2007, after pressure spearheaded by the Claims Conference, the German government established a compensation fund for Holocaust victims who worked "without force" during their internment in a Nazi-era ghetto. The fund's one-time payment of 2,000 euros was intended for ghetto survivors who had been rejected for German Social Security payments.

The one-time payment, known as the Ghetto Fund, and the monthly Ghetto Pension awards were mutually exclusive. Ghetto survivors could receive one or the other but not both, but recent changes in German law currently allow eligible Jewish survivors to receive both payments as compensation for their work in a Nazi-era ghetto.

The German pension system intends to review claims from 56,000 survivors that had previously been rejected. "Ghetto survivors who have not yet submitted a request to the Ghetto Fund to receive a pension are being asked to do so immediately," a statement from the Claims Conference said. Survivors can get more information at www.claimscon.org/ghettopension.



Jewish "slave workers" in striped uniforms are seen in a Nazi ammunition factory near *Dachau* concentration camp during World War II.

Fund. The decision comes in the wake of negotiations between the German government and the Claims Conference, which works to get financial compensation and restitution for Holocaust survivors.

The German government recently eased the criteria for compensation, making additional ghetto survivors – including those who did not work under forced labor conditions – eligible. Under the new agreement, Jews who worked in ghettos will be eligible for payments from German social

ACCUSED NAZI GUARD DIES AT 91

Former Ohio autoworker John Demjanjuk died March 17 in Germany, ending nearly 35 years of legal battles with officials in three countries who claimed he was a guard in a Nazi death camp. He was 91.

During his decades-long trials, Demjanjuk was imprisoned in the United States, sentenced to death in Israel – until its highest court freed him – and, last May, convicted in Germany for serving as an accessory in the deaths of more than 28,000 people at a death camp.

A German court sentenced Demjanjuk to five years in prison but he was freed while he appealed the conviction.

Demjanjuk had been living in a nursing home in *Bad Feilnbach* in southern Germany, according to The Associated Press. He died nearly three years after being taken from his home in suburban Cleveland and flown overseas.

The cause of death was unclear, though Demjanjuk's family has said he suffered incurable bone marrow disease.

TURKEY "OWES" APOLOGY FOR DEATHS OF HOLOCAUST ESCAPEES

Ankara must show the courage to apologize for its role in the *Struma* tragedy in which 764 people died in the Black Sea after being neglected by Turkey while escaping from the Holocaust, a leading Jewish-Turkish businessman has said. "Just like German Chancellor Angela Merkel apologized for Turks who were murdered by neo-Nazis, Ankara must have the same courage,"

İshak Alaton said. Alaton was accompanied by Turkish musician and author Zülfü Livaneli, who wrote his latest novel, *Serenad*, about the *Struma* disaster. Representatives of the Jewish community also joined the memorial service along Istanbul's Seraglio Point coastline.

"This is a kind of open secret, but Turkey must acknowledge and apologize just like other responsible states have to. Britain, Romania and Turkey share this shame," Livaneli said during a service in Istanbul commemorating the 70th anniversary of the tragedy.

Alaton said he was only 15 years old when he carried bread to the ship *Struma*

every morning while it was anchored at the Istanbul shore.

"I realized that they were sent to death when a morning came and we did not find the boat where it had been. Only the Jewish community helped out those people who were living in that old boat with diseases and hunger," said Alaton.

The *Struma* disaster happened following an official declaration by the British authorities that no Jews would be accepted to Palestine. As such, Turkish authorities did not allow anyone to leave the boat, according to reports. Turkish authorities cut the chain of the anchor and, due to a breakdown in the engine, tugboats attached ropes to the boat and pulled it out of the Bosphorus, leaving it in the Black Sea, where a Soviet submarine shot the boat on Feb. 24, 1942. Some 764 people died in the incident.

Only one person, a 20-year-old man, was rescued – 24 hours after the event. Some 760 of the bodies were never recovered.



Jewish-Turkish businessman Alaton (2nd from R), musician and author Livaneli (2nd from L), and other Jewish Turks remember the victims of 1942 *Struma* tragedy.

HOUSE PANEL APPROVES BILL TO ALLOW HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS TO SUE FOR INSURANCE BENEFITS

In a plea for justice, a House panel pushed ahead legislation that would allow thousands of aging Holocaust survivors in the United States to sue European insurance companies for benefits they estimate total \$20 billion.

The Foreign Affairs Committee approved a bill by voice vote that would give survivors access to U.S. courts and force companies such as Germany's Allianz SE and Italy's Assicurazioni Generali to disclose lists of policies held by Jews before World War II. Among the policies are life insurance, annuities, and even dowries that Jewish families purchased for their daughters, envisioning that they would receive the money upon turning 18.

In many cases, insurance company records and government archives are the only proof of existence of the insurance policies.

"This bill is the last hope for Holocaust survivors to obtain justice," said Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, (R-Fla.) the committee chairman, whose district is home to many of the estimated 100,000 Holocaust survivors in the United States.

Among those attending the committee session was David Schacter, 82, who survived the Auschwitz and *Buchenwald* death camps and is president of the Holocaust Survivors Foundation USA.

"In very plain and ordinary language, what happened today is we got back some of the dignity taken away from us," Schacter, of Miami, said in a telephone in-

terview. "Anyone can sue anyone. ... We're the only ones not allowed to sue."

The legislation has lingered in Congress for about five years, and the House Judiciary Committee still must consider the bill. It faces opposition from the U.S. State Department and the German government. Germany points to the billions of dollars in reparations and payments it has made to survivors and other victims of the Nazi regime. The International Commission on Holocaust Era Insurance Claims paid about \$305 million, and an additional \$200 million went to humanitarian programs for survivors.

The State Department told the committee that the legislation would force the reopening of long-settled Holocaust-era insurance cases that were resolved through diplomatic agreements, restitution programs through other countries, or international commissions.

The bill would "open the floodgates to litigation, undermine commitments made by the United States, and weaken our ability to achieve such settlements in the future," the State Department said.

The department said the bill would deal a setback to the cause of bringing justice to Holocaust survivors and other victims of the Nazi era rather than advancing the cause.

Survivors estimate that the policies were worth about \$600 million in 1938, and a calculation based on the savings bond yield would put that amount at \$20 billion today.

AUSTRIA PRESENTS PLANS TO RESTORE WWII MAUTHAUSEN CONCENTRATION CAMP

Austrian authorities have presented plans to restore and revamp the Nazis' former *Mauthausen* concentration camp.

The Nazis shot, gassed, beat or worked to death about half the 200,000 inmates in the main camp or its affiliates around the villages of *Mauthausen* and *Gusen*, about 12 miles east of the city of *Linz*. It is now a site for commemorating Holocaust

victims and learning about the horrors of history.

The Austrian Interior Ministry said that projects include an exhibit about mass extermination, expanding educational programs, and the creation of a new space specifically for the remembrance of those who died.

The first phase of the revamp is expected to cost \$2.4 million and be completed in early 2013.

HOLOCAUST DATABASE UNITES LOST COUSINS

More than a decade after they died, children of Nahum and Yaakov Korenblum meet for the first time at Yad Vashem thanks to a recently uploaded family photo discovered on its comprehensive online database.

For five long years during World War II, Nahum Korenblum never left the side of his younger brother Yaakov as the two fled the Nazi invasion of Poland, escaped forced labor camps across Europe, and ultimately joined the Soviet Red Army. There, they were separated and dispatched abroad, never to meet again.

Recently, more than a decade after they died, their children were united at Israel's Yad Vashem Holocaust memorial thanks to a recently uploaded family photo discov-



Dorit, Rafael and Bracha Korenblum unite with their cousin Gennadiy Koramblyum (second from left).

ered on its comprehensive online database of Holocaust victims.

It was just the latest successful byproduct of the memorial's database, established years ago as a means of commemoration aimed at gathering the exact names of all the six million Jewish victims of the Nazi genocide.

But since the database went online in 2004, it has become a powerful genealogy tool that has led to hundreds of emotional reunions of long-lost families.

In 1958, shortly after Yaakov moved to Israel, he and his wife filled out a Page of Testimony at Yad Vashem commemorating his dead parents. Nahum had meanwhile settled in Ukraine, where his surname was mangled into Koramblyum.

For the rest of their lives, the brothers searched for each other in vain, the paper trail often coming to a dead end because of the differing spellings of their names.

In 2006, Yaakov's daughter, Bracha Fleishman-Korenblum, updated the online entry, attaching an old black-and-white photo of her grandparents and four of their children – including Nahum and Yaakov.

Several months ago, one of Nahum's American grandchildren stumbled upon the entry and was shocked to recognize his grandfather in the picture. He reached out to the Korenblum clan in Israel and a reunion was put into motion.

FRENCH RAILWAY HANDS OVER PAPERS ON DEPORTATIONS

France's state-run railway has handed over its digital copies of its archives for the period covering World War II, when it deported tens of thousands of Jews, to three Holocaust museums.

The documents, covering the period from 1939 to 1945, have been delivered to the Shoah Memorial in Paris, Yad Vashem in Jerusalem, and the Holocaust Museum in Washington, said a statement.

This gesture of openness was intended to help the work of researchers and reinforce the company's policy of transparency about its past, the statement added.

SNCF president Guillaume Pepy admitted a year ago that the company had been

In February, Gennadiy Koramblyum, of Queens, New York, and his son, who is named after Yaakov, arrived in Israel for the wedding of one of their newly discovered relatives.

"It was joy, I cried, I didn't sleep for two nights," Gennadiy Koramblyum said. "Since I was a little boy, I remember my father told me 'I have another brother, he is somewhere.' He said 'I always held him in my hands, I never let anyone separate us.'"

Koramblyum's father moved with the family to the United States in 1991, and he died there in 1997. Yaakov passed away in Israel four years later.

"I am sure they are happy now upstairs seeing us all here together," Koramblyum said, shaking. "This means everything to me."

His Israeli cousin shared that sentiment, saying the children's joy was mixed with sorrow that their fathers never managed to reunite.

"It's sad, but they meet in heaven," said Rafael Korenblum, who bears a striking resemblance to his late father Yaakov. "A circle has been closed. There was something unresolved all these years, it lingered, and now there is closure."

Cynthia Wroclawski, the manager of Yad Vashem's name recovery project, said such breakthroughs are being made possible by the increased openness of aging survivors and the curiosity and tech savvy of their descendants.

"The lock is being opened by the younger generation. They have more intuition and more interest," she said. "That's the power of the database, the torch of memory is being passed."

The project began in 1955 and had reached three million confirmed names by the time the online database was launched. More than a million more names have been added in the seven years since.

Efforts are continuing, primarily in Eastern Europe, where name collection is particularly difficult because Jews there were often rounded up, shot, and dumped in mass graves without any documentation. The names of Jews killed at German death camps, on the other hand, are easier to collect because of meticulous Nazi records.

The information can be accessed online in English, Hebrew, and Russian. Yad Vashem actively encourages survivors and their kin to come forth and fill out Pages of Testimony for those killed, before their names and stories are lost forever.

"We are not giving up, there is still much more to do," Wroclawski said. "For these families, you see the rift of the Holocaust is getting smaller and that some kind of healing process is taking place."

"a cog in the Nazi extermination machine" during the occupation of France.

It had provided space at the station in Bobigny, north of Paris, from which 20,000 Jews were sent to perish in death camps between 1943 and 1944.

Goods trains carried 76,000 Jews to death camps and destinations in France between 1942 and 1945.

"All the documents have been gathered and numbered. No sorting has been done so as to guarantee access to all documents from the period," the statement added.

In 1995 France's then president Jacques Chirac acknowledged that the French state, under the Vichy regime, had "seconded" the slaughter.

BAPTISM OF HOLOCAUST VICTIMS SPARKS ANGER

Anne Frank, the Jewish girl whose diary and death in a Nazi concentration camp made her a symbol of the Holocaust, was allegedly baptized posthumously in February by a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, according to whistleblower Helen Radkey, a former member of the church.

The ritual was conducted in a Mormon temple in the Dominican Republic, according to Radkey.

Radkey said she discovered that Annelies Marie "Anne" Frank, who died at *Bergen-Belsen* death camp in 1945 at age 15, was baptized by proxy. Mormons have submitted versions of her name at least a dozen times for proxy rites and carried out the ritual at least nine times from 1989 to 1999, according to Radkey. But Radkey says this is the first time in more than a decade that Frank's name has been discovered in a database only open to Mormons.

A screen shot of the database sent by Radkey shows a page for Frank stating "completed" next to categories labeled "Baptism" and "Confirmation," with the date February 18, 2012, and the name of the Santo Domingo Dominican Republic Temple.

Mormon posthumous proxy baptisms for Holocaust victims or Jews who are not direct descendants of Mormons have continued, despite church vows to stop such practices.

Negotiations between Mormon and Jewish leaders led to a 1995 agreement for the church to stop the posthumous baptism of all Jews, except in the case of direct an-

cestors of Mormons, but Radkey says she found that some Mormons had failed to adhere to the agreement.

The name of Nobel Peace Prize winner Elie Wiesel was recently submitted to the restricted genealogy website as "ready" for posthumous proxy baptism, though the church says the rite is reserved for the deceased, and Wiesel is alive. Wiesel, a Holocaust survivor, was among a group of Jewish leaders who campaigned against the practice and prompted the 2010 pact by which the Mormon Church promises to at least prevent proxy baptism requests for Holocaust victims.

Wiesel called on Republican presidential candidate and Mormon Mitt Romney, a former Mormon bishop who has donated millions to the church, to speak out about the practice.

Radkey's discovery of another possible proxy baptism for Frank follows an apology from the Mormon Church for recent posthumous baptisms of Nazi hunter Simon Wiesenthal's parents.

Following the events presented above Mormon leaders have put up a virtual firewall in their massive genealogical database to block out anyone who attempts to access the names of hundreds of thousands of Holocaust victims the church has agreed not to posthumously baptize.

The church said the move is aimed at ending the practice, but critics say it merely serves to block anyone from monitoring whether the posthumous baptisms continue.

NEW HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL IN BREST

Brest (Belarus) marked the creation of a memorial to Holocaust victims, which was erected at the site of a mass grave of 350 Jews from *Brest* murdered by the Nazis during World War II. The opening of the monument, located in a local cemetery, was dedicated to the 70th anniversary of Nazi Germany's attack on the USSR.

At the opening ceremony, the organizers explained that the remains of Jews killed by the Nazis in September 1942 on the outskirts of the former village of *Gershony* were reburied in this mass grave. This site now falls within the city limits of *Brest*.

According to former residents' recollections, the Nazis' victims executed here in *Gershony* included old men, women, and children. This is the site of one of the very first mass executions of Jews during the war.

"In the *Brest* region alone, there were 76 places where numbers of Jews were exe-

cuted during World War II. To date, 17 memorials to Holocaust victims have been erected, and this year, two more will be raised in the *Ivatsevichi* district," explained



Boris Bruck, Chairman of the *Brest* Jewish organization "Brisk." Participants in the event laid wreaths and flowers at the monument and remembered the victims with a moment of silence.

NORWEGIAN PRIME MINISTER APOLOGIZES TO JEWS

"Without diminishing the Nazis' responsibility, it is time to recognize that police and other Norwegians took part in the arrest and deportation of Jews," said Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg. "Today, I find it appropriate to express our deep apology that this could have happened on Norwegian soil."

The prime minister was speaking at a Holocaust remembrance ceremony at the site where, 70 years ago, 532 Norwegian Jews were forced onto the ship *Donau* and sent to Auschwitz.

"During the war, a total of 772 Norwegian Jews and Jewish refugees were arrested and deported. Only 34 survived," said the prime minister.

"The murders were without a doubt the Nazis' work, but it was Norwegians who arrested. It was Norwegians who drove the cars. And it happened in Norway."

Twenty years ago, as the Prime Minister noted, Norway's parliament provided both private and communal restitution for the

"economic liquidation" the Norwegian Jews had been subjected to, which signified, "a moral acceptance of the state's responsibility" for what had befallen the country's Jews.

"Now, 20 years later, Prime Minister Stoltenberg has gone an important step further with his expression of regret for the role played by some Norwegians in the Holocaust," said AJC Executive Director David Harris. "His words on International Holocaust Remembrance Day are a powerful reminder that the Nazi evil was too often assisted by some locals in occupied countries. We welcome the prime minister's apology, as well as his forthright call for vigilance against those who continue to hate."

In his speech, Stoltenberg said, "Seventy years later, it pains me to say that the ideas that led to the Holocaust continue to live on."

He expressed concern that Norwegian Jews have said they live in fear today. "We shall not have it like this in Norway," said the prime minister.



BOOK REVIEWS

NITZOTZ: THE SPARK OF RESISTANCE

Nitzotz: The Spark of Resistance in Kovno Ghetto & Dachau-Kaufering Concentration Camp.

Edited and with an Introduction by Laura M. Weinrib. Translated by Estee Shafir Weinrib. Syracuse University Press: Syracuse, 2009. 201 pp. \$22.25 hardcover.

REVIEWED BY DR. DIANE CYPKIN

"One spark [nitzotz] is hidden in my heart

A small spark—but my own, Not borrowed, not stolen, It is inside me and part of me."

From "I Did Not Win Light out of Lawlessness"

By Chaim Nachman Bialik

For many people, writing is the kind of thing you do near a crystalline lake, under a sunny sky, while sitting in the purple shade of an elm, oak, or some other kind of tree. Perhaps there are writers who have the pleasure of putting their words to paper under such idyllic conditions. But the fact is, a great deal of writing, indeed, the unwavering and driving need to write, is greatest when things are far from idyllic, when there is no lake, no sun, and no tree — when the only light is the light of hope to be found in writing and its consequence — the written word, which magically transforms amorphous thought to palpable existence and somehow confirms the reality of hope.

In sum, the true story of the only Hebrew journal written and published "consistently" under some of the worst conditions during World War II — conscientiously documented in *Nitzotz: The Spark of Resistance in Kovno Ghetto & Dachau-Kaufering Concentration Camp*, edited with an introduction by Laura M. Weinrib and translated by Estee Shafir Weinrib — doesn't surprise this reviewer at all. In its (the journal's)

"twelve to twenty pages" writers and readers found the only freedom available to them — spiritual freedom. In its pages writers and readers could dream of a tomorrow that seemed impossible in the today. In its pages writers and readers found a reason to live.

Thus, Ms. Weinrib relates how the monthly handwritten Hebrew journal *Nitzotz*, born in 1940 Kovno, was the mouthpiece of the underground resistance group *Irgun Brith Zion* ("Organization of the Covenant of Zion"), "a middle-of-the road Zionist youth organization" initially formed in reaction to the Soviet takeover of the region and the closing of Hebrew schools along with anything else having to do with Zionism. The seven issues published during the Soviet period "were dedicated to Jewish culture and the Hebrew language, and they contained Hebrew literature and commentary on Zionism and Judaism. They served as a forum for opposition to Communist assimilation as well as news of Eretz Israel and updates on the conditions of Polish Jewry."

Then, with the brutal Nazi takeover of Kovno and all of Lithuania in the summer of 1941, we read of how *Irgun Brith Zion's* goal, and the goal of the handwritten twenty-eight issues of *Nitzotz* published in the Kovno ghetto, became resistance to the Nazis in the form of an ever-greater, life-affirming, and determined future orientation. Hence, interestingly, while we still note the journal's "emphasis on Hebrew culture," *Nitzotz* became "primarily . . . a

forum for ideological debate and articulation of IBZ's (*Irgun Brith Zion's*) political platform. Most important, the authors began to lay plans for the Zionist effort after the war."

Nor did the work of IBZ, or the publication of *Nitzotz*, end with the July 1944 destruction of the ghetto. In September 1944, with the authors of *Nitzotz* deported to *Dachau-Kaufering*, the first issue of the journal appeared there, and was soon circulating beyond the immediate IBZ membership. For one of IBZ's goals in *Kaufering* was organizing a more united Zionist front. Thus in that same year, "the survivors of IBZ in *Dachau-Kaufering* officially joined forces with the members of *Dror HeHalutz*." "The two groups formed a new umbrella or-

ganization: *Hitachdut Hanoar Haleumi* (Association of National Youth)." Meanwhile, the "central theme that unites the political commentary, debates, memoirs, poetry, and manifestos that fill the pages of *Nitzotz* [at this time]. . . is the urgency of maintaining one's humanity amid the suffering of the concentration camp." For the dream of the establishment of a Jewish state and future settlement in Eretz Israel by them, it was claimed, could only happen if Jews kept their dignity, their hope, their belief in a tomorrow, their *mentschlekhkayt*.

Of course, throughout the almost five years and forty-two issues of the journal's entire existence, a number of individuals were responsible for the publication of *Nitzotz*. However, it quickly becomes apparent that one of the most

dedicated writer/editors and distributors wholeheartedly devoted to the journal was Selimar Frenkel, later (in Israel) the *Davar* news correspondent and writer Shlomo Shafir. His stubborn will, his courageous risk-taking, his ability to secure paper (sometimes quite a feat), his writing when, at times, "contributors" may have been few for one heartbreaking reason or another, truly made all the difference! It is very easy to see why his granddaughter, Ms. Weinrib, decided to "author" this volume and make his work and the work of *Nitzotz* public. It is also easy to see why his daughter, Estee Shafir Weinrib, is the English translator of five issues of *Nitzotz* to be found in the second half of this book — a few surviving examples (and their survival is a story in itself!) which clearly reveal the important place the journal filled in the lives of those who wrote it and read it. Indeed, all this, too, must be included in any history and any study of the Holocaust.

On a personal note, this reviewer was drawn to the work because her own family survived the Kovno ghetto to be liberated by the Russians. Many of the names mentioned in the work are — by way of her own father — familiar, names like Garfunkel, Kagan, Tikin, Gringauz. Moreover, this reviewer was especially pleasantly surprised to note the words of Aharon Barak, at one point chief justice of the Israel Supreme Court, and a survivor from Kovno quoted in Weinrib's book. He is a cousin by marriage (of this reviewer), and his father survived in our bunker — one of only three bunkers left after the Nazi destruction of the ghetto. (Interestingly, most histories of the Kovno ghetto only mention two bunkers surviving. But, then again, my mother, most especially, could keep a secret). In sum, it really is a small world!

SNAPSHOTS FROM THE THIRD REICH

Album of the Damned: Snapshots from the Third Reich.

By Paul Garson. Academy Chicago Publishers, 2008. 410 pp. \$31.50 hardcover.

REVIEWED BY DAVID BRINN, THE JERUSALEM POST

A chilling coffee-table tome, *Album of the Damned: Snapshots from the Third Reich* doesn't include any photographs of death camps, stacks of Jewish bodies or other atrocities committed by the Nazis.

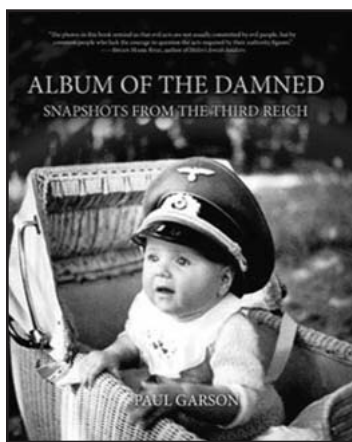
Instead, the collection of nearly 400 captioned shots compiled by Los Angeles-based freelance writer and photographer Paul Garson focuses on subtlety instead of gruesomeness to arrive at the same horrific results. Photographed almost exclusively by amateurs — both soldiers and civilians — the pictures in *Album of the Damned* center on the daily life within the Third Reich, both at home and on the battlefield.

Nazis at home with their wives and children, during training sessions, horsing around while on leave, photographed by their buddies, look for all intents and pur-

poses like normal, everyday people. That's the point Garson is trying to make, a point emphasized by author Bryan Mark Rigg, who penned *Hitler's Jewish Soldiers*: "The photos in this book remind us that evil acts are not usually committed by evil people, but by common people who lack the courage to question the acts required by their authority figures."

Garson assembled the exclusively black-and-white photos from private collections around the world, including many captured by the Soviets that only became available after the fall of the Soviet Union. Over a period of five years, Garson examined more than 10,000 photos, and he bid against private collectors and museums for the rights to use them in *Album of the Damned*.

The effort was well worthwhile. Divided into sections entitled "The Home Front," "Prelude to War," and "The Battlefield," the book uses the photographs to home in on details and expressions — the proud officer posing with his handsome wife and baby daughter, a Hitler Youth standing next to his stately-looking father, an almost comical "Laurel and
(Continued on page 15)



THE LEGACY OF ANTISEMITISM

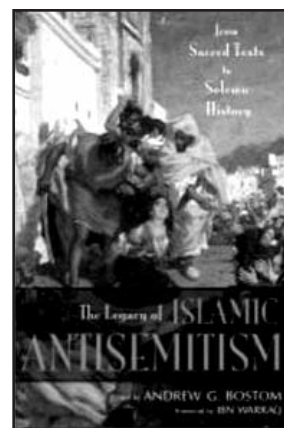
The Legacy of Islamic Antisemitism: From Sacred Texts to Solemn History.

Edited by Andrew G. Bostom. Prometheus Books, 2008. 766 pp. \$26.12.

REVIEWED BY RAELEEN ISAAC

Bostom's new book shreds two myths that have become almost as entrenched among the media/academic elite as man-made global warming: that Islamic anti-Semitism is a recent phenomenon learned from the Nazis and that Islam is a religion tolerant of minorities, with Jews living safely under Islam for many centuries, never more idyllically than during the Golden Age of Muslim Spain.

Like Bostom's earlier companion volume *The Legacy of Jihad: Islamic Holy War and the Fate of Non-Muslims*, this is effectively two books: a lengthy overview, by Bostom, followed by the "proof-texts": relevant sections of the Koran, the hadith (its authoritative exegesis), and the sira (early biographical writing on Mohammed); the statements of more recent key Islamic jurists; and essays, some by experts, many of them firsthand, on the actual experience of minorities under Islam at different times and places.



Hatred and contempt for Jews, Bostom shows clearly, is rooted in the text of the Koran. Mohammed began by wooing Jewish tribes (Jews were numerous in Medina, which was originally a Jewish city), adopting Jewish ceremonies, even stipulating that his followers turn to Jerusalem in prayer. But the Jews dismissed him as ignorant, peppered him with questions, and mocked his mistakes when he answered. Hell hath no fury like a prophet scorned, and Mohammed turned angrily against the Jews, wiping out many, expelling others. In the Koran itself Mohammed describes the Jews as "envious" with hearts "hard as rock," "evildoers" who "confound the truth," "the heirs of Hell," "apes, despised and loathed," and much more in the same vein.

The hadith and sira embellish the theme. Mohammed's death is attributed to poisoning by a Jewish woman; even the catastrophic schism within Islam into Shiites and Sunnis is blamed on a Yemenite convert from Judaism. Blaming the Jews for untoward developments in Islam has continued into modern times: for example, Sayyid Qutb, the founder of fundamental-
(Continued on page 14)

RESEARCHERS URGE UN TO OPEN VAULT ON NAZI WAR CRIMES CASES

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Locked inside UN headquarters is a huge but largely unknown archive documenting 10,000 cases against accused World War II criminals. Leading British and American researchers are campaigning to make the files – hundreds of thousands of pages in 400 boxes – public for the first time in 60 years, arguing that they not only are historically valuable but also might unearth legal precedents that could help bring some of today's war criminals to justice.

"It's outrageous that material which could help bring today's war criminals to justice and improve our understanding of the Holocaust is still secret," said British academic Dr. Dan Plesch, who is leading the push for access. "The whole archive should be online for scholars and historians."

The archive belonged to the United Nations War Crimes Commission, a body established in October 1943 by 17 allied nations to issue lists of alleged war criminals – ultimately involving approximately 37,000 individuals – examine the charges against them, and try to assure their arrest and trial.

The War Crimes Commission was shut down in 1948, and the following year, the UN Secretariat drew up rules making the files available only to governments on a confidential basis. In 1987, limited access was granted only to researchers and historians.

Among the documents obtained by Plesch is a letter Belgium sent to the commission on March 15, 1945, filing unspecified charges against Hitler. That was two months before the end of the war in Europe.

Minutes of committee meetings in 1947 document cases in Greece and Poland involving rape and mass murder. Another document, signed by General Douglas MacArthur, the Supreme Allied Commander in the Pacific, details the conviction of a Japanese commander for permitting or inciting his troops to rape a woman.

Those cases could have set a precedent for the prosecution of rape as a crime against humanity in the post-World War II era and reinforced it today, Plesch said.

But it wasn't until 1998 that the UN tribunal prosecuting leaders of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda convicted a former mayor of genocide and crimes against humanity, for the first time citing rape along with extermination, murder, and torture.

The International Criminal Court added rape as a crime against humanity in a 2001 landmark case against Bosnian Serb troops.

Duplicates of commission documents obtained from the National Archives in



UN archivist Bridget Sisk opening a section of the 184 reels of microfilm about World War II criminals.

Maryland include staff lists for the Nazi concentration camps at Auschwitz-Birkenau and *Buchenwald* with the names, ranks, and accusations against them.

Buchenwald camp leader Max Schobert, described as taking part in all mass and individual executions, was quoted as giving orders to bring him at least 600 Jewish death reports every day, and to take all university graduates and rabbis to the camp gate and bury them alive. He was found guilty of war crimes in 1947 and was hanged the following year.

At *Buchenwald*, a Gestapo official was described as "a particularly bloodthirsty torturer." Another officer, in charge of gardens, was described as a "fanatical Jew

baiter" who "made prisoners jump into the sewage pool," where on some days 80 or 90 prisoners suffocated.

Plesch, director of the Center for International Studies and Diplomacy at the University of London's School of Oriental and African Studies, stumbled on the archive while researching the beginnings of the United Nations for his book, *America, Hitler and the UN*.

Among the papers he discovered was a copy of a form from the "United Nations War Crimes Commission" outlining charges by Canada against a German Panzer brigade commander during 1943–44.

"This told me that there was something much, much bigger here that I wanted to know about, and that people needed to know about," he said.

Plesch said records indicate that alongside the *Nuremberg* trials, where prominent Nazis faced justice, the UN commission endorsed war crimes trials for some 10,000 individuals. It is known that 2,000 trials took place in 15 countries including the United States, he said.

Copies of some of the documents also exist in other archives around the world, but Plesch said the UN's collection "is the only central repository for the records of the trials from these 15 tribunals."

"The case law of all of these has been forgotten," he said.

"The *Nuremberg* trials only constituted one percent of the post-World War II prosecutions," he added. "A first look at the UN War Crimes Commission archive of the other 99 percent shows a gold mine of precedent and practice that can help hold modern-day war criminals to account. It must be made open without delay."

Plesch and two other researchers have asked UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to "take the necessary steps to ensure full public access to all the records" of the commission.

UN chief archivist Bridget Sisk said that, to her knowledge, this was the first request to change the rules of access in more than 20 years.

When he was Israel's UN ambassador, Benjamin Netanyahu appealed in 1986 for

the archive to be opened to historians and the public. The Yad Vashem Holocaust memorial center said in 1987 that public access to the archive "would generate a significant amount of new information regarding the Holocaust."

After three months of intensive consultations with the 17 governments, the UN loosened the rules in November 1987 to allow access to researchers and historians if they get authorization from their government and the UN secretary-general, Sisk said.

But material with names of specific individuals not convicted of war crimes and witnesses was put off limits and the general public remained barred, she added.

"It would take new consultations by the 17 countries that were part of the commission to change the rules of access," Sisk said. "It would be for the secretary-general to entertain a request from one of the 17 members of the commission, as was done in 1987."

Concerns about putting every name in the archive into public view could remain an obstacle to opening it. Plesch said some countries could also be sensitive about documents that could indicate their reluctance to pursue war crimes trials.

While the archive is not a secret, few researchers know about it.

The United States, for example, authorized access for a researcher in 2002 but did not get another request until 2011, which it recently granted to one of Plesch's investigators.

The U.S. also recently approved a request from the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, which as a federal agency received wide access in February.

Asked about making the archive public, U.S. deputy spokesman at the UN Payton Knopf said, "We are aware of requests to open the archives to the public and are reviewing the issue."

Paul Shapiro, director of the Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies at the museum, said some of the material is already publicly available in other archives around the world. But the UN files do contain "a significant amount of unique material," he said.

DON'T REHABILITATE THE GUILTY

BY EFRAIM ZUROFF, HAARETZ

Recent events in four different Eastern European countries have once again highlighted the ongoing assault on the accepted Holocaust narrative in the post-Communist world. Three attracted considerable attention, while the fourth, which perhaps affords us the best insight into the phenomenon of Eastern European attempts to rewrite World War II history, was virtually ignored, until it aroused a solitary Jewish protest.

In Kiev, *Odessa* and *Lviv*, on January 1, hundreds marched to mark the birthday of Ukrainian nationalist hero Stepan Bandera, who headed the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN), which collaborated with the Nazis and actively participated in the mass murder of Jews following the German occupation of Ukraine in 1941. A few days later, the regional council of the Ukrainian oblast of *Ivano-Frankivsk* declared 2012 the year of the UPA, the military wing of the OUN.

From Estonia, on December 27, it was reported that the country's defense ministry planned to submit a bill to parliament

that would recognize Estonians who served in the 20th Waffen-SS Grenadier Division, which fought alongside German troops as "freedom fighters" for the country's independence – despite the fact that Nazi Germany had no intention of granting Estonia freedom. While the *Waffen-SS* division did not participate in Holocaust crimes (by the time it was established the Jews of Estonia had already been murdered), its members included men who had previously been involved in killing Jews and Gypsies.

In Zagreb and *Split*, Croatia, memorial masses were conducted on December 28 to honor Ante Pavelic, its World War II head of state, who bears responsibility for the mass murder of hundreds of thousands of Serbs, 30,000 Jews and several thousand Roma. Pavelic, who was installed by the Germans, created one of the most lethal and brutal regimes in Axis-dominated Europe.

The fourth event involved former Lithuanian foreign minister Vygaudas Usackas, currently the EU Special Representative to Afghanistan, who wrote a *Wall Street Journal* op-ed in which he charac-

terized the Nazi occupation of his homeland during the years 1941–1945 as "a few years' respite from the Communists."

In view of the fact that 96.4 percent of the 220,000 Lithuanian Jews who lived there under the German occupation were murdered (along with thousands more Jews deported there from Western and Central Europe), many by local Nazi collaborators, Usackas' description was grossly insensitive, if not outright outrageous. Yet in response to my criticism, Usackas issued a public statement in which he justified his original text by pointing to the unbalanced treatment in Western public opinion of "the crimes of Stalin's regime ... and the tragedy of its victims," which had only recently received due legal recognition, "in contrast to Nazi crimes which have been universally condemned by all civilized humanity." And while he did reiterate an earlier condemnation of Holocaust crimes in general, his comments did not mention a word about the tragic plight of Lithuanian Jewry or the horrific crimes committed by Lithuanians during the "respite" from Soviet occupation.

Such callous indifference to the fate of over 200,000 Lithuanian citizens, mur-

dered in many cases by their own countrymen, may seem shocking coming from an official representative of the European Union, but recent events in Lithuania clearly indicate the government's determination to rewrite the history books to cover up the crimes of local Nazi collaborators. In this regard, one example stands out: a conference held in the *Seimas* (Lithuanian parliament) last June to mark the 70th anniversary of the German invasion. The conference's main purpose was to glorify the Lithuanian Activist Front, a political group that collaborated with the Nazis in the hope of reestablishing Lithuanian independence, and that openly called for violence against the Jews. This incitement was a factor in the widespread attacks on Jews in 46 Lithuanian communities even before the arrival of Nazi troops – a well-documented phenomenon whose existence was denied at the conference.

All of the above cases can best be described as "Holocaust distortion" (as opposed to denial), which seeks to promote the canard of historical equivalency between Nazi and Communist crimes,

(Continued on page 15)

SURVIVORS' CORNER

A POLISH WOMAN'S HEROIC JOURNEY OF SELF-DISCOVERY

BY VANESSA GERA, AP

Magdalena Grodzka-Guzkowska's journey of self-discovery is pieced together from interviews with her and people close to her, emails made available to *The Associated Press*, information provided by *Yad Vashem*, her memoir *Lucky Woman*, and documentary footage.

As Nazi troops imposed their terror on Warsaw, an 18-year-old Polish girl slipped into a Warsaw church with an elderly rabbi to teach him how to dip his hand in holy water and cross himself.



The rescuer, Magdalena Grodzka-Guzkowska.

The rabbi, his newly shaven beard leaving his cheeks white, approached the lesson with gravity, skimming the water in the church font and crossing himself with slow reverence, hoping this would help him pass as Catholic.

"You've already exposed yourself! You're dead already!" the teenager whispered in his ear, and showed him how to perform the sacred gestures the way she and other Catholics did, so quickly and automatically that she barely touched her head and chest.

"Without respect?" the rabbi asked.

"Without any respect!" the girl replied.

It was 1943 in Nazi-occupied Poland and any mistake could cost him his life, and hers, too. The Nazis would have killed her for helping a Jew.

What she did not know back then: she was a Jew herself.

Decades after she helped save the rabbi and about a dozen others, mostly children, by teaching them Christian customs, Grodzka-Guzkowska discovered documents in an old suitcase showing that her father and other close family members were Jews. Growing up she knew vaguely that one of her great-grandmothers was Jewish, but nothing more about those roots.

Shared humanity, not ancestry, impelled her to heroism.

"I remember running with children through the city. It was horrible," the now frail Grodzka-Guzkowska told *The Associated Press*, her hand trembling as she sat in a wheelchair.

"And I felt I had to help."

Grodzka-Guzkowska knew Catholic prayers and customs so well that the anti-Nazi resistance tasked her with teaching them to Jews. Today, at age 86, she's living out her last years waiting to be buried in a white shroud according to the ancient customs of her ancestors.

The discovery of Jewish roots is a growing phenomenon in Poland, where increasing numbers of Catholic or secular Poles in recent years have learned, often from deathbed confessions of loved ones or from chance discoveries of documents, that they are of Jewish descent.

Poland, for centuries a refuge for Jews in a largely hostile Europe, once was home to Europe's largest Jewish population. Many Jews became culturally assimilated before World War II, while some sought survival through baptism during the German occupation of 1939-1945.

Such knowledge was often repressed because of the trauma inflicted by the Hitler era and anti-Semitic persecution during the Communist decades that followed.

Today, as democracy here matures, many Poles who discover their Jewishness have turned from hiding their Jewish roots to celebrating them, and non-Jews also are finding themselves drawn to the rich Polish-Jewish past.

For Grodzka-Guzkowska, a true understanding of her identity, and the danger it could have posed, came late in life. It inspired her to immerse herself in the Torah, dream of visiting Israel and ask Poland's chief rabbi to bury her in Warsaw's Jewish cemetery.

Like many Jews in prewar Poland, Grodzka-Guzkowska's Jewish great-grandmother, a pediatrician, intermarried. Her descendants were so well integrated

into Catholic society that the matriarch's Jewishness meant little to Grodzka-Guzkowska when she was growing up.

"The most important fact about my great-grandmother was that she was a doctor, not a Jew," Grodzka-Guzkowska said in 2007 in an interview for a documentary in progress, *I Am a Jew*, by filmmakers Slawomir Grunberg and Katka Reszke.

"During the war I saved Jewish children while not being aware that I was Jewish," she recalled. "I saved them because that is what had to be done."



Rescuer Magda Grodzka-Guzkowska (center), survivor William Donat, and Bozena Rotman of the Righteous Department at the wall in the Garden of the Righteous.

One landmark on her path to a new identity came during a dinner at the home of a Jewish friend in the 1990s, when she mentioned her Jewish great-grandmother — her mother's mother's mother.

The friend, Konstanty Gebert, explained to her that this precise lineage was significant because Jewish law traces Judaism from mother to child, meaning that technically speaking, she was Jewish, too.

"This means that instead of saving those

(Continued on page 14)

THE FIRST KILLINGS OF THE HOLOCAUST

BY TIMOTHY W. RYBACK,
THE NEW YORK TIMES

On the brisk winter Tuesday of January 20, 1942, 15 Nazi officials assembled at a lakeside villa on the Wannsee near Berlin to deliberate on the "final solution." This month, the world marks the 70th anniversary of the Wannsee Conference, one of the pivotal moments in Holocaust history. It provides an appropriate occasion not only for reflecting on the origins and implications of this horrific event, but also on one particular moment when it could have been prevented and, I would posit, almost was.

The extermination of European Jews may have been formally outlined seven decades ago, but it began nearly nine years earlier, during Easter Week 1933, a few minutes after five o'clock in the afternoon on Wednesday, April 12, when four Jews — Arthur Kahn, Ernst Goldmann, Rudolf Benario, and Erwin Kahn — were executed in precisely that order at a Nazi camp in the obscure Bavarian hamlet of Prittlbach.

These four killings framed the constituent parts of the genocidal process formalized

at the Wannsee Conference: intentionality, chain-of-command, selection, execution. In the years to come, the process was refined, the numbers expanded monstrously, but the essential elements remained.

Even Prittlbach retained its central role. The hamlet was so small that the Nazis named their camp after the neighboring town of Dachau, which had access to a rail line. The boxcars rolled into Dachau, but the victims were marched to Prittlbach.

The *Konzentrationslager Dachau* in Prittlbach became the prototype for Nazi atrocity. It boasted the first crematory oven, the first gas chamber, and, on that sun-splashed spring day in April 1933, the first Jewish victims.

A Holocaust survivor once told me, and repeated to many others with equal conviction, that the trail of blood that began in Dachau ultimately led to Auschwitz. But it also almost ended there before it barely began.

On that same April evening in 1933, Joseph Hartinger received a call that four

men had been shot attempting to flee the recently erected detention facility. As a local prosecutor, it was Hartinger's job to establish a commission to investigate all deaths resulting from "unnatural causes."

The blood was still damp on the ground when Hartinger arrived. He sensed imme-



Work detail at Dachau in the early days of the camp.

diately that something was horrifically wrong. "My reasons were based not only on the physical circumstances but in particular on my assessment of the personalities I encountered in the camp and especially on my evaluation of the nature of the camp commandant Wackerle, who made a devastating impression on me," Hartinger recalled. "I also had to include in

my deliberations the fact that those who had been shot were all Jews."

When Hartinger reported that a serial killing of Jews had taken place, his superior responded unequivocally: not even the Nazis would do that. The investigation was terminated.

But as killings continued to mount, Hartinger persisted. On June 1, 1933, he issued indictments against the camp commandant and three other SS men. It was a brazen act of legal defiance to the regime. Hartinger was not naïve. He knew the Nazi capacity for violence. That evening, he told his wife, "I just signed my own death sentence."

The murder indictments had a surprising impact. The commandant was removed. The killings stopped. Hartinger had hurled a legal wrench into the Nazi bureaucracy and singlehandedly paralyzed its homicidal impulse.

For several weeks in the summer of 1933, the killings stalled as Nazi officials attempted to understand the implications of the Hartinger indictments. Solutions were found. The killing was renewed. Miraculously, Hartinger survived.

(Continued on page 14)

The Eichmann Trial: 50 Years Later

The Young Leadership Associates of the American Society for Yad Vashem cordially invites you to a program commemorating Yom Hashoah



Friedel 8/100

The Young Leadership Associates of the American Society for Yad Vashem cordially invites you to a roundtable discussion and a reception commemorating Yom Hashoah.

The Holocaust and the United Nations Outreach Programme, in partnership with the State of Israel, will convene a panel of experts to discuss the impact the Eichmann Trial has had on society and the implications it has for justice and accountability in the 21st century.

A private reception and viewing for the Young Leadership Associates of the American Society for Yad Vashem of **With Me Here are Six Million Accusers**: A traveling exhibition prepared by Yad Vashem Jerusalem.

Confirmed speakers include: **Professor Deborah Lipstadt**, author of *The Eichmann Trial*; **Elie Wiesel**, author and Nobel Prize Laureate; **Minister Yossi Peled of Israel**; and **Amos Hausner, Esq.**, son of Gideon Hausner, the Chief Prosecutor at the trial.

Monday, 23 April 2012 | 6:30 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.
North Lawn Building of the United Nations Headquarters
(entrance at 45th Street and 1st Avenue)

YLA Event Chairpersons: Alexandra Lebovits and Elliot Pines

RSVP required by Thursday, April 19th
RGrossman@yadvashemsua.org | 212-220-4304
Event Coordinator

Must bring valid ID for admission to the United Nations



YAD VASHEM HONORS FRENCH RIGHTEOUS AMONG THE NATIONS

Yad Vashem posthumously honored Georges Dilsizian and his son André-Gustave Dilsizian, as Righteous Among the Nations from France.

André-Gustave's daughter Liliane de Toledo accepted the medal and certificate of honor on her father and grandfather's behalf.

A memorial ceremony in the Hall of Remembrance was followed by the awarding of the medal and certificate in the synagogue at Yad Vashem.

Georges Dilsizian was born in Armenia and in the early 19th century immigrated to France, where his 13 children were born.

His son André-Gustave married Lea Albohair, a daughter of Jewish immigrants from Turkey. In 1942 their daughter Liliane was born.

George Dilsizian felt he could not remain indifferent to the suffering of the Jewish people, especially having witnessed the suffering of the Armenians, and together with his son set out to help the extended family of Lea Albohair.

After her husband Raphaël, a French soldier, was taken prisoner in the early days of WWII, Reina Leon, Lea's sister, was left alone with her children.

She sent her children to a nanny outside of Paris; however, they returned owing to the terrible way in which they were treated and the nanny's insistence that they be baptized. The boys in the family were sent to alternative hiding places while their sister Caroline stayed with her mother.

With the onset of deportations from Paris in March 1942, the Germans arrived to arrest Caroline's grandparents, Samuel and Kalo Sevy.



Survivor Carline Elbaz (left) and Liliane de Toledo, daughter and granddaughter of the Righteous, unveiling the names of the rescuers on the wall of honor, Yad Vashem, Jerusalem.

Caroline was with them at home at the time. The doorwoman told the Germans they were not at home and the Germans said they would return the next day.

Reina turned to Georges for help and without hesitation he agreed to hide Samuel and Kalo.

As her grandparents did not speak French, Caroline was sent along to act as interpreter. André took care of bringing the couple to his father's home in *Brunoy*, in southeast Paris. Georges looked after Caroline's education, first teaching her at home and later, after telling neighbors she was his granddaughter, sending her to the nearby nuns' school, while doing homework with her every night.

Caroline and her grandparents Samuel and Kalo Sevy remained with Georges until the liberation of France in August 1944. Caroline's cousins, Ida and Corinne Sevy, were sheltered in André-Gustave's home in *Montacher*.

Georges Dilsizian passed away in 1946 and André-Gustave died in 1971. On February 22, 2011 the Commission for the Designation of the Righteous Among the Nations decided to recognize Georges Dilsizian and André-Gustave Dilsizian as Righteous Among the Nations.

PROSECUTE AGING WAR CRIMINALS

A lawyer who represented families of victims of Nazi war criminal John Demjanjuk said he wants 28 other alleged low-level war criminals prosecuted.

Cornelius Nestler, also a professor of criminal law and criminal procedure at the University of Cologne in Germany, said of Demjanjuk: "Yes he is a small fish — of course, that's right. He was at the lowest level of the hierarchy. But from the perspective of my clients, who lost their families in *Sobibor*, there's no doubt that everybody, big fish or small, who participated in murder of their families should be brought to justice."

Nestler spoke at the Hebrew University's Institute for Advanced Studies in Israel.

In a Tel Aviv interview with *Haaretz*, Nestler said he had a list of 28 German guards who had been stationed at the *Flossenburg* concentration camp in Bavaria and are now in their 80s.

"Statistically speaking, I would assume that some of them are still alive, and so a prosecutor needs to do his job and find them," Nestler said. "Age doesn't play a role. You cannot run away from your responsibility just because you are getting old."

He said he gave the list to the German chief prosecutor in Munich, who is charged with bringing Nazi war criminals to trial, but the prosecutor "isn't really moving forward in a timely fashion" to track down the war criminals even though they could be found with information "readily available" to police such as phone books and computer data bases.

Nestler blames a lack of resources for the failure to track down the suspected death camp guards.

Given the ages of the alleged war criminals, Nestler said, time for prosecuting them is running short.

YAD VASHEM: THE SHINING LIGHT

Gala of the Young Leadership Associates



(L to R): Gonen Paradis, Jeremy Halpern, Abbi Halpern, Jeff Wilf, Mindy Schall, Jordana Altaman, Jaci Paradis, Nadav Ben Laurie Kolin, Daniella Hoffer, Ben Hoffer, Carolina Massel; (in front): Mikey Distinfeld, Erica Distinfeld.



IGHT OF THE NEXT GENERATION

of the American Society for Yad Vashem



esner, Alexandra Leibowitz, Becky Hanus,





REPORT FROM YAD VASHEM

FROM OVERSEAS VISITORS, A GROWING DEMAND TO STUDY THE HOLOCAUST

BY ETHAN BRONNER,
THE NEW YORK TIMES

The students were spared nothing. There were sessions on Nazi disputes over how to murder the Jews; propaganda art in the Third Reich; encounters with survivors; a history of anti-Semitism; and the dilemmas faced by leaders of the Jewish ghetto councils.

It was just what one might expect from a 10-day seminar at Yad Vashem, Israel's Holocaust memorial and museum. The surprise was the students: 35 teachers and professors from Taiwan, none of them specialists in the area, most of whom had never before met a Jew. More surprising still were the lessons some were taking away.

"Before I came, I felt worse about the Holocaust," said Jen Hsiu-mei, a psychologist and an early childhood educator. "This week, I learned that inside the death camps people helped each other. It gives new meaning to human values. This is not something I expected to learn here — hope."

Seven decades after the Holocaust, with its survivors rapidly dying, the most systematic slaughter in human history is taking on a growing and often unexpected role in education across the globe. Yad Vashem alone, which opened its international teaching branch only in the 1990s, produces material in more than 20 languages, is active in 55 countries, and puts on 70 seminars a year for groups of visiting educators.

And while many believe that to make a universal point it is important to teach the Holocaust in the context of other genocides — in Rwanda, Armenia, and Cambodia — the trend at Yad Vashem is the opposite, going more deeply into the human details of the slaughter of six million Jews — most of them grim, some uplifting.

"This is the most complicated phenomenon in human history," Avner Shalev, chairman of Yad Vashem, said in an interview. "How could it happen? How did democracy fall so quickly? How was it possible at the

height of liberalism? The only way to understand it is through the particulars, through the details."

Yad Vashem has grown in recent years from a handful of buildings in a bucolic setting into a bustling campus of research, documentation, teaching, and remembrance with a \$45 million annual budget. It has just inaugurated a new building for its international education school, with large classrooms and high-tech links that allow it to conduct lectures for viewers abroad.

Perhaps more than anything else, though, the surprise is the way the Holocaust is being taught and what people around the world make of it.



Seminar participants at Yad Vashem, whose international teaching branch produces materials in more than 20 languages.

"We live in an era when young people know little and have big opinions," said Dorit Novak, director of Yad Vashem's International School for Holocaust Studies. "The Nazi regime wanted to erase any trace of the Jewish people. If you don't understand that, you can't understand the event. But paradoxically, the more you delve into the facts and the particulars, the less uniquely Jewish and more universal it gets."

What she meant was that how an individual copes with evil can be understood in a wide range of contexts. In addition, identifying the stages of the Holocaust — it

started slowly with a boycott of Jewish businesses, followed by laws against "overcrowding" in German schools — can help stem future trends toward discrimination and mass killing.

"The Holocaust shows not only how low humanity can go, but also how high it can go," she added. "Someone in a camp who shares his last bread with a friend sheds new light on the word friendship."

Ms. Novak says the range of people who come through her school is remarkable. She recalled asking a group of Berbers from Morocco at a seminar here why they had come.

"They said that at home they were reconstructing Berber history that had been either ignored or lost, and they had come to Yad Vashem to learn how to remember," she said.

Nicolás Paz Alcalde, from the village of Jerte in Spain, said he understood. He and his wife run a school for foreigners learning Spanish, and they discovered that the old stone house in which their school is located had been a synagogue until Spain expelled the Jews in the 15th century.

"This created a very direct and emotional connection to Jewish history here, and my wife and I decided to go to Yad Vashem and study the Holocaust," he said by telephone. "People have grown anesthetized to history, and we felt a moral obligation to bring the Holocaust alive for them."

He wrote a play about the dilemmas of an ethics professor in the Warsaw ghetto in the 1940s, recruited locals to act in it, and has presented it numerous times around his region in schools and community centers.

Despite an ever more universal gloss on the Holocaust abroad, here in Israel there is concern among liberals that it has taken on too big a role in the national nar-

ative, leading to a mentality of victimhood and siege.

A poll of Israeli Jews in 2009 found the only issue on which there was near-universal agreement was the need to remember the Holocaust. Citing that poll, Merav Michaeli, a columnist for the newspaper Haaretz, complained that "the Holocaust is the sole prism through which our leadership, followed by society at large, examines every situation." She added that the way many Israelis view world events, "all our lives are simply one long Shoah."

This was also the point made by Avraham Burg, a former speaker of Parliament, in his book, *The Holocaust Is Over; We Must Rise from Its Ashes*.

He urged that on the campus of Yad Vashem there should be built an international court of crimes against humanity, adding: "Israel must leave Auschwitz, because Auschwitz is a mental prison. Life inside the camp is survival laced with guilt and victimology."

Mr. Shalev, the Yad Vashem chairman, said the Holocaust should not be the sole source of Israel's definition of itself. Still, he said, it was clearly an important element, adding: "The Holocaust does, in some way, hold our identity together. At the same time, the buildup of interest in the Holocaust around the world has created a growing awareness of genocide generally, and we have an important role to play in that."

The Taiwanese studying here agreed. They said they would take home lessons they would apply to discrimination and even bullying on their campuses.

Mr. Paz Alcalde, the Spanish teacher, said he, too, believed that studying the details of one particular set of events was the best way for a larger point to emerge.

"I don't see any dichotomy between the particular and the universal," he said. "The history of the Holocaust is a history of real individuals and families, people with birthdays and dreams. Once you get to know them, their story becomes your story."

EXHIBIT REVEALS HOLOCAUST-ERA PORTRAITS

BY AKIVA NOVICK, JEWISH WORLD

Yad Vashem seeks public's help in identifying Jewish orphans from Moldova documented by young girl in Bucharest after World War II.

Evelyn Ziegler, 19, approached her drawing block with shaky hands. She was determined to commemorate the faces of the orphans who arrived at her home in Bucharest from Nazi concentration camps in Moldova.

She sketched the thin faces of the seven teenage boys, vowing that no one would be able to erase their identity ever again.

Almost 70 years after that morning, the Yad Vashem Holocaust museum is asking for the Israeli public's help in identifying the brave children who survived the horror and were documented by the young girl.

When the Nazi war machine finally pulled back in the spring of 1944, not many

refugees remained in the Transnistria region in the Moldova area. In March of that year, all the young orphans were released from the camps and sent to the Jewish community in Bucharest, Romania.

At least seven children were adopted by the Ziegler family. Evelyn, who saw what a difficult state they were in, decided to draw their portraits.

At the foot of the drawings she wrote down comments expressing her feelings. "An 18-year-old boy from Moldova, does he deserve to suffer?" she asked. Only one portrait has a name on it — Michel Korlero.

Later on Evelyn got married and immigrated to Israel, and her

work made its way to Yad Vashem. Now the drawings are looking for their owners.

Three of those sketched are believed to have been 15 to 18 years old in the spring of 1944. The girl and the two

younger children were likely 10 years old. These children may have survived the horror and perhaps even immigrated to Israel.

These faces are part of an exhibition at the Yad Vashem museum, on the eve of International Holocaust Remembrance Day, marking the 70th anniversary of the Wannsee Conference, where Nazis coordinated the "Final Solution" — the genocide of European Jews.

The exhibition, "Last Portrait: Painting for Posterity," presents some 200 works created by 21



Children who survived Holocaust.

Jewish artists during the Holocaust to document and commemorate their friends and acquaintances in the ghettos and camps.

Nearly 60 of the faces telling the story of the greatest disaster in the Jewish people's history have yet to be identified.

"We've conducted an extensive inquiry in a bid to find out details about these people," says exhibition curator Eliad Moreh-Rosenberg. "We hope that following the exhibition and the portraits' exposure to the wide public, we'll receive new information about the people looking at us from the portraits, who have so far remained anonymous."

"What makes this exhibition unique is the presentation of a systematic effort by Jewish artists to portray their brethren during a cataclysmic time, creating a body of work of astounding dimensions. For many of the subjects, the artist's recording of their faces, moments before death, makes for their final portraits."

LETTER OF HITLER'S FIRST ANTI-SEMITIC WRITING

BY JACK EWING, THE NEW YORK TIMES

In 1919, a soldier in Munich discovered that he could galvanize small groups of fellow trench warfare veterans with virulently anti-Semitic oratory. A superior officer, impressed with the soldier's oral skills, asked him to commit his ideas to paper.

Thus came into existence the first written record of Adolf Hitler's obsessive hostility toward Jews, an embryonic form of the worldview that would later lead to the Holocaust and millions of deaths.

Now, the Simon Wiesenthal Center in Los Angeles has acquired what it believes may be the original version of the document, known as the Gemlich letter.

The text of the letter is well known to scholars. It is considered significant because it demonstrates just how early in his career Hitler was formulating his anti-Semitic views.

"It is his first written statement about the Jews," said the historian Saul Friedlander, who won a Pulitzer Prize in 2008 for his study of the Holocaust. "It shows that this was the very core of his political passion."

The version of the letter best known to scholars is in an archive in Munich, and news that another copy had made its way to Los Angeles met with some skepticism among historians. The market for Hitler memorabilia is notorious for forgeries.

"It has to have very good provenance," said Klaus Lankheit, deputy director of the archive at the Institute of Contemporary History in Munich. "From my experience, I would be very skeptical."

But Othmar Plöckinger, an expert on early Hitler documents, says it appears that the document acquired by the Wiesenthal Center is the original letter written by Hitler and that the one in Munich is a copy made about the same time. "There are a lot of points that make me believe it could be the original," Mr. Plöckinger said of the Wiesenthal Center's document.

Mr. Plöckinger compared a copy of the document acquired by the center with the version of the Gemlich letter at the Bavarian State Archives in Munich. Mr. Plöckinger, who is working on an annotated version of Hitler's *Mein Kampf* for the Institute of Contemporary History, cau-

tioned that more research would be needed to be 100 percent sure.

Rabbi Marvin Hier, founder and director of the Wiesenthal Center, says he is convinced that the four-page letter, acquired by the organization for \$150,000 in May through a dealer, is genuine. "I am absolutely certain our copy is signed by Adolf Hitler," Rabbi Hier said.

Rabbi Hier provided records indicating that the document was found in the final months of World War II by a U.S. Army soldier named William F. Ziegler. In a handwritten letter in 1988 provided by the dealer who sold the document to the Wiesenthal Center, Mr. Ziegler said he had found the document among others scattered on the floor of what appeared to be a Nazi Party archive near Nuremberg.

Rabbi Hier also provided documents from the dealer showing Hitler's signature on the letter was validated in 1988 and again in 1990 by Charles Hamilton Jr., a New York handwriting expert and dealer who was famous for exposing fake Hitler diaries in 1983. Mr. Hamilton died in 1996.

Rabbi Hier said he had a chance to acquire the letter when it first came on the market in 1988, but was skeptical of the document because it was typed. That seemed odd to him for the period in question, when Hitler was an ordinary soldier in a country devastated economically by war. Typewriters were very costly in 1919 and even many military units did not have them. "How did he get hold of a typewriter?" Rabbi Hier asked.

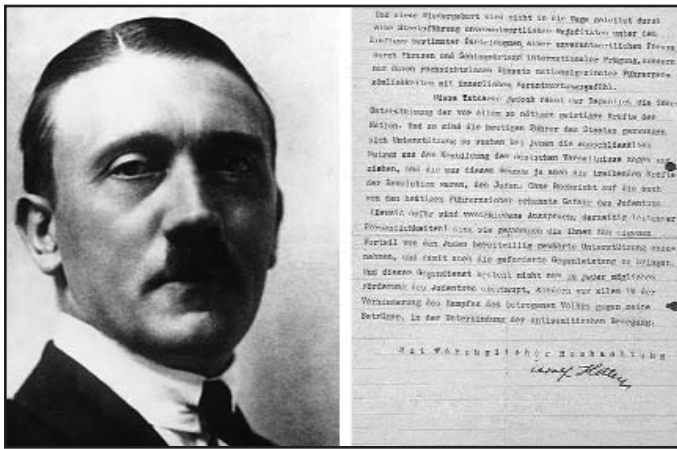
This year, Rabbi Hier learned that there was a plausible explanation. In 1919, during the upheaval that followed Germany's defeat in World War I, Hitler was attached to a military propaganda unit of the Bavarian Army in Munich that was trying to stamp out Bolshevik sentiment carried home by prisoners of war in Russia.

Hitler's ability to hold the interest of his listeners drew him to the attention of a su-

perior officer, Capt. Karl Mayr. When a soldier named Adolf Gemlich, who was doing similar propaganda work for the army in Ulm, wrote asking for a clarification of "the Jewish Question," Captain Mayr gave Hitler the assignment.

Hitler wrote to Mr. Gemlich that occasional pogroms against the Jews were not enough — the Jewish "race" must be "removed" from Germany as a matter of national policy.

Ian Kershaw, a British author of best-selling Hitler biographies who was knighted for his studies of Nazism, says it is very unlikely that Hitler already envisioned the industrialized extermination of the Jews that he would pursue.



Adolf Hitler, pictured in 1930, and the last page of his infamous Gemlich letter, written in 1919.

"Not even Hitler was capable of imagining in 1919 what could be done," Mr. Kershaw said.

But the letter, Mr. Kershaw said, showed that "already in 1919 Hitler has a clear notion of removal of the Jews altogether."

Either Hitler wrote the letter in longhand and it was typed by someone in Captain Mayr's office, or Hitler dictated the letter, according to a 1959 article in a German historical quarterly, which appears to be the first scholarly mention of the document.

Captain Mayr later turned against Hitler and died at the *Buchenwald* concentration camp during the final months of the war.

The document in the state archives in Munich is not the original and is not signed by Hitler, said Johann Pörnbacher,

a representative of the archives. He says the archives has no record of where the original is.

Mr. Plöckinger, the historian who examined both versions, said that the copy in the Munich archive corrected some typographical and punctuation errors in the Wiesenthal Center document. At the same time, the Munich copy adopted some nonsensical commas written by hand in the Wiesenthal Center document.

"This wouldn't make sense to a forger," Mr. Plöckinger said. "So structural aspects speak in favor of the authenticity" of the document acquired by the Wiesenthal Center.

The implication is that the signed version in Los Angeles was the letter originally sent to Adolf Gemlich.

Mr. Plöckinger, who two years ago was involved in authenticating newly discovered pages from *Mein Kampf*, said that to be absolutely sure it would be necessary to do more thorough research by, for example, analyzing the age and composition of the paper in the Wiesenthal Center's document, and trying to trace the journey the letter made after 1919.

"If you want to have 100 percent certainty," he said, "then you have to do a lot of other things."

Rabbi Hier said he jumped at the chance to buy the letter when it was offered for sale by Profiles in History, a dealer in Calabasas Hills, California, that normally specializes in historical documents associated with the likes of Abraham Lincoln or Albert Einstein as well as Hollywood memorabilia. The dealer has been in the news recently as the auctioneer of a collection of Hollywood costumes owned by the actress Debbie Reynolds.

Rabbi Hier said he had persuaded members of the Wiesenthal Center board of trustees to donate the \$150,000 purchase price for the Gemlich letter.

Joseph Maddalena, president of Profiles in History, said he first acquired the letter two decades ago from a small-time dealer in Kansas, who in turn had bought it from Mr. Ziegler, the soldier who is said to have found the letter. Mr. Maddalena said he never met Mr. Ziegler and did not know if he was still alive.

"In terms of the Holocaust," Rabbi Hier said, "we have nothing that would compare to this document."

LITHUANIA DEMANDS SURVIVORS RETRACT EXPLICIT HOLOCAUST REPORT

BY DAVID LEV, ISRAEL NATIONAL NEWS

An organization in Tel Aviv that chronicles and records the history of Lithuanian Jews and their decimation in the Holocaust is likely to be sued by the Lithuanian government — over a scholarly study released over 13 years ago.

"It's strange that for 13 years this study never bothered them, and that now, all of the sudden, the Lithuanian government is worried about the honor of its murderous countrymen," says Tel Aviv Attorney Yosef Melamed sarcastically in an interview with Arutz Sheva. "And while I wouldn't necessarily choose to go to court to defend our accusations, I am more than prepared to do so."

At issue is a study released over a decade ago by the organization Melamed directs, the Association of Lithuanian Jews in Israel. The study catalogs thousands of Lithuanian murderers of Jews — officials and ordinary citizens who did the "dirty work" for the Nazis, enthusiastically organizing and directing the destruction of Lithuanian Jewry, an effort, Melamed says

grimly, that destroyed 96% of the country's pre-war Jewish population.

They began to murder Jews months before the Nazis arrived, claiming that the Jews were disloyal for preferring the hated Russian occupiers to the Nazis, hardly surprising if you were a Jew.

Melamed sent the study, called "Lithuania: Crime and Punishment," to the Lithuanian Justice Minister, who did nothing with the report. No one was brought to trial.

Until several months ago, that is, when Lithuania sought an investigation into the Association, with the intent of preparing a case against it for "defamation of character" against nine individuals named in the report who in recent years have been named Lithuanian "national heroes."

One of those named, for example, is Juozas Lukša, who is celebrated in Lithuania as a fighter against Communism, escaping through the Iron Curtain to the West in 1947 and seeking to raise consciousness against the Soviet occupation of the country. In 1950 he secretly returned to Lithuania, and was killed by the Soviets in 1951.

While in Western Europe, Lukša wrote a book called *Fighters for Freedom*, depict-

ing the suffering of the Lithuanians under the Soviet thumb. Less well known in the West, however, was Lukša's role in persecuting and murdering Jews, the Association says. In 1941, for example, Lukša was an officer in the Lithuanian army and participated in a pogrom in the city of *Kaunas*, helping fellow murderer Viktoras Vitkauskas murder Rabbi Zalman Ossovski, beheading him, and placing his head in a window to show off their accomplishment.

"The others are just as bad. We have witnesses, documentation, and whatever else is necessary to defend these charges in court," says Melamed, 86, himself a survivor who managed to escape the clutches of the Nazis — and the Lithuanians — fighting both of them as a partisan. "In Lithuania, the people enthusiastically took on the task of murdering the Jews, saving the Nazis the trouble," he says. "In general, the Lithuanians were considered the cruelest nationality during the war, far worse than the Poles or even the Ukrainians." Oddly, it wasn't the Lithuanian Justice Ministry that physically tried to serve the Association with papers — it was the Justice

Ministry of the State of Israel. "As part of international agreements, the Lithuanians asked the Israelis to open an investigation into their case, and demanded from us documentation and information."

Which is very hypocritical of the Lithuanians, Melamed says. "During all the years we have been researching the Lithuanian massacre of Jews, the government there has never willingly turned over even one document."

Now, 13 years later, "Lithuania has decided that the time has come to 'clear' the names of its 'heroes,' in order to propagate its image as a staunch defender of Western values against the Communists. But the facts are the facts, and no matter how much 'cleaning up' the Lithuanians do, they cannot change the testimony of those who saw with their own eyes how their countrymen — including these 'heroes' — participated enthusiastically in the destruction of Lithuanian Jewry."

Melamed is ready for a court case, he says — as long as it takes place in Israel. "I cannot go to Lithuania," he says. "If I go there I won't come back alive. That's the way they do things there."

DISTINCTIVE MISSION FOR MUSLIMS' CONFERENCE: REMEMBERING THE HOLOCAUST

BY SAMUEL G. FREEDMAN,
THE NEW YORK TIMES

One afternoon President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad of Iran addressed the United Nations General Assembly, once again casting doubt that the Holocaust had occurred. Almost exactly 24 hours earlier, an otherwise obscure college student in Morocco named Elmehdi Boudra was convening a conference devoted not to denying the Holocaust but to remembering it.

Mr. Ahmadinejad's speech, not surprisingly, made major news around the world, as had his similar pronouncements in earlier years and his Tehran convention of Holocaust deniers. Mr. Boudra's conference, meanwhile, attracted virtually no media attention of any kind.

Yet it should have been trumpeted, all the more for its coincidental timing. While Holocaust denial or denigration in the Muslim world is a sadly familiar phenomenon, hardly news at all, the conference put together by Mr. Boudra and several dozen classmates, all of them Muslim, may well have been the first of its kind in an Arab or Muslim nation, and a sign of historical truth triumphing over conspiracy theories and anti-Semitic dogma.

The conference — held at Al Akhawayn University in *Ifrane*, a town in the Atlas Mountains about two hours south of Rabat — brought together Holocaust scholars and survivors, leaders of Morocco's Jewish community, and American Jewish and Moroccan Muslim students. Its twin mandates were to teach about the extermination of European Jewry and to pay homage to the courage of Morocco's wartime king, Mohammed V, in resisting the orders of the Vichy French occupation government to round up and turn over Jews for internment and probable death.

Uncommonly among Arab and Muslim nations, Morocco has accepted the reality of the Holocaust, rather than either dismissing it outright or portraying it as a European crime for which those countries paid the price in the form of Israel's creation. Partly, no doubt, because of Mohammed V's stand against the Vichy regime, the current king, Mohammed VI, called in a 2009 proclamation for "an exhaustive and faithful reading of the history of this period" as part of "the duty of remembrance dictated by the *Shoah*."

Still, the recent conference would never have occurred without Mr. Boudra. Now 24 and majoring in political science, Mr. Boudra grew up after much of Morocco's Jewish population had moved to France or Israel. But he heard from his grandmother about her childhood in the Jewish quarter of *Casablanca*, and a grandfather still had Jewish neighbors in his apartment house.

Those few personal connections kindled a broader curiosity. That curiosity ultimately led Mr. Boudra to study with Simon Levy, a scholar who directs the Museum of Moroccan Judaism of *Casablanca*, and to read such classic Holocaust memoirs as *If This Is a Man* by Primo Levi and the diary of Anne Frank.

"What upsets me about this subject," Mr. Boudra wrote in an e-mail message, "is some people's claims that the Holocaust never took place. It is simply absurd to hear such claims in the light of the historical evidence the world has today."

As a student at Al Akhawayn, an elite university with an international orientation, Mr. Boudra and several dozen friends formed

a club around their shared interest in Morocco's Jewish culture and heritage. They named it Mimouna, after the holiday that Moroccan Jews celebrate on the final day of Passover.

Through Mimouna and Al Akhawayn, Mr. Boudra met another barrier-breaker named Peter Geffen. The descendant of a distinguished rabbinic family, Mr. Geffen had founded a Jewish day school in New York and an organization, Kivunim, that provided students and teachers with study and travel in Jewish communities around the world.

In December 2010, Mr. Geffen took 60 Kivunim participants to *Ifrane* to meet with the Mimouna Club. As the session ended, Mr. Boudra pulled him aside to say that the club wanted to hold a Holocaust conference and to ask if Mr. Geffen could help.



King Mohammed V resisted the orders of the Vichy government to round up and turn over Jews for internment and probable death.

"The whole power of it is that it was their idea," Mr. Geffen said in a recent interview, recalling the conversation. "This is before the Arab Spring, and here's a group of Muslim students, 20, 21 years old, on an Arab campus in the Arab world. And to have an intuitive recognition that opening the discussion in the face of widespread Holocaust denial is a major human step forward."

So it was that on Sept. 21, the eminent Holocaust historian Michael Berenbaum spoke of the Jewish genocide in Europe, the tide that Mohammed V succeeded in holding back in his nation. An 80-year-old survivor, Elisabeth Citron, recounted her childhood in Romania and Hungary — wearing the yellow star, being deloused with gasoline in front of a laughing first-grade class, being deported to *Birkenau*, watching the daily selection of inmates for the gas chambers and ovens.

"I don't expect any of you to understand how today I'm here standing in front of you," Ms. Citron said. "I have no clue why I am here." By which, of course, she meant alive.

For their part, the Moroccan students asked questions and got answers. Were there any German Jews powerful enough to intercede with the Nazis? Was propaganda the way the Nazis justified the Holocaust to non-Jews? At one point, a Jewish adviser to the current king, Andre Azoulay, addressed Mr. Boudra and the Mimouna Club directly.

"You have decided by yourself," he said. "No one asked you to do it. It was your decision, your vision, your commitment." He mentioned the significance of naming the club for Mimouna with its connection to the Exodus. "You Muslim students decided to be identified with our liberation," he said. "It's not something usual."

SHOAH SURVIVORS DONATE "EVERYDAY" ITEMS

A steamer trunk. Banquet table cloths. A nearly 160-year-old dollhouse.

As elderly Holocaust survivors living around the United States age, they are slowly donating to museums everyday personal items that advocates say shed light on their plight in Nazi Germany.

The donated items are some of the survivors' last physical links to the Holocaust, and they don't want them collecting dust in attics and basements when they could be used to help tell a story, museum officials and curators say.

The Holocaust and Intolerance Museum of New Mexico, for example, has officially unveiled an exhibit entitled "Hidden Treasures," featuring a 158-year-old dollhouse owned by a German-Jewish family and hidden away during World War II.

In addition, the US Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington is offering museum members a 2012 calendar highlighting 12 "extraordinary ordinary objects, each with an unforgettable story to tell." Among the 12 items are a typewriter, a camera, and a wedding band.

By donating items, survivors are connecting people to normal life at that time, something usually overshadowed by horrors, said Jerry Small, the New Mexico museum's co-president.

"These simple, everyday items represent and show a destroyed culture," Small said. "To have these artifacts means we can show how people lived."

Until recently, many Holocaust survivors spoke regularly to audiences and schools about their experiences in concentration camps, losing family members, living as refugees, and fleeing to the United States.

But Regina Turner, founder and executive director of the New Mexico Human Rights Projects, said many survivors have passed away and only a few remain or are healthy enough to speak publicly. Seven years ago, for example, 15 Holocaust survivors took part in an Albuquerque school speakers' series sponsored by Turner's organization. Today, only six participate and most were young children living in hiding during the war, she said.

"This is truly the last generation," Turner said. "Some of them have realized their mortality and they are donating what they have in order to tell their story."

That's what happened to Lilo Waxman, 91, of St. Louis.

In 1936, her family left Nazi Germany before the major persecution of Jews by Hitler started. They landed in New Mexico with the help of an uncle who was a major merchant in the state at the time. Her family was forced to leave many of its possessions in Germany, including a dollhouse that had been in the family for generations.

The dollhouse was hidden in a Christian friend's attic in Germany, said Waxman, who lost family members to concentration camps. "The woman's family didn't even know it was there," Waxman said in a telephone interview from her St. Louis home. "But there it was, hidden from the Nazis."

After the war, Waxman's family recovered the dollhouse, and she periodically showed it to friends and members of Temple Israel in St. Louis.

"But now I just can't keep up with it, and I wanted to find a home for it," Waxman said. "I don't want these rooms getting lost."

ISRAELI HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS SUE AUSTRIA

A group of Austrian-born Israeli Holocaust survivors is working to reopen the symbolic compensation agreement signed by Austria a decade ago and demanding payment "for all the property we were robbed of."

Jewish property has been evaluated in the past by Austrian historians at some €15 billion (\$21 billion), without interest.

Since the Austrian and US governments signed the symbolic agreement in 2001, Holocaust survivors have filed claims worth some €1.5 billion (\$2 billion), without interest. But the agreement states that Austria will pay the survivors and their offspring a total of \$210 million, so in most cases survivors received only 10% of the sum demanded in the claim.

When the agreement was signed, Austria had a conservative-national government which also included Jörg Haider's far-right Freedom Party. The move was aimed at removing the country from the international isolation it was subject to at the time.

The Austrian leadership took advantage of the fact that Vienna's Jewish community was facing bankruptcy at the time in order to get its approval for the symbolic compensation arrangement. Now, 10 years later, the Austrian-born survivors are preparing to demand the rest of the money they deserve.

"I have no idea how the Austrians calculated the sum agreed on at the time," says attorney Martha Raviv, a member of the group demanding to reopen the agreement.

Raviv was born in Vienna in 1938 to a family involved in the Austrian food industry. Her father was murdered in gas chambers near *Buchenwald*. Her sister was sent to Israel immediately after Austria was annexed by Germany.

Martha and her mother were sent to several prisons and concentration camps before being transferred to Israel in 1943, as part of a prisoner exchange deal between Britain and Germany.

As part of the compensation agreement, Martha and her sister received only \$10,000 for all of the family businesses registered under their father's name.

Yohanan Ne'eman, 78, another member of the group of plaintiffs, was born and raised in *Graz*. His family traded in grains and owned a big department store in the Austrian city. In 1938, his parents sensed the imminent threat and quickly left for the Land of Israel, leaving all their belongings behind.

"We presented the Austrians with long lists of property," Ne'eman says. "After all their rejections, it was decided that we're entitled to \$880,000 in compensation, without interest. But because 20,000 claims were filed, and the overall sum was predetermined, my brother and I received only 10% of this amount."

"People signed because they had no choice," explains Doron Weisbrot, representative of the second generation in the group of plaintiffs. "When they received the compensation, they were forced to sign documents relinquishing any additional claims."

Meanwhile, the group members have received support for their demand in a letter sent to them from an Austrian parliament member.

"No real effort has been made to compensate for the damages caused to Jewish property during the Nazi era," admitted Eva Glawischnig of the Green Party. "It was clear to all those involved that the sum transferred to the survivors would hardly cover the property damages."

WORLD'S OLDEST HOLOCAUST MUSEUM GETS NEW LIFE

BY D.D. GUTTENPLAN,
THE NEW YORK TIMES

In a sun-drenched room overlooking Russell Square, a visitor's eye is immediately drawn to a display of cheerful coloring books, a brightly colored board game, and photographs of laughing children. On closer inspection, the children in one photo can be seen crowding around a cake decorated with a swastika.

The board game, a German version of Parcheesi or Sorry made in Dresden in 1936, is called *Juden Raus!* (Jews Out!), in which the first player to chase six Jews out of the walled ghetto is the winner. A deck of trivia cards for teenagers features the faces of Nazi leaders. And in a beautifully illustrated book aimed at teaching good German boys and girls the alphabet, "A" is for "Adolf."

"A is for Adolf: Teaching Children Nazi Values" is the first public exhibition at the Wiener Library, a combination of museum, archive, research center and academic institution. Though long known among the small circle of scholars who study Nazism or World War II, the library languished for decades in relative obscurity in rented spaces crammed to bursting with books, photographs, letters, magazines, and other material documenting the flourishing life and violent death of Germany's Jewish community.

"Through its combination of testimonies and records and current journals and works of scholarship, the Wiener Library has played a unique role for historians," said Richard J. Evans, the regius professor of modern history at the University of Cambridge and author of a three-volume history of the Third Reich. As the principal expert witness defending the American academic Deborah E. Lipstadt in her 2000 libel trial against the British writer David Irving, who claimed that the Holocaust had never happened, Mr. Evans found the library's collection an indispensable resource.

Opened in December in a renovated Georgian townhouse flanked by the Birkbeck College history department and the School of Oriental and African Studies at

the University of London, the library "now has the space and modern facilities it deserves," Mr. Evans said.

Largely the product of one man's obsession, the Wiener Library is not only the world's oldest Holocaust museum, it is the only such institution whose origins predate Hitler's rise to power.

Alfred Wiener was born in Potsdam, Germany, in 1885 into a prosperous Jewish family. On finishing his doctorate on Arabic literature at the Heidelberg University, he worked briefly as a journalist before enlisting in the artillery corps during World War I, where he saw action on the Eastern and Western fronts and was awarded the Iron Cross.

His position as secretary of a Jewish civil rights group in the 1920s brought him into repeated contact with the rise of anti-Semitism. After years of documenting the trend and trying to warn his fellow Germans about the Nazi Party's racist doctrines, Mr. Wiener fled the country, taking his dossiers and files to the Netherlands and then to Britain.

The collection first opened in London on September 1, 1939 — the day Nazi troops marched into Poland. Known then as the Jewish Central Information Office, the library essentially functioned as a private intelligence service, with Mr. Wiener paid a regular stipend by British government departments in return for keeping them informed about developments in Germany.

It was Alfred Wiener's new employers who apparently first referred to his enterprise as "the Library." After the war, the library found new patrons among wealthy Jews in Britain and the United States. It also played a role in assisting in the prosecution of Nazi war criminals at Nuremberg. Yet even though its twin focus on documenting the devastation of Jewish communities of Europe and the ideology that led to that destruction was unrivaled — the Israeli memorial at Yad Vashem was not built until 1953 — the Wiener Library struggled to survive. Its widely publicized involvement in the prosecution of Adolf

Eichmann brought only a temporary respite in a long period of decline.

For years, a steadily shrinking staff struggled to maintain the aging collection and to catalog the growing archive of Holocaust-related clippings culled by a group of volunteers, some of whom had themselves survived German death camps.

In his biography of Mr. Wiener, who died in 1964, Ben Barkow blames a combination of the founder's personal failings, academic politics and the vagaries of ethnic institutions for the library's decline. But Mr. Barkow, the library's current director, believes that his institution is on the verge of



Nazi children's book from the Wiener Library collection.

a renaissance. "Although we don't have any formal relationship with any university, we are very keen to be part of the life of our academic neighbors," he said in an interview.

Dan Plesch, the author of *America, Hitler and the UN*, said of the library, "It's an astonishing resource." In researching his book, Mr. Plesch, who teaches at the School of Oriental and African Studies, came across a statement issued Dec 17, 1942, by the British, American, and Soviet governments that seemed to suggest fairly detailed early knowledge of the Holocaust, warning that the German authorities "are now carrying into effect Hitler's oft repeated intention to exterminate the Jewish people in Europe."

"The Wiener Library were able not just to authenticate the document but to place it into context," Mr. Plesch said.

MAKING SENSE OF TROUBLESOME TIMES

(Continued from page 1)

the events of 9/11 as an example, Dr. Klagsbrun discussed the challenges in teaching about historical events that are so extreme in horror that the educator needs to take into account the impact the information has on the learning process for the child. His presentation in 2002 was a meaningful addition to what educators were already aware of in teaching about the events of the Holocaust. At our program this year he gave a followup to this topic and also included his own memories of escaping Belgium as a child in 1939. His professional expertise on the subject illuminated the challenges of teaching and learning about the events of the Holocaust and 9/11.

Dr. Marlene W. Yahalom, Director of Education of the American Society, spoke about the "importance of empowering educators to transmit the lessons of the Holocaust to their students through education. As an institution, Yad Vashem is a symbol of both destruction and rebirth. Through education, these parallel messages are conveyed to the community at large. One of the ways in which we provide teachers with enrichment about this subject is to provide resources to teach about

this subject, but also to offer connections between this subject and other fields of study. In this way we hope to raise awareness and make the information more relevant to students. As educators we are aware how the events of the Holocaust include a wide array of challenges to teach-



Participants at the conference during the Questions and Answers part of the program.

ers and students because of the complexity, horror, content, and obligation to remember that the subject presents."

She added that "In the aftermath of 9/11, we addressed the need for educators to grapple with the many challenges they

facied in teaching about the events of 9/11 in our program entitled 'Altered Intellectual Landscapes – Learning from the Past.' We offered enrichment and strategies to address these concerns. As educators, teachers were the first responders to students to help them grapple with the enormity of this tragedy. The shock and horror of the event posed challenges in how to teach about the event, how to learn about it in a way to make the lessons meaningful and instructive, to remember and honor the memory of the victims and heroes who died, and to look towards the future as a way of finding comfort and hope that the fallen will not be forgotten and that positive lessons can be learned from such horror. We offered connections

and similarities in the strategies used to teach about the Holocaust since many of these themes and considerations overlapped.

"Our program this year on Holocaust education represents an opportunity to pro-

Increasing the likelihood of such collaborations was a major factor in moving the library to Bloomsbury, said Joanna Bourke, a Birkbeck history professor involved in the negotiations. "It's one of the great underutilized resources," she said. "People tend to categorize it as being just about the Holocaust, or about European Jews. But I've used it in my work on women's organizations. And for anyone interested in health care or the history of medicine in Britain, they have a wealth of material."

Referring to the library, Ms. Bourke added: "They wanted to retain their independence, which they have. But by moving them effectively onto campus, they'll get a lot more visitors, and a lot more researchers will be able to use the collection."

Nor are the new users all academics. According to Mr. Barkow, visitor numbers have tripled since the library moved to its new building.

"The Wiener has German documents from Stalag VIII-B, the main P.O.W. camp," Mr. Bright said. "In December 1943, these showed 10,537 British P.O.W.'s, of whom 772 were identified as Jews. On the next roll call, there are no Jews among the British P.O.W.'s. What does it mean? Did something happen to them?"

Even more visitors are expected this year when the Wiener becomes the British home for the International Tracing Service, an archive that Anne Webber, co-chairwoman of the Commission for Looted Art in Europe, calls "the most important Holocaust archive in Europe." Kept for decades by the International Committee of the Red Cross, the archive "has both humanitarian and scholarly importance," Ms. Webber said. "Access has come too late for many," she added, "but there is still the chance for individuals lost to each other since the war of finding each other."

Indeed, very few of the stories contained in the Wiener Library have happy endings. Yet Ms. Webber and Mr. Barkow say they are delighted with the library's new home. Which in turn pleases Barbara Weiss, the architect in charge of the renovation.

"If you're going to be reading about horrible things," she said, "you might as well do so in a nice, warm, secure place."

more discussion on compelling moral and ethical questions that confront the world in the aftermath of the Holocaust. We want to ask: are there positive lessons to be learned from a world where all definitions of right and wrong, legal and illegal were distorted, undermined, and ultimately found to be meaningless?"

Dr. Yahalom reminded the participants that "as educators, by sharing the responsibility of teaching the lessons of this event to future generations, you make a positive and meaningful contribution to Holocaust education and remembrance since their efforts help secure the historically valid memory of this event for the future." She concluded that "when we teach students about the Holocaust, we try to provide a human perspective. Studying the Holocaust allows us to see the range of human behavior: the beauty and the horror, the hope and the despair, the thoughtfulness and the thoughtlessness, and the kindness and cruelty of which human beings are capable."

For more information about ASYV educational programs and events, contact Dr. Marlene Warshawski Yahalom, Director of Education at mwy@yadvashemusa.org.

THE FIRST KILLINGS OF THE HOLOCAUST

(Continued from page 6)

The Nazis had deliberated on murdering him. Instead, he was transferred to another jurisdiction.

Recently, I came across the 40-page unpublished memoirs that Hartinger wrote in 1984 shortly before his death at age 91. Along with many technical details already familiar to scholars, Hartinger outlined an extraordinary plan for dismantling the emerging system in the *Dachau* Concentration Camp.

He understood that the Nazi regime, just a few months in power, was still sensitive to international opinion. It was his intention to use the murder indictments to expose publicly the atrocities in *Dachau*, and force the government to evict the SS guards and replace them with trained police or military units familiar with the laws governing the proper detention and treatment of prisoners. It was a seemingly quixotic plan, but Hartinger understood the key decision makers within the government and sought to play them against one another.

He almost succeeded. "These were not fantasies," Hartinger recalls in his memoirs. "As I later learned, there were conversations in exactly this direction except that the 'good spirits' did not prevail."

But his indictments confounded the Nazi legal bureaucracy. In the end, the only recourse was to lose them. They were locked in a desk and forgotten.

After the war, the abandoned indictments were discovered by a U.S. intelligence unit and returned to German prosecutors, who used them to convict the surviving perpetrators.

The Hartinger memoirs show us in nuanced detail the political, legal, and emotional dynamics that led to the first serial killing of Jews in Nazi Germany. Equally important, they show us that tenuous phase of an emerging genocidal process when intercession could have disrupted and derailed the horrific and now seemingly inevitable outcome.

Clearly, no single man could have prevented the Holocaust, except Hitler himself, but had there been more Germans like Hartinger to hold individual Nazis personally accountable for their excesses, including President Paul von Hindenburg, who possessed the constitutional authority to dissolve the Nazi government at will and dismiss Hitler as chancellor, the course of history could have taken a very different turn.

The Hartinger memoirs make this fact abundantly clear, preserving for us that ineffable substance of the human soul — faith, hope, fear, and courage — that shapes individual decisions and ultimately determines the course of actions, both large and small, that constitute the chain of events we know as history.

Hartinger may have lacked the aristocratic bearing of Raul Wallenberg. He certainly possessed neither the charm nor the wiles of Oskar Schindler. He was little more than a middle-aged civil servant with a wife and five-year-old child at home. But like these two legendary figures of Holocaust rescue, Joseph Hartinger demonstrated the potential of personal courage, intelligence, and determination in a time of collective human failure. He also provides further proof of the transcendent and enduring power of justice.

A POLISH WOMAN'S HEROIC JOURNEY OF SELF-DISCOVERY

(Continued from page 6)

children, I should have been protecting myself?" Gebert recalled her saying. The realization made her giggle like a teenager.

After that evening, she began to cultivate a relationship with Warsaw's Jewish community and to attend services at Warsaw's Nozyk synagogue.

It was another discovery five years ago that confirmed her sense of Jewishness completely: the discovery of documents showing that her father was Jewish. Grodzka-Guzkowska had grown up attending a private Catholic school for girls, and her father's parentage had never been discussed in the family.

As she was sorting out old stuff cluttering a closet, she found identity documents in a suitcase that showed both her paternal grandparents were Jewish. This revelation, more than anything, caused a profound shift in her identity and made her finally think of herself as a Jew.

She learned a few Hebrew words and delved into reading the Old Testament. She envisioned herself wrapped in a simple white shroud with mourners placing stones on her tomb, rather than the flowers found in Catholic cemeteries.

"I will be buried in the Jewish cemetery as a Jew," she said. Chief Rabbi Michael Schudrich confirms her wishes will be carried out.

Grodzka-Guzkowska's gradual embrace of Judaism paralleled cultural shifts within Poland after the 1989 collapse of its communist government, as it began its painful but ultimately successful transition to democracy.

These days, although there is occasional vandalism of Jewish cemeteries and some anti-Semitism persists, Polish Jews sometimes say they feel safer walking the streets of Warsaw in a yarmulke, or skullcap, than they would in many Western European cities.

As Poles with Jewish roots feel freer to explore a heritage that once spelled death,

the nation's Jewish traditions also are going mainstream, with students packing Jewish history and Hebrew courses and all kinds of people flocking to Jewish festivals held in Krakow, in Warsaw, and even in smaller towns.

In 1939 Poland's Jews numbered nearly 3.5 million, about 10 percent of the population. Today, there are no firm statistics on



Award ceremony at the Yad Vashem synagogue.

how many people in this nation of 38 million identify themselves as Jewish. The Conference of European Rabbis estimates that Poland's Jewish population has grown from just a few thousand to more than 20,000 over the past 30 years.

Many of the prewar Jews were traditional Orthodox believers who lived in villages or shtetls that formed the archetypal image made famous in *Fiddler on the Roof*. Many others became fully integrated into mainstream Polish society: doctors, writers, military officers, scientists.

Amid Poland's cultural changes, aging Poles with family secrets feel it is finally time to pass them on to the next generation. In some cases, such discoveries spark personal transformations, inspiring adult men to undergo circumcision or to take on new names.

Most of those who decide to live as Jews are in their 20s or 30s, with the older generations often still too fearful of anti-Semitism

to want to live openly as Jews. Grodzka-Guzkowska is a prominent exception.

"It's an amazing story," said Rabbi Stas Wojciechowicz. "Three generations after the war people are rediscovering their Judaism and some are undergoing formal conversion. ... It's the third and fourth generation that is closing this cycle."

He said he also has been struck by how so many Polish Jews belong very much to the Jewish and Catholic worlds simultaneously. His synagogue, for instance, practically empties of worshippers around Christmas and All Saints Day, a major Catholic holiday when Poles visit the graves of ancestors.

"They say they are sorry but they need to be with their parents at those times," he said. "Almost everybody has this story of a divided family, with one part Jewish — mostly the younger generation — while the older one isn't."

Not long after Grodzka-Guzkowska embraced her Jewishness, it proved an obstacle to her being honored for her wartime heroism.

A Jewish boy she had rescued was reunited with her in 2007 as a grown man. William Donat petitioned Israel's Yad Vashem Holocaust memorial to name her a "Righteous Among the Nations" in recognition of her wartime heroism.

But Yad Vashem hesitated on the grounds the award only recognizes non-Jews.

As Yad Vashem wavered, Chief Rabbi Schudrich and her friend Gebert, a prominent member of Warsaw's Jewish community, made the case that she should be given the award because she had acted during the war with the consciousness of a Catholic, not a Jew.

"Magda decided in a moment to save Jewish children," Schudrich wrote in a 2008 email to Yad Vashem. "Why are we taking so long?"

The Jerusalem-based institute ultimately ruled in her favor: It honored her in 2009.

THE LEGACY OF ANTISEMITISM

(Continued from page 4)

ism in modern Egypt, held Jews responsible for the emergence of secular national elites in the Muslim world — indeed argued that "anyone who leads this community away from its religion and its Qur'an can only be a Jewish agent." The same poisonous stew continues to be preached today by imams in their Friday sermons, especially in the Arab world. For Islam, as Bat Yeor, a pioneer in the modern study of the (mis)treatment of minorities in Islam, has pointed out, Nazism merely provided new propaganda techniques.

As for the actual experience of Jews — and Christians — in the Islamic world, as people of the book, they were allowed to live subjected as *dhimmis*. *Dhimmi*s had to pay the *jizya*, a burdensome annual tax, which they were supposed to deliver to the authorities in person and be beaten around the head as they did so. *Dhimmi*s were not permitted to defend themselves if physically assaulted by a Muslim; could not testify against a Muslim in a court of law; had to wear distinctive clothing, footwear and badges (here the Nazis imitated Islam); could not ride horses or bear arms; and had to hurry through the streets with lowered eyes, accept insults without reply, and always pass to the left (impure) side of a Muslim. *Dhimmi*s were restricted in building new houses of worship or repairing old ones. Bat Yeor points out they did not have human rights as individuals — their only "rights" derived from

acceding to the rules laid down by the protector for giving his protection. The cumulative effect of humiliation and economic exploitation was devastating. Nazi propagandist and later convert to Islam Johann von Leers (whose 1942 essay *Judaism and Islam as Opposites* was translated for Boston's book) celebrates this: "Oriental Jewry was completely paralyzed by Islam. Its back was broken."

Even so, a greater proportion of Jews than Christians resisted conversion to Islam. Although the Muslim countries around the southern and eastern Mediterranean were Christian before being conquered by jihad, almost all the inhabitants would become Muslims. The most effective measures were not necessarily the most brutal: particularly effective was a provision that gave a convert inheritance rights to the property of all his relatives.

So where did the myth of Islamic tolerance, the myth of a golden age in Muslim Spain, come from? Oddly enough, it came largely from 19th century European Jewish scholars who developed Islamic studies. They romanticized especially the experience of Jews in Muslim Spain as a reproach to the European societies in their own day, reluctant to accept Jews as equals in the wake of their legal emancipation. As Bernard Lewis, the doyen of Islamic studies, puts it: "The myth was invented by Jews in 19th century Europe as a reproach to Christians — and taken

up by Muslims in our own time as a reproach to Jews." This is not to deny that there was a burst of Jewish philosophic and poetic creativity in Muslim Spain, with some Jews assuming positions of political power. But the effect was to inflame the Muslim masses. In the 11th century, widely taken to be the peak of Arab-Jewish symbiosis in Spain, 4,000 Jews were killed in Muslim riots in Grenada and hundreds of Jews slaughtered in Cordoba.

The Legacy of Islamic Antisemitism affords important lessons for Jews and Christians alike. Jews can learn that the vaunted Arab-Israeli "peace process" is a delusion — there is no way Muslims will accept Jews as anything but *dhimmi*s in a region they claim as part of the Islamic heartland. And Christians can learn that the "multiculturalism" of which the West has become enamored threatens to pave the way for them to assume *dhimmi* status in the European heartland. Absurd? A small telling incident: In Birmingham, on February 19, two American-born preachers were briefly arrested for passing out Christian pamphlets in a Muslim area: they were told it was a "hate crime." Continued mass Muslim immigration to Europe, a much higher birthrate and potential conversion of Europeans increasingly adrift from their Christian faith can lead before long to a "tipping point" in several European countries.

This important book should become the standard reference work on its subject.

RIGHTEOUS GENTILE RECALLS SAVING HUNDREDS OF CHILDREN

BY CNAAN LIPSHIZ, JERUSALEM POST

The question asked of Johan Van Hulst on the morning of June 19, 1943, was short but potentially fateful: "Are those Jewish children?" With SS soldiers within earshot, it might well have been the last question he would hear.

His interlocutor, Inspector Fieringa, was an Education Ministry official sent to oversee the matriculation exams at the Protestant seminary which Professor Van Hulst — who turned 101 in January — was running.

"You don't really expect me to answer that, do you?" he finally replied.

In January Van Hulst met with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in the Dutch parliament and received from the visiting Israeli prime minister a copy of the Bible as a token of gratitude for saving more than 500 children from the Holocaust.

"There was only one way to escape from the crèche, and that was from the seminary. And I — and not only I but students from the University of Amsterdam and from Utrecht — saved more than 500 children, but less than a thousand."

Netanyahu replied: "We say, those who save one life saves a universe. You saved hundreds of universes. I want to thank you in the name of the Jewish people, but also in the name of humanity."

In an interview with *The Jerusalem Post*, Van Hulst — who after the war became a senior politician — said he could not have done it if not for "the help of God and people like Inspector Fieringa."

Upon discovering Van Hulst's secret, the inspector shook the professor's hand and quietly told him: "In God's name, be careful."

The same day Van Hulst met with Netanyahu, a feature film was released in the Netherlands depicting the actions of the people involved in the rescue operation, including Van Hulst and the students and staff of his college, the *Hervormde Kweekschool te Amsterdam*.

The film, *Suskind*, focuses on the actions of Walter Suskind, a German Jew who

used his good relations with SS officers in occupied Holland to smuggle children from the SS-guarded Jewish crèche at the *Hollandsche Schouwburg* in Amsterdam to the adjacent seminary run by Van Hulst.

The film touches on what is apparently one of Dutch society's open nerves.

Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte denounced amid a heated public debate that he would not apologize for the perceived indifference of the Dutch government in exile to the murder of over 100,000 Dutch Jews.

Rutte had been urged to apologize by presiding and former politicians.



Van Hulst meets with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Asked by an Israeli journalist whether the Netherlands would someday apologize, Rutte said: "The terrible events do not lend themselves to black and white utterances that we don't intend to pass lightly."

During World War II, the German occupation forces in the Netherlands relied heavily on the collaborationist Dutch Nazi party (NSB) to administer daily life and facilitate the extermination of more than 80 percent of Dutch Jewry. Queen Wilhelmina, who was together with her government in exile in London, devoted five sentences to the fate of her Jewish subjects over five years of frequent radio broadcasts.

"My opinion is that I do not wish to judge," Van Hulst said. "The Dutch govern-

ment in exile knew nothing of what was happening here. I do not wish for an apology. There was such great suffering."

Those in favor of an apology, including the Dutch-Israeli scholar on anti-Semitism Dr. Manfred Gerstenfeld and a former deputy premier, alleged the Queen and her government remained relatively silent because they did not regard Jews as real Dutchmen.

Van Hulst believes apologies are due for the treatment of Jews after the war.

"The Jews who returned were not welcomed," he said. "Some Jews who returned from the camps were not compensated for their property and some were even required to pay city tax and utility bills for their time in the camps."

Collaborationism (or treason, as Van Hulst calls it) was also rife, he said. "Safe houses in Amsterdam were impossible to find. There were many German sympathizers. The chance of betrayal was enormous."

Not a sentimental man, Van Hulst sought to avoid expressions of gratitude by people he had saved.

"I had closed the book on the war and devoted myself to the education system, which was in a terrible state after the war."

But that changed after Van Hulst, in the 1960s, was asked to review a dissertation about the rescue operation. "I was sucked right in," he said with a smile.

Yad Vashem recognized him as a Righteous Among the Nations in 1972.

One of the most difficult days in Van Hulst's life, he said, was the day the crèche was closed down and all 80 children there were to be sent to the camps.

"Taking in 80 children was impossible. I had to choose. But who? I chose 12 children, all of them five to twelve years old. They could walk — and fast if necessary."

Van Hulst said he has no regrets, but wishes he could have saved more. "I saved more than 500, but fewer than a thousand."

DON'T REHABILITATE THE GUILTY

(Continued from page 5)

thereby denying the Holocaust its rightful place as a unique case of genocide. Such distortion also minimizes the highly significant role of Hitler's Eastern European collaborators in Holocaust crimes and paves the way for the rehabilitation of those who fought against the Soviets, regardless of any crimes they may have committed against Jews. It is this ideological foundation that spawned all four events described above.



A gathering in 2006 for veterans, including members of the 20th *Waffen Grenadier Division of the SS* (1st Estonian). The SS veterans claim they only allied with the Nazis to defend their country from Soviet invasion.

This approach was originally formulated in the Prague Declaration of June 3, 2008, which can properly be categorized as the official "manifesto of Holocaust distortion." The declaration's original signatories — 27 leading Eastern European political leaders and intellectuals — openly warn that Europe will never be united until it "recognize[s] communism and Nazism as a common legacy," and makes practical demands that if accepted would lead to a revolutionary reevaluation of World War II history, and turn the Holocaust into just another of many similar tragedies. Unfortunately, resolutions supporting these principles have already passed by a wide margin in the European Parliament and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

It is time for the Israeli government and Jewish defense organizations to begin actively combating these dangerous phenomena, lest the successes achieved during recent decades in Holocaust commemoration and education worldwide be erased by those trying to conceal the crimes of their countrymen.

SNAPSHOTS FROM THE THIRD REICH

(Continued from page 4)

Hardy" Luftwaffe pair. Critics might maintain that by focusing on showing how Nazis were "human," the book diverts attention from their crimes against humanity. But it's impossible to thumb through the book on any page and not see the ghosts of the six million floating around every photo.

A narrative that snakes through the book provides an overview of the time period and background on what's taking place in the photos. Garson admits in the introduction that the text is not meant to be a comprehensive overview of the Third Reich, but it still provides an extra dimension in the efforts to comprehend the people in the photos.

And in the end, it is the photographs, stark and naked, that tell the story. As Garson writes, "With these photos, we look into that surreal world, and into the very faces of average men and women, often smiling faces, and ask, How was it possible?"

After *Album of the Damned*, the answer doesn't get any closer, but the question will give you the shivers.

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Eli Zborowski
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To Industry
To Holocaust Remembrance
(KTAV/Yad Vashem Publications)

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