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CELEBRATING THE STRENGTH OF WOMEN

THE AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR YAD VASHEM ANNUAL SPRING LUNCHEON

On May 16 the American Society for Yad Vashem held its Annual Spring Luncheon at the New York Marriott Marquis hotel in New York City. The theme of the event was Celebrating the Strength of Women. Sima Katz and Iris Lifshitz Lindenbaum were this year's honorees.

Marilyn Rubenstein, Luncheon Chair, opened the event with the following remarks.

"On behalf of the American Society for Yad Vashem and my Luncheon Co-Chairs, Rita Levy and Stella Skura, I welcome you to this year's Annual Spring Luncheon.

"I am pleased to see all of you here today and thank you for your commitment to our organization's important mission of Holocaust remembrance.

"I wish to acknowledge our Chairman and Founder, Eli Zborowski, and his wife, Elizabeth. Eli and Elizabeth continue to inspire us with their tireless energy and complete dedication to the Society and, through it, to Yad Vashem in Jerusalem. Thank you.

"I also welcome our guest speaker Rochel Berman, a long-standing member of the American Society for Yad Vashem, whose book about Eli chronicles a life of exemplary leadership.

"Today we celebrate the strength of women – their spirit and resilience; the memory of those who perished so tragically while holding on to family and children for as long as they could; and those who survived and lived to raise new generations of leaders in a new world.

"Indeed it is appropriate that today we honor Sima Katz and Iris Lifshitz Lindenbaum. Sima, a survivor who, with her late husband Nathan, came to America and through hard work and unbending spirit raised children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren; and Iris Lifshitz Lindenbaum, who carries the torch of our Young Leadership. Iris is a grandchild of survivors, Sam and Stella Skura, founders of our organization. Iris has her own child, a Fourth generation. Both Sima and Iris are active and respected representatives of our organization and reflect our dynamic continuity.

"It is therefore with great pleasure that I officially open this Luncheon's program, acknowledging the contribution of our honorees and their leadership.

"I now call on Eli Zborowski, our Founder, Chairman, and mentor."

Eli Zborowski addressed the audience with the following speech:

"In Celebrating the Strength of Women we have selected two distinguished honorees who are members of families that have made enduring humanitarian contributions to Jewish life, and particularly to the cause of remembrance. On behalf of the American Society for Yad Vashem, I wish to congratulate Sima Katz, a Holocaust survivor, and Iris Lifshitz Lindenbaum, granddaughter of survivors, Sam, *z"l,* and Stella Skura. Sam was one of my oldest and dearest friends. He was the person to whom I turned to discuss all major decisions about the Society. His death has left a void in my life.

"Both families we honor today are Society Benefactors. Sima Katz has endowed a program for Jewish educators at Yad Vashem in memory of her late husband, Nathan, *z"l*. The Skura-Lifshitz families have endowed a Learning Center at Yad Vashem that provides visitors with interactive access to an extensive Holocaust database of texts, photographs, recordings and films.

"This past year marked the publication of my biography, *A Life of Leadership*, that was meticulously researched and skillfully co-authored by Rochel and George Berman. The Bermans brought to this project the knowledge and understanding they gained about our work during the last twenty years. This afternoon, we are pleased to welcome Rochel as our guest speaker.

Front row: Eli Zborowski, Chairman, American Society for Yad Vashem; Sima Katz, 2012 Spring Luncheon Honoree; and Iris Lifshitz Lindenbaum, 2012 Spring Luncheon Honoree.
Back row: Rita Levy, 2012 Spring Luncheon Co-Chair; Matthew Levy, grandson and introducer of Sima Katz; and Marilyn Rubenstein, 2012 Spring Luncheon Chair.

"Just prior to Pesach, the book, co-published by Yad Vashem, was launched in the Yad Vashem synagogue, a project endowed by Marilyn and Barry Rubenstein and family. At the conclusion of his remarks, Joshua Berman, Professor of Bible at Bar Ilan, who represented his parents, pointed to four empty pages at the back of the book. He said that these pages symbolically signify that our work for the perpetuation of memory will continue for generations to come. With your interest and support we have built a strong organization that now includes the Second, Third, and Fourth generations. I am confident that there will be many more chapters written by successive generations about the aftermath of the *Shoah*."

After award presentation Rita Levy, Luncheon Co-Chair, introduced the guest speaker, Rochel Berman.

"About fifteen years ago my parents went back to Lithuania to find the gentile family who hid them during the war. They were successful, and so they applied to Yad Vashem to have them named Righteous Among the Nations. We came up with the idea of having the ceremony at my daughter Rebecca's Bat Mitzvah reception here in New York. And my father said something like, 'I want the whole world should know. Call the newspapers! Call the TV!' As is typical in many father/daughter relationships, I just rolled my eyes. As was typical with my father, he steamrolled ahead. So, in the office of Benjamin Mead (may he rest in peace), the head of the American Gathering of Jewish Holocaust Survivors, we came to a meeting about how we could accomplish 'the whole world should know.'

"It was there that we met a lovely, self-assured, professional American woman, who also spoke Yiddish! And the most amazing part was, when she spoke, no matter what the language, my father listened. We all listened. And as a result:

"When the Žilevičius family arrived at JFK, our local news channel and the *Daily News* were there.

"When they went with my parents to the Statue of Liberty, *Newsday* went with them.

"It was the same *Newsday* reporter who listened to Mom and Dad tell their story while Matthew sat on his *Zaydie's* lap, hearing the stories for the first time – and at the *bat mitzvah* reception, as Rebecca stood with her brother and cousins and explained that because of the seven lives that the Žilevičius family saved in 1943, twelve of us are here today. *Tikun Olam*. To save one life is to save the world. And channel four was there to record and later air the story. *Newsday* did a large feature spread.

"Rochel Berman was responsible for helping to tell the world what happened. In fact, she helped with the publication of Dad's memoir, *Teach Us to Count Our Days*.

"On a personal note, Rochel taught me that, no matter how nervous you are standing behind a podium, in front of a microphone, it is indeed important, imperative, to keep the stories alive, to pass them on from one generation to the next. Remember and never forget."

The guest speaker, Rochel Berman, said:

"I offer my heartfelt congratulations to our honorees Sima Katz and Iris Lifshitz Lindenbaum. I have been privileged to work closely with two generations of the Katz and Skura families and am so pleased that there are now three generations in each of these dynasties that have embraced the cause of remembrance. The Skura and Katz ancestry as well as their progeny epitomize strength, courage, and compassion.

"Because I inaugurated the Spring Luncheon more than a decade ago, I continue to have a very proprietary feeling about this event. While the program has evolved and attendance has doubled over the years, I

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IN THIS ISSUE

YOM HASHOAH AROUND THE WORLD

PEOPLE FROM ISRAEL TO THE U.S., AND EVERYWHERE IN BETWEEN, REMEMBER THE VICTIMS OF THE HOLOCAUST ON APRIL 19

Israel honors six million victims of Nazi Holocaust

Israelis flocked to the Yad Vashem Holocaust memorial on April 19 to read the names of loved ones who perished at the hands of the Nazis during World War II, a rite that has become a centerpiece of the country's annual commemoration for the 6 million Jews killed in the genocide.

Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu lays a wreath during the annual ceremony in memory of six million Jews who perished in the Nazi holocaust, on Holocaust Remembrance Day at the Yad Vashem memorial in Jerusalem.

The ceremony, known as "Every Person Has a Name," tries to go beyond the huge numbers to personalize the stories of individuals, families, and communities destroyed during the war.

Zvi Shefet, an 87-year-old survivor, carried a list of 48 names, including those of his parents, his lone sister, his grandparents, uncles, aunts, and cousins. Having fled to the countryside, he remained not only the lone survivor of his family but also one of the few Jews to escape from the village of *Slonim* — then part of Poland, today in Belarus — where Nazi troops massacred nearly 30,000 Jews and dumped their bodies into open pits.

Israeli soldiers stand at attention during the opening ceremony of Holocaust Martyrs and Heroes Remembrance Day at the Yad Vashem Holocaust memorial in Jerusalem.

"These people have no grave, no tombstone. Their names are written nowhere," said Shefet, who later migrated to Israel and now has three children and eight grandchildren. "When I go to Yad Vashem, it is like I am going to the cemetery, to remember my family but also my community — all those who died and have no one left behind to even remember them or commemorate them."

Israel came to a standstill on the morning of April 19 to honor the victims when sirens wailed for two minutes across the country. Pedestrians stood in place, buses stopped on busy streets, and cars pulled over on major highways — their drivers standing on the roads with their heads bowed.

In homes and businesses, people stopped what they were doing to pay homage to the victims of the Nazi genocide, in which a third of world Jewry was annihilated.

A wreath-laying ceremony at Yad Vashem followed, with Israeli leaders and

World War II veterans lay a wreath during the annual ceremony in memory of six million Jews who perished in the Nazi holocaust, on Holocaust Remembrance Day at Yad Vashem memorial in Jerusalem.

Holocaust survivors in attendance. Other ceremonies, prayers, and musical performances took place in schools, community centers, and army bases.

The annual remembrance is one of the most solemn on Israel's calendar. Restaurants, cafes and places of entertainment shut down, and radio and TV programming was dedicated almost exclusively to documentaries about the Holocaust, interviews with survivors, and somber music. The Israeli flag flew at half-staff.

Young Jews place memory plaques, after signing them, on railway tracks at the Auschwitz-Birkenau Nazi death camp in *Oswiecim* as they take part in the annual "March of the Living" in memory of the 6 million Jews killed during the Holocaust.

A public reading of names also took place at Israel's parliament, where Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and other leaders recited names of relatives who were killed.

At the opening state ceremony at Yad Vashem, Israeli leaders linked the Nazi genocide to Iran's suspected drive to acquire nuclear arms and urged the world to stop it.

"Those who dismiss the Iranian threat as a whim or an exaggeration haven't learned a thing from the Holocaust," said Netanyahu, who has been criticized by some in Israel for making the connection.

Iranian leaders have repeatedly made references to the destruction of Israel.

Iran denies its objective is to build nuclear bombs. Many in Israel believe that even if it does, a comparison to Nazi death camps, gas "showers," and crematoria is unwarranted.

"The question is whether additional speeches laden with pathos and cliches, and whether the airing of hollow threats will serve the shared goal of disarming Iran of nuclear weapons?" wrote columnist Ben Caspit in the Israeli *Maariv* daily, asking, "Isn't it a bit excessive to compare Tehran's threats of war to the Nazi extermination machine, the theories about racial superiority, the creation of a murder machine that was unprecedented in the history of humankind that not only exterminated six million Jews but dragged the entire world into the flames?"

The link drawn between the Holocaust and Iran shows how more than six decades later, the mass murder of Jews during World War II is still a central part of Israel's psyche. The nation was created just three years after the end of the war, and hundreds of thousands of survivors made their way to Israel.

One of those was Shefet, who joined the Polish resistance movement, met his future wife, then sailed with her to Israel.

Today, they are among fewer than 200,000 elderly survivors in Israel.

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Obama at Holocaust museum: "I'll be there for Israel"

President Obama in an address at a Holocaust remembrance event said he would "always be there for Israel" and defended his administration's record on preventing atrocities.

U.S. President Barack Obama lights a candle alongside Nobel laureate and Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel in the Remembrance Hall at the United States Holocaust Museum in Washington.

Obama spoke on April 23 at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, a few days after Holocaust Remembrance Day. Prior to his address, he took a tour of the museum guided by Elie Wiesel, the Holocaust memoirist and Nobel Peace laureate.

He recounted meeting with a woman at Yad Vashem, Israel's Holocaust memorial, when he was a presidential candidate in 2008, who told him that the Jews only had one state.

"I said I would always be there for Israel," Obama said, and he cited the steps he has

Ryan Blesse, left, and Mioko Webster light a candle in remembrance of victims of the Holocaust during a *Yom HaShoah* program at Illinois College in Jacksonville, Ill. In addition to remembering the victims, the program highlighted the efforts of those who chose to save others at the risk of their own well-being.

taken to isolate Iran because of its suspected nuclear weapons program.

Obama announced the formal establishment of the Atrocities Prevention Board, which will draw senior officials from across the government. The panel will serve as a clearinghouse for real-time intelligence, policymaking and other issues related to the threat of mass killings.

He also announced the preparation of the first National Intelligence Estimate — the consensus view of all U.S. intelligence agencies — appraising the potential for mass killings in countries around the world.

"We must tell our children. But more than that, we must teach them," Obama said in a solemn 25-minute address. "Because remembrance without resolve is a hollow gesture."

Obama also recounted steps taken by his administration through military and diplomatic action to prevent atrocities in Sudan, Libya, Uganda, and Ivory Coast.

The president has come under pressure in recent months for not doing more to oust Syrian President Bashar Assad, whose crackdown on opponents has killed thousands. Obama pledged to keep working with allies to bring about "the end of the Assad regime."

Elsewhere in his address, however, he said that his commitment to preventing atrocities "does not mean we intervene militarily every time there is an injustice in the world."

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Thousands attend March of the Living in Auschwitz to honor Holocaust victims

The mournful wail of the traditional Jewish ram's horn – the "*shofar*," symbolizing freedom -- marked the start of the annual March of the Living, held this year for the 21st time since 1988 in this southern Polish town where Nazi Germany built its most notorious death camps.

Members of Warsaw's Jewish community, and city officials and others gather to mark the 69th anniversary of the doomed Warsaw ghetto uprising, in Warsaw, Poland, on Thursday, April 19.

Eight thousand marchers, including Auschwitz survivors, Jewish youths from as far as Australia, and two thousand young Poles, passed through the infamous "*Arbeit macht frei*" (Work Will Set You Free) gate at the Auschwitz camp before proceeding along the three-kilometer route to *Birkenau*.

"This march for me is like a candle which I have to light for the victims," Steven Higgs, a 22-year-old from Boston, Massachusetts, told AFP.

"It's a small candle in a dark world but I believe, if more people will light a candle, the world could be better," he said.

Maria Hermano, 43, travelled from Mexico with her family for the march, marking the annual Holocaust Memorial Day.

"No one from my family died in a concentration camp, but when you are here, you feel that every victim is a part of your fam-

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FIFTY YEARS ON EICHMANN ON DISPLAY AT THE UN

The UN marked Yom HaShoah with the opening of an exhibition on the 50th anniversary of the trial of Adolf Eichmann, one of the key architects of the Final Solution.

Prominently displayed in the UN's visitor's lobby, the exhibition documents the historic trial through photographs, news clippings and works of art – from Eichmann's capture by the Mossad in Argentina in May 1960 to his execution in 1962.

The exhibit was produced by the Museums Division of Yad Vashem, the Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Authority in Jerusalem. It includes photographs, newspaper clippings, works of art and original film footage of the trial. International media coverage of the court hearing, which included testimony by Holocaust survivors, captured public attention around the globe and was considered a turning point in Holocaust history.

On the opening day, remarks were made by Minister Yossi Peled of Israel, a Holocaust survivor and retired general; H.E. Mr. Ron Prosor, Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations; and Professor Melvin J. Bukiet, Sarah Lawrence College, member of the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors of the American Society for Yad Vashem.

"In telling Eichmann's story, this exhibit sends a clear message to the international community and to each visitor that passes through these halls," said Ambassador Ron Prosor. "As we learn what he stood for, we understand what we must stand against... Eichmann's trial did more than expose the past; it taught the world a critical lesson for the future."

But perhaps that lesson has not yet been fully learned or understood, warned Minister Yossi Peled, with a not-so-veiled reference to Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.

"Every year, just a few meters from where we are sitting, there is a president of a UN member state that stands on the podium of the General Assembly and denies the Holocaust while his government threatens to carry out another one."

Elliot Pines, American Society for Yad Vashem Young Leadership Associates Event Chair; Alexandra Lebovits, American Society for Yad Vashem Young Leadership Associates Event Chair; Minister Yossi Peled of Israel; Tamar Hausner-Raveh, Esq., daughter of Gideon Hausner, chief prosecutor at the Eichmann trial; Eli Zborowski, Chairman of the American & International Societies for Yad Vashem; Caroline Massel, Founder and Chairman Emerita of the American Society for Yad Vashem Young Leadership Associates.

A 2005 UN resolution rejects any denial of the Holocaust as an historical event and commends those states which have actively engaged in the preservation of sites which served as Nazi death camps, concentration camps, forced labor camps, and prisons during the Holocaust. Two years later, another resolution was passed urging all UN member states to reject any denial of the Holocaust.

The UN has also designated 27 January – the day Auschwitz was liberated in 1945 – as Holocaust Remembrance Day.

It has been 50 years since the Eichmann trial in Jerusalem, but memories have not faded. Tamar Hausner-Raveh, lawyer and daughter of Gideon Hausner, the trial's chief prosecutor, remembered when she was 14 years old, the day her father was appointed to the case and Eichmann entered her life.

"My father shared with us his doubts about whether he could represent the victims without being a survivor himself," she said. But he found the inner strength to do so, as reflected in his opening remarks of the trial: "As I stand here before you, judges of Israel, to lead the prosecution of Adolf Eichmann, I do not stand alone.

"With me, in this place and at this hour, stand six million accusers."

The trial was broadcast live, receiving extensive international media attention, and was open to the public. Eileen Azif, a New York exchange student studying at Hebrew University at the time, attended the proceedings for several days.

"I clearly remember the image of this man with headphones [for translation from Hebrew to German] sitting very still behind a glass booth. He never moved a muscle," she recalled.

Mickey Goldman was a member of Israeli Police Bureau 6, which was set up to prepare witnesses for testimony.

"Eichmann never accepted blame or showed any remorse for his acts, not during the investigation, not during the trial and not before his death," he said. "On the day of his execution, at which I was present, he refused to confess."

Adolf Eichmann was convicted on 15 criminal charges, including crimes against the Jewish people and humanity. He was sentenced to death on June 1, 1962. His body was cremated and the ashes were scattered at sea, beyond Israel's territorial waters, in order to prevent his burial place from becoming a memorial site. The execution of Adolf Eichmann is the only time that Israel has enacted a death sentence.

On April 23, there was a roundtable discussion on the Eichmann trial with Minister Yossi Peled, Nobel laureate Elie Wiesel, and Amos Hausner, an attorney and son of the trial's chief prosecutor Gideon Hausner, followed by a reception organized by Young Leadership Associates of the American Society for Yad Vashem.

FIFTH OF GERMANS HOLD SOME ANTI-SEMITIC VIEWS

One-fifth of Germans hold latent anti-Semitic views, according to a study commissioned for the Bundestag.

Given the tiny Jewish population – just 0.24% of Germany's population – the study suggests the prejudice is an indirect effect of the near-erasure of Jewish life in Germany after the Holocaust.

"Anti-Semitism in our society is based on widespread prejudices, deeply rooted in clichés and on sheer ignorance about Jews and Judaism," said Peter Longerich, one of the authors.

Jewish life in Germany has experienced something of a revival over the last two decades.

While the community numbered fewer than 30,000 in 1989, immigration from Russia has seen the population swell to more than 200,000.

However, the report, compiled from data in various other studies, notes that anti-Jewish insults remain deeply rooted in popular culture, particularly in soccer fan culture.

References to Auschwitz, gas chambers, and burning synagogues are part and parcel of terrace chants.

Schoolchildren, the report notes, use the term "You Jew" as an insult. A fifth of Germans, according to the study, agree with the proposition: "Jews have too much power in business."

These latent anti-Jewish views make people susceptible to recruitment by far-right groups.

With about 26,000 members, these fringe groups, rather than the general population, are responsible for about 90 per cent of crimes with an anti-Semitic motivation.

The report calls on politicians to pursue better coordination of anti-Semitism measures at local, state and federal level.

In a pan-European comparison, German attitudes placed it in the mid-range of European anti-Semitism. Anti-Jewish feeling was far more widespread in Poland, Hungary, and Portugal.

NAZIS ON THE RUN

Secret files recently uncovered in South America reveal as many as 9,000 Nazi war criminals fled to the continent after World War II, the *Daily Mail* reports.

Approximately 5,000 went to Argentina, 1,500 to 2,000 went to Brazil, and another 500 to 1,000 fled to Chile. The rest hid in Paraguay and Uruguay.

The files also reveal that Argentine president General Juan Peron sold 10,000 blank passports to the Germans in order to facilitate their travel. And the documents exposed new details regarding the "rat lines," or escape routes, used by around 800 Nazis to flee Europe with passports provided by the Vatican.

Kurt Schrimm – head of the central war criminal authority in Germany responsible for examining the files – remarked, "These documents provide the hottest leads we have had for years."

The team holds out for the possibility that new leads might procure a living fugitive, though Schrimm noted, "Each day that passes makes that less and less likely, but I do not want people to say in the future that we did not try."

LAWMAKERS VOTE TO RELAX SWISS SECRECY FOR HOLOCAUST FUNDS

Swiss lawmakers voted to relax strict secrecy laws to make it easier to liquidate unclaimed accounts held in Swiss banks, a major step forward in efforts to deal with wealth hidden by Jews from the Nazis during the Second World War.

Though Switzerland's UBS and Credit Suisse reached a $1.25 billion deal with Holocaust survivors and their descendants in 1998, the Swiss government has spent years attempting to amend banking secrecy laws to try to deal with unclaimed accounts.

In March, the lower house of parliament made a breakthrough, agreeing to suspend secrecy rules in order to allow unclaimed funds to be moved to another bank and liquidated without an account holder's approval.

The secrecy rules would only be waived if the bank could prove it had repeatedly failed to reach the account's owner or his or her beneficiaries.

Switzerland's upper house has yet to vote on the changes.

The 1998 settlement followed three years of wrangling between Holocaust victims and their descendants and Swiss banks over the fate of funds deposited in Swiss banks by Jews during the Second World War.

Swiss banking secrecy has come under renewed pressure in recent years, forcing Switzerland to relax its banking laws in certain areas and pledge to pursue tax evasion as well as outright fraud.

Switzerland is currently grappling with a U.S. crackdown on wealthy Americans hiding funds from the Internal Revenue Service, after U.S. prosecutors indicted Swiss private bank Wegelin over allegations it had helped hide money.

GETTY MUSEUM TO RETURN 17TH CENTURY DUTCH PAINTING LOST IN THE HOLOCAUST

The Getty Museum is returning another work of art that has turned out to be stolen goods, this one a Dutch landscape painting that was one of about 1,400 works left behind by Jacques Goudstikker, a noted Dutch-Jewish art dealer who fled the Nazi invasion of 1940.

The 370-year-old oil painting by Pieter Molijn isn't a masterpiece like some of the prized antiquities the Getty has sent back to Italy. When it was acquired at auction in 1972, "Landscape with Cottage and Figures" was believed to be by Jan van Goyan, but its authorship was later revised.

The Getty says the painting, which it never exhibited, was acquired "in good faith" but is being returned now because cooperative research by its own staff and experts working for Goudstikker's daughter-in-law, Marei von Saher, showed it was among the pieces the ill-fated Goudstikker had catalogued in a notebook at the time he fled.

Von Saher is after a far more prized work that hangs in Southern California: Lucas Cranach the Elder's "Adam and Eve" diptych, a highlight of the Norton Simon Museum's collection that has become the object of a long-running court battle.

BOOK REVIEWS

THEY DARED RETURN: THE TRUE STORY OF JEWISH SPIES BEHIND THE LINES IN NAZI GERMANY.

They Dared Return: The True Story of Jewish Spies Behind the Lines in Nazi Germany.

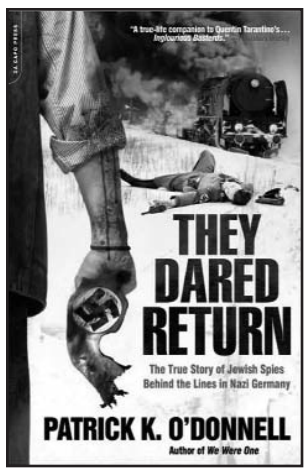
By Patrick K. O'Donnell. Da Capo Press: Cambridge, Massachusetts, 2010. 239 pp. $12.95 paperback.

REVIEWED BY DR. DIANE CYPKIN

Much has been written about Jews as victims during the war. Not nearly enough has been written about Jews as fighters. Patrick K. O'Donnell's volume *They Dared Return: The True Story of Jewish Spies Behind the Lines in Nazi Germany* is thus very welcome and important, and tells a unique and little known story.

In *They Dared Return* we read about Jews, lucky enough to escape the Nazis, who came to America and enthusiastically joined the American armed services to do all they could to fight them. The "star" of O'-Donnell's book is Frederick Mayer, a Jew, born in 1921 in the city of *Freiberg*, Germany. Interestingly, when Hitler came to power Mayer's father thought he and his family would be safe, despite the growing anti-Semitism around him. After all, this long-time patriot stubbornly believed, he had been a lieutenant and a decorated war hero in the Kaiser's army. That must mean something! That must protect them! Mayer's mother didn't feel that way, and after much "red tape" — two years of it to be exact –- the family immigrated to America, specifically, Brooklyn, New York.

Nonetheless, O'Donnell reveals to us that, as soon as Hitler declared war on America in 1941, Frederick Mayer — now safely out of harm's way — immediately reported to his local recruiting station in Brooklyn. He eagerly wanted to fight! Unfortunately, at first they wouldn't take him. He was considered an "enemy alien." It was only when he insistently appeared again, instead of his brother, that they realized his unwavering determination and "acquiesced."



Shortly after this point, O'Donnell's work starts reading like a James Bond novel. But the difference is this is not fiction. For more than eight years O'-Donnell conscientiously did his research for this book. He combed primary resources. He interviewed individuals central to his work.

In sum, because higher-ups quickly recognized Mayer's innate abilities, most especially his exceptional leadership abilities and keen resourcefulness in any situation, he was hand picked to become a member of the German Operational Group, or OGs. The OGs were the "precursor to the U. S. Army's Special Forces." "The OGs were part of a much larger organization called the Office of Strategic Services" (OSS). The goal of these OGs was "to penetrate enemy lines and strike at the heart of Nazi Germany."

Others who were hand picked to become members of this elite group, and with whom Mayer especially bonded, included George Gerbner, Alfred Rosenthal, Bernd Steinitz, and Hans Wynberg. All of them were Jews. Gerbner was a twenty-four-year-old refugee from Hungary who spoke four languages. Rosenthal was a nineteen-year-old from Germany who had already graduated from the U.S. Army intelligence school. Steinitz was a "world-class athlete" who "barely escaped from Nazi Germany in 1939." "Wynberg was a natural-born radio operator."

As fate would have it, however — and, surely, due to the confusion of an agency still just getting on its feet — Mayer and these men finally found their meaningful place in the OSS as intelligence operatives and just plain spies. In this role, ironically, they worked closely with and were aided by German prisoners of war who, after close scrutiny, were deemed trustworthy, and wanted to help the Allies to victory. At the same time, in this role, they were often in the "field" on their own and had to rely on their own wits and just plain chutzpah! Finally, in this role, if they were caught they could expect to be put to death. In short, these men had to have nerves of steel – for what they frequently succeeded in doing was often more than an army could. Indeed, they could save an army!

Mayer's activity was central in what may very well have been "one of the most successful OSS missions of the war," "Operation Greenup," location: *Innsbruck*, Austria. Here Mayer worked particularly closely with Wynberg and Franz Weber, a veteran *Wehrmacht* officer who proved especially valuable since he was born and grew up very near *Innsbruck*. Interestingly, Mayer met Weber when he was testing his German in a POW camp in Italy. Weber was his tent-mate and they got to talking . . .

Dropped in *Innsbruck*, "Operation Greenup" was about finding out information vital to the Allies. This being the case, Mayer didn't think twice about impersonating a German officer and a French electrician. He fearlessly mingled with German soldiers, railway personnel, and laborers. Thus he discovered, and miraculously communicated to his superiors, information that led to the bombing of trains "moving from Germany to the Italian front," carrying "tanks, ammo, guns, and fuel." "The destruction of the trains" may, "according to a source in Eisenhower's headquarters," have "shortened the war in Italy by six months." He verified information regarding German jet production factories, moved underground and into mountains. The Allies were concerned as to whether what was being produced there posed a real threat. Mayer checked on the veracity of talk circulating and promoted by the Nazis on a "last stand" planned at an *Alpenfestung*. Finally, he was responsible for the bloodless Allied takeover of *Innsbruck*. All this Mayer did — even as, in the midst of it, he was arrested and brutally beaten by the Gestapo.

Just exactly how did he do all this? *They Dared Return* is well worth the reading to find out!

BOOK DETAILS GERMAN CITIZENS' ROLE IN END-OF-WAR KILLINGS

The Death Marches: The Final Phase of Nazi Genocide.

By Daniel Blatman. Harvard University Press, 2011. 592 pp. $35 hardcover.

REVIEWED BY JAN FRIEDMANN, SPIEGEL ONLINE

More than 250,000 concentration camp prisoners died in death marches shortly before the end of World War II. Many of them were murdered by German civilians. A new book tries to answer the question why.

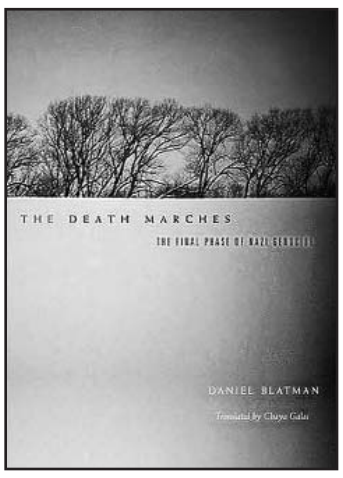
The end was in sight, with Allied troops already on the outskirts of the city. Nevertheless, a number of citizens of *Celle* in north central Germany became murderers on April 8, 1945.

They participated in the hunt for hundreds of concentration camp prisoners who, during an American bombing attack on the city and its train station, had fled from the freight cars, some of them in flames, in which they were being transported. Local police officers, guards and members of the *Volkssturm* national militia and the Hitler Youth executed their victims in a nearby forest.

The prisoners were "killed like animals," many of them execution style, according to a British military report. Up to 300 people died in the massacre, with the leader of a Hitler Youth group in *Celle* killing more than 20 alone. The Allies captured the city four days later.

The outbreak of violence in this part of the state of Lower Saxony is described in detail in a book by Daniel Blatman, *The Death Marches: The Final Phase of Nazi Genocide*. The book addresses the broader issue of the death marches of concentration camp prisoners in 1944 and 1945, during the waning months of the war.

Blatman, a historian at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, comes to an unsettling conclusion about the last phase of the Nazi mass murders: "The more the war approached its end, and the more obvious the prisoners' presence in the midst of the German population became, the more regularly German civilians participated."



Those civilians included government and local officials, members of the Nazi Party, and the Hitler Youth, as well as local residents. They abused or killed large numbers of those who, in the last stage of their lives filled with suffering, were forced on marches or had spent days being transported across Germany in overfilled freight cars.

At least 250,000 former prisoners lost their lives on death marches between January and May 1945. Their graves line roads in parts of Lower Saxony, Bavaria, and *Mecklenburg*, and in almost all of the places where the Nazis had built their camps.

The death marches began in occupied Poland, where the SS emptied out the larger camps in places like *Majdanek*, *Gross-Rosen* and Auschwitz as the front approached. Many prisoners were not even given enough time to pack their few belongings. Often clothed in nothing but rags and wearing wooden shoes, they staggered across the overcrowded roads in the bitter cold.

The prisoners were forced to share the roads with retreating German soldiers and civilians fleeing from the Red Army. All too often, the fears of the panicked masses erupted into violence against the weakest of those with whom they shared the route.

The tone was set by the SS, whose guards murdered without restraint. In *Palmnicken*, for example, 50 kilometers (31 miles) from the former East Prussian city of *Königsberg* (today's *Kaliningrad*), the henchmen drove more than 3,000 prisoners from the *Stutthof* camp, who had been marching for days, onto the beach of the frozen Baltic Sea and mowed them down with their machine guns.

A few weeks later, the death marches led directly through the territory of the German Reich. In one case, prisoners from the *Hessental* camp near *Schwäbisch Hall* in southwestern Germany were forced to march eastward toward Bavaria. After the war, investigators with the French occupation force unearthed mass graves in several locations along the route. They found 17 bodies in *Sulzdorf*, 36 in *Ellwangen* and 42 in a village called *Zöbingen*. Death marches that began at the *Dachau* concentration camp passed through *Poing* near *Munich* and continued through *Wolfratshausen* and *Bad Tölz*. Groups of prisoners from the *Flossenbürg* camp crisscrossed Bavaria.

The number of perpetrators continued to grow. Historian Blatman estimates that thousands, perhaps even tens of thousands, of ordinary citizens became accomplices of the murderous regime near the end of the war. In the northern city of *Lüneburg*, for example, a scenario similar to what had happened in *Celle* unfolded on April 11, 1945, when civilians and police officers captured prisoners who had escaped from a train that had been bombed. Members of the German navy later shot the prisoners at the *Lüneburg* train station.

There is no historical evidence that anyone at the very top, such as Hitler or SS chief Heinrich Himmler, gave the orders to liquidate the camps. The last weeks of the war were characterized by a gradual breakdown of administrative order. The jurisdiction over the groups of prisoners being forced to march around the country changed in rapid succession, and many local officials acted on their own authority when deciding what to do with the prisoners.

But why did so many officials behave with such brutality, and why did ordinary

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HOW A TOP NAZI'S BROTHER SAVED LIVES

BY CHRISTOPH GUNKEL, SPIEGEL ONLINE

Hermann Göring was one of the Nazi party's most powerful figures and an adamant anti-Semite. But his younger brother Albert worked to save the lives of dozens of Jews. Despite his efforts to do good, Albert's family name would ultimately prove to be a curse.

In downtown Vienna under the Nazis, two members of the SA had decided to humiliate an old woman. A crowd gathered and jeered as the storm troopers hung a sign bearing the words "I'm a dirty Jew" around the woman's neck. Suddenly, a tall man with a high forehead and thick mustache pushed his way angrily through the mob and freed the woman. "There was a scuffle with two storm troopers, I hit them and was arrested immediately," the man later said in a matter-of-fact statement.

Despite this open act of rebellion, the man was released immediately. He only had to say his name: Albert Göring, brother of Hermann Göring, the commander of the German air force and Hitler's closest confidant.

Years later, after the fall of the Third Reich, Albert Göring was arrested once again, this time by Americans. Again he gave his name, but this time it had the opposite effect.

"The results of the interrogation of Albert Göring … constitutes as clever a piece of rationalization and 'white wash' as the SAIC (Seventh Army Interrogation Center) has ever seen," American investigator Paul Kubala wrote on September 19, 1945. "Albert's lack of subtlety is matched only by the bulk of his obese brother."

Kubala's interpreter, Richard Sonnenfeldt, was likewise skeptical. "Albert told a fascinating story, but one I had trouble believing," he commented.

A MEMBER OF THE RESISTANCE?

The life of Hermann Göring's younger brother indeed makes a fascinating story, one that has remained essentially unknown in the nearly seven decades since the end of the Nazi dictatorship. Perhaps it's because today many have the same reaction that the American investigators had then: Can it really be possible that Hermann Göring's brother was a member of the resistance? A caring person who saved Jews, helped dozens of persecuted individuals obtain foreign currency and fake papers, and even secured the release of concentration camp prisoners?

While his prominent elder brother Hermann was known for his authoritarian, bombastic personality, Albert Göring (shown here in a photo taken around 1936) was a quiet, cultivated man.

"It has been four months now since I was robbed of my freedom, without knowing why," Albert Göring wrote in September 1945 in a heavy-hearted letter to his wife. He had turned himself over to the Americans voluntarily on May 9, 1945. After spending years trying to thwart his brother's policies in various small ways, now he felt betrayed.

So he took up a pen and paper and wrote an alphabetical list of 34 names, entitling it "People whose life or existence I put myself at risk (three Gestapo arrest warrants!) to save."

For decades, that list and the few other existing documents on Albert Göring sat in archives, gathering dust. Hermann Göring's life was examined down to the last detail, from his morphine addiction and his role as an art thief to his actions as *Reichsjägermeister*, or official gamekeeper. Albert Göring, meanwhile, sank into oblivion.

In the end, it was journalists rather than noted historians who first introduced the younger brother to a wider public. In 1998, a British film crew shot a documentary called *The Real Albert Göring*. In faraway Sydney, William Hastings Burke, then 18, stumbled across the film and developed a long-lasting fascination with the story. "The idea that this monster we learn about in history class could have had an Oskar Schindler for a brother seemed absolutely unbelievable," Burke later wrote.

After completing a university degree in economics, Burke scraped together the money for a ticket to Germany. He found a room in a shared apartment in the university town of *Freiburg*, got a job in an Irish pub, and otherwise devoted the next three years to searching for Albert Göring, combing through archives and meeting with friends and family members of people Albert Göring was said to have helped. The result was *Thirty Four*, a book named after Albert Göring's list, published in 2009.

STRIKING DIFFERENCES

Burke's book describes a man who could not have been more different from his infamous brother. "He was always the exact opposite of me," Hermann said in a statement after the war. "He wasn't interested in politics or the military, and I was. He was quiet and withdrawn, I loved gatherings and being sociable. He was melancholy and pessimistic, I'm an optimist."

In appearance as well, the brothers' differences were so striking that even early in their lives, rumors flew that Albert was in truth the result of an affair on the part of their mother, Franziska. Hermann had blue eyes, Albert had brown. Hermann was stocky and fat, Albert tall and slim. Hermann loved authoritarian, bombastic behavior, while Albert was a bon vivant — musical, cultured, and charming. He was also a ladies' man who married four times and was said to be always up for a fling.

At first, Albert simply tried to keep out of the National Socialists' way. A mechanical engineer, he chose not to join the Nazi Party, instead moving to Vienna, Austria in 1928 to work as sales manager for a company that made heating boilers. He also took on Austrian citizenship. But the world-power politics Albert so hated, and which his ambitious brother promoted, caught up with him there with the 1938 annexation of Austria to Nazi Germany.

At some point, Albert decided he wanted to help instead of turning a blind eye. For example, he helped Oskar Pilzer, former

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MY TAKE: SEVEN LIFE LESSONS FROM A HOLOCAUST SURVIVOR

BY CAROLINE STOESSINGER, CNN

At age 108, Alice Herz-Sommers is the world's oldest survivor of the Holocaust. She was imprisoned at* Theresienstadt*, which was conceived by Hitler as a "model" concentration camp.

Herz-Sommers – Alice, as I know her – is a pianist. In between summer 1943 and the camp's liberation at the end of the war, she played more than 100 concerts at *Theresienstadt*. Most were solo recitals culled from memory from her extensive repertoire. She has survived for more than a century with a profound faith in humanity intact and a smile on her face.

As music is her kind of prayer, Alice still practices piano – Bach, Beethoven, Schubert – for three hours every day.

I got to know her in London, where she now lives, through mutual friends who are musicians, historians, and Holocaust survivors. Here are seven lessons she has taught me:

1. Hatred only begets hatred

Alice recognizes that anyone, anywhere, and at any time can adopt hatred and, worse, can infect others with its venom. Hatred that may begin with one person, like a single pebble cast into a lake, can spread out incrementally to larger and larger groups, and even to entire nations.

"We are responsible for our actions and our words," she says. " And each of us must vigilantly guard against prejudice and hatred in our own minds and with the words that fall from our lips. No one is exempt. Hitler could not have come to power except in the climate of excessive hatred."

2. Love your work, no matter the situation

Reinhard Heydrich, Hitler's "hangman," and his underlings understood that adding musical and artistic events to *Theresienstadt* could be a huge publicity stunt, to prove to the outside world that all was OK for the Jews.

They ordered the prisoners to form a *Freizeitgestaltung*, or Free Time Committee, to organize concerts, lectures, and other events. Crudely printed posters appeared to advertise the programs.

Prisoners had no money, so tickets were free. So many musicians had been sent to *Theresienstadt* that for a time before the members were shipped to their deaths in Auschwitz, four symphony orchestras could play there simultaneously.

The artists took their performances just as seriously as if they were performing on the world stage. "As our situation became even more difficult, we tried even harder to reach for perfection, for the meaning in the music," Alice says. "Music was our way of remembering our inner selves, our values."

The Nazis failed to understand that the power of music to provide comfort and hope to the performers and their audiences was stronger than the terror of their Nazi masters. Every composition that was written in *Theresienstadt*, every concert played there, became a moral victory against the enemy.

3. Perseverance

On Alice's third day in *Theresienstadt*, she was told to play a recital the following week. "But I need to practice," she responded.

The next morning, Alice found the room where she had been assigned the 9:00–10:00 practice slot. With no time to waste, she began to work on her Chopin etudes, only to find that the pedal did not work and that several keys stuck repeatedly.

Refusing to be defeated, she quickly adapted to the piano's limitations and began to play with abandon, losing herself in the music. "At least I was making music and that always made me happy," she says.

Author Caroline Stoessinger, right, befriended Holocaust survivor Alice Herz-Sommers.

Despite the conditions in the camp and the inadequate, broken-down, legless instruments provided for concerts, emotionally she may have given her finest interpretations of Beethoven's and Schubert's sonatas in *Theresienstadt*.

4. In routine there is hope

Despite the filth and hunger, Alice's routine life of working her obligatory factory job, performing, caring for her six-year-old son Rafi, and giving him and a few other children elementary piano lessons in spare moments helped her never to lose hope.

"We were not heroic," Alice says. "We improvised. We managed to keep doing, keep working as usual. To not practice was unthinkable."

5. If you have something spiritual, you don't need as much food

In the camp Alice learned what she could live without. Rather than grieving for what she did not have, she rejoiced in what she had. Alice knew that no one could rob her of the treasures of her mind. "I am richer than the world's richest person because I have music in my heart and mind," she says today.

While performing, the prisoners could nearly forget their hunger and their surroundings. Besides the terror of finding their names on a deportation list for Auschwitz, the fear of dying of starvation, typhus, and other diseases had become a reality.

"Music was our food, our religion, and our hope," she says. "Music was life. We did not, could not, would not give up."

6. Complaining does not help; it makes everyone feel bad

Alice is anything but naïve and is acutely aware of the evil that has always been present in our world. "I know about the bad, but I look for the good," she says.

7. Faith is stronger than fear

As she faces the last years of her life, Alice does not waste time with fears of death and worries about the unknown. "We come from and return to infinity," she says. "The soul lives on without the body." Alice finds consolation in her spiritual theme song, "Urlicht," with its opening words "I come from God and I will return to God."

"Things are as they are supposed to be," she says. "I am still here, never too old so long as I breathe to wonder, to learn, and to teach."

SURVIVORS' CORNER

"I THOUGHT I WAS THE LAST JEW LEFT"

BY ROI MANDEL, YNET NEWS

Yoram Sztykgold was only three when Nazis occupied his homeland. He remembers the dog that almost turned him in, sitting on a German officer's lap, and the moment everyone burst into laughter in the middle of a Nazi raid.

"If you want I'll tell you my story, but I must warn you – I won't be giving you any horror stories about the concentration camps and the crematorium, I won't be telling you about unusual courage. I didn't meet any heroes during the Holocaust.

"You also won't hear about how I fought all by myself with a knife between my teeth. It's simply a story about a boy who survived thanks to a lot of luck and resourcefulness."

Yoram (Wlodek) Sztykgold, 76, begins his account with a "warning," finding it difficult to understand why anyone would be interested in his personal story, doubting there is anyone who really wants to hear about those dark times at the Warsaw ghetto.

He recently received a phone call from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum and was informed that a picture from the children's home where he recovered after the war appears in the "Remember Me" project album, which aims to locate 1,100 orphaned children who survived the Holocaust.

BAG WITH CHOCOLATE

Yoram was born in Warsaw in September 1936 to a wealthy traditional Jewish family. His father, Mistislav Moshe Josef, was an engineer and the owner of one of Europe's biggest gas street lamp factories and another that made hospital equipment. His grandfather worked in real estate and had a lot of property in Poland.

Yoram was Moshe and Helena's youngest child. His sister, Wanda, was four years older than him. The family lived in a large house with servants, nannies, and a cook.

When the Nazis occupied Poland in 1939, the Sztykgold home was included in the area of Warsaw which was surrounded by a wall and turned into a ghetto.

The Nazis looted the expensive belongings and ordered the family to move into the kitchen. The rest of the huge house

Sztykgold in his home.

was turned into a laundry for the German army's underwear.

Yoram remembers the strong sanitization smell. He would spend days in the hideout his father created inside the room where bundles of linen would arrive, well packed, "like building blocks, in a German order." His father placed an oxygen tubule between the packages.

The Germans robbed most of the Sztykgold family's money, and what they could take and hide bought life in the ghetto. With money and diamonds, father Moshe purchased food and certificates and used his connections outside the ghetto. He later smuggled his daughter Wanda out of the ghetto under a false identity, while little Yoram remained with his parents.

Wanda left, not before teaching her small brother all the Christian prayers by heart, as if she knew that one day he would need them.

"I am a grownup person today and I forget a lot of things, but I still remember those prayers by heart, word for word. It's something that will never be erased.

"During the first few months, my mother Helena would cover my eyes when we walked on the street," Yoram recalls. "But you didn't have to see to understand what was going on.

"The ghetto was as noisy as a beehive, so crowded that you couldn't walk on the street, with a terrible stench. Sick people, children dying under the houses, flies everywhere. In the ghetto, I never raised my head as I walked on the street. I always looked down so as not to see what was happening and not to meet the eyes of a German soldier."

He was always armed with a bag his mother had prepared for any scenario. "There were clothes in there and a bottle of wine and chocolate. Every time I returned home I would discover it was all stolen. People fought to survive."

"HELL ON BOTH SIDES AND WE'RE MARCHING"

Yoram remembers how his grandparents' health and mental condition deteriorated. As two of the richest people in Warsaw, they suddenly found themselves penniless.

He remembers when his grandfather became the toilet cleaner at the factory built in his house, and how his grandmother continued to employ a cook even when there was nothing left to cook, until she died of grief.

Once, he recalls, as the Germans raided a block in the ghetto, his grandfather, in alarn, jumped out of the bathroom with his pants pulled down, asking, "What happened?" while the family members were looking for him.

"It made us burst into laughter in the middle of all the tension. It was surreal," he remembers.

"The Nazis would raid a block or an entire area, remove the tenants from their homes, and we would hear the gunshots," Yoram recounts. "Every time they'd reach the area, we would jump from one house to another, through the rooftops or basements, and an informer would direct us where to run to.

"One night, after three days of not eating or drinking and basically turning into a corpse, I ran with my parents into one of the houses. A woman stood in the living room holding a hot pot of soup while her children sat around the table.

"I was exhausted and my parents knew I would not survive the night if I didn't put anything in my mouth. 'I have a sick child. Perhaps you could give him some soup?' my mother asked, but the woman in living room refused. 'Ma'am, would you give if you had any?' she responded.

"It was the first and only time I saw my mother cry. Suddenly we heard gunshots and began escaping again. For an hour we ran from place to place, jumping from one attic to another, until we somehow ended up in the same place.

"We entered the apartment again. This time it was empty. The woman and her children had disappeared – perhaps they were taken by the Germans or just ran away. The soup was standing there in the middle of the table and I remember it was still hot. My life was saved, and I still have no explanation why that happened."

The hunger, Yoram remembers, was intolerable. The German raids increased as the elimination of the ghetto drew near. In one of them, his mother broke down.

"My condition deteriorated because I didn't eat and didn't drink. Mother saw me fading away and gave up. She thought there was no use in running, we must get food even if we have to pay for it with our lives.

"We emerged from the hideout to the street. I looked down and we started

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HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS STRUGGLING TO MAKE ENDS MEET IN ISRAEL

BY HARRIET SHERWOOD, GUARDIAN

Despite the horrors of a childhood in the shadow of the Holocaust, Ros Dayan survived to build a life she could be proud of in the new Jewish state of Israel.

She trained as a nurse; she sang in a choir that toured the world. She learned Hebrew, though she never lost her central European accent. She paid her taxes and eventually bought the tiny house in Jaffa that she had rented at a subsidized rate for years. She even learned to live with the pain of three broken vertebrae, the result of an assault by a Nazi soldier.

But, now, in the last years of her life, Ros is ashamed. One of the 198,000 Holocaust survivors still alive in Israel, she is also one of the growing proportion who cannot make ends meet, who struggle with insufficient funds on a daily basis.

Wiping a single tear with a shaking hand, she says: "For the first time, I don't have enough money for food or clothes. I used to have pride, now I am ashamed."

As Israel commemorates Holocaust Day, Ros resents those who mourn the six million Jews that died without considering the penury of some of those still living. "On Holocaust Day, they make a parade, those who do not know what a Holocaust is, what hunger is. The people who suffered in the Holocaust are left behind, hungry."

According to studies, around a quarter of Holocaust survivors in Israel live below the poverty line, struggling to pay for food, heating, housing, medication and care.

As survivors get older – almost 90% are over 75 – their resources diminish as their needs grow. Many are widowed, and a high proportion of those receiving assistance are childless. As well as basic living needs, most face expensive bills for medication, and around 20,000 need 24-hour care.

"A lot of survivors face big medical bills, and life in Israel is very expensive generally," says Deborah Garel of the Jaffa Institute, which distributes bimonthly food parcels to Holocaust survivors. "Holocaust survivors going hungry in Israel? This is not right. After being hungry in the ghetto, they shouldn't be hungry in the Jewish state."

The government is doing its best, says Garel, but many survivors do not know what their rights or entitlements are, and many are incapable or do not have the mental energy to go through necessary bureaucratic hurdles to obtain benefits.

Recently the government announced an increase in funds for the needs of survivors from 206 million shekels a year

Ros Dayan in her apartment in Haifa.

to 225 million. It points out that, despite the overall declining numbers of people who lived through World War II, more people are being defined as Holocaust survivors according to criteria set by the government and are therefore eligible for funding.

Garel says more Israelis and Jews in other countries should contribute from their pockets for the care of survivors. "It's the responsibility of every Jew to give to the few that are remaining. If everyone made a small annual donation, it would make a big difference."

After Ros and her family were driven from their comfortable middle-class home in Sofia, they spent the rest of the war in extreme fear and hunger. "I never felt like a child, I never had a childhood," she recalls. "We lived on 300 grams of bread a day. Potatoes were a luxury food."

But the family were spared the death camps, and after the war they made their way by boat to the place that would soon become Israel. They landed in Haifa with few possessions and no money or valuables.

After a rocky and lonely beginning, Ros married and built a new life. Now a childless widow, she was recently forced to hire a full-time, live-in caregiver – a necessary expense which she simply cannot afford. She is bitter about her circumstances.

"I love this country, but I don't feel Jewish here. I came here to feel Jewish. Every Holocaust day I'm sad for what we lost, and I'm sad I didn't end up in a country that loves me," she says.

The problem of impoverished Holocaust survivors is acute but not long-term. Twelve thousand survivors in Israel died over the past year, and the current rate is one death an hour.

BEATING THE NAZIS AT THEIR OWN GAME

BY RAPHAEL ARHEN, THE TIMES OF ISRAEL

An Iranian official risking his life to save Jews? This scenario, while implausible nowadays, actually happened during the Holocaust. Meet Abdol Hossein Sardari, a diplomat at the Iranian mission in Paris during the 1940s. Known as the "Iranian Schindler," he helped thousands of Jews escape certain death – by turning the Nazi race ideology on its head.

Born into a privileged Iranian family, Sardari was a junior diplomat at the Paris embassy who enjoyed fine dining and the company of pretty women. After the Germans invaded France and the Iranian ambassador left the capital and went to Vichy to reconstitute the embassy there, Sardari was put in charge of consular affairs in Paris. When the Nazis started implementing anti-Jewish decrees in occupied France, Sardari made it his mission to protect his fellow Iranians in the region, regardless of their religion. Trying to beat the Germans at their own game, he argued that Iranian Jews weren't genetically related to their European co-religionists and therefore shouldn't be subject to the Reich's racial laws.

Writing on the letterhead of the Imperial Consulate of Iran, Sardari tried to convince the authorities that according to "an ethnographic and historical study," the members of the Jewish communities of Persia and central Asia were not Semitic but rather Aryan, like the Germans themselves.

According to the study, the so-called Jugutis belonged to the Jewish community "only by virtue of their observance of the principal rites of Judaism," Sardari wrote in 1940. "By virtue of their blood, their language, and their customs, they are assimilated into the indigenous race and are of the same biological stock as their neighbors, the Persians and the Sartes (Uzbeks)."

The Nazis classified non-Muslim Iranians as either "nicht juedische Abstammung"

Abdol Hossein Sardari.

(not of Jewish descent) or "Blutmassig nicht Juden" (not Jewish by blood). Iranian Armenians, Christians, and Zoroastrians were included in the first category, while other Iranians whose religion was based on or influenced by the teachings of Moses but who were not "racially Jewish" belonged to the second category, explained Fariborz Mokhtari, the author of *In the Lion's Shadow: The Iranian Schindler and His Homeland in the Second World War*, a new biography about Sardari. "Added to that was the early Nazi propaganda that was saying that Iranians are of the Aryan race. He had to find a way to beat them at their own game," he said.

"Sardari, with his legal education, diplomatic experience and considerable wit, exploited the classification courageously as far as it was possible, to the point of angering people such as Adolf Eichmann," Mokhtari, an Iranian-born political scientist based in Washington, D.C., told *The Times of Israel* during a recent phone interview.

Did Sardari believe in his own racial theory? "I doubt that he was actually concerned about that," Mokhtari said. "His mission was to save fellow Iranians. Based on his legal education, he found a way of making an argument that the German could not easily dismiss."

Indeed, Sardari's arguments were persuasive enough to get the Racial Policy Department in Berlin to ask for the opinion of the Research Institute for the History of the New Germany in Berlin, the Institute for Research of the Jewish Question in Frankfurt, and other official bodies.

This runaround served Sardari well. His theories "would just circulate and as time would go on, he would benefit from the process and the time that it took," Mokhtari said. "In the meantime, he would pursue his policy of saving as many people as he could."

Sardari's plan actually worked. When Jews were forced to wear the yellow Star of David, a directive was issued that Iranian Jews should be exempt. In addition, Sardari gave out between 500 and 1,000 Iranian passports, without the consent of his superiors. This saved 2,000 to 3,000 Jewish lives, as passports were issued for entire families.

"He started issuing these passports to Jewish Iranians because that was his main concern," said Mokhtari, who, while researching his book, spoke to about a dozen people who survived thanks to Sardari. "But the Jewish Iranians had French or non-Iranian partners; some of them were married to non-Iranians. After he helped the Iranians, they went to him and asked him to help their friends. Sardari trusted the Iranians and therefore he trusted the people they introduced to him [and gave them] Iranian documents."

Incidentally, a new Turkish documentary similarly claims that Turkish diplomats in Iran saved thousands of Jews by giving them passports allowing them to escape to Turkey. But the film has not been without controversy, with Israel's attaché in Turkey, Batya Keinan, reportedly accusing it of being a work of "propaganda."

At the beginning of World War II, Iran was officially neutral, though the regime was friendly with the Nazis. But after the Soviets and the British invaded Iran in 1941 and forced the king into exile, the new Iranian government declared war on Germany. As a representative of an enemy nation, Sardari's diplomatic status was now severely compromised. His government ordered him to leave France immediately, and, when he refused, suspended his salary. But he continued to save Jews, often "without heat, without money and sometimes without food," according to eyewitness accounts.

Sardari never took any credit for what he did. The Simon Wiesenthal Center in Los Angeles and other Jewish institutions have posthumously honored Sardari for his actions.

SURVIVORS' GRANDCHILDREN FEELING AN OBLIGATION TO SHARE HOLOCAUST MEMORIES

BY SUZANNE KURTZ, JTA

Shira Sheps remembers walking through an exhibit at the Museum of Jewish Heritage in lower Manhattan and stumbling upon her grandmother's long-ago school reports alongside family photos and her great-grandparents' wedding invitation.

Sheps, 25, had known that her grandmother shortly after *Kristallnacht* had left *Furth*, Germany, at age 9 on a Kindertransport to England. But seeing personal mementos of the life that had been taken from the family, as well as her grandmother's uncanny resemblance as a young girl to Sheps' younger sister at that age, "I freaked out," she says.

As a child, Sheps would listen to her grandmother's stories of a childhood lived during the eve of World War II. The stories, she says, "profoundly affected me. No matter what I do, I come back to it."

A social worker in Fair Lawn, N.J., who is pursuing her master's degree at the Hunter College School of Social Work in New York, Sheps has spent the past several years researching and studying the effects of intergenerational trauma.

"It gives me an excuse, gives meaning to [my studies]. It's a fixation," she says in an interview. "I'm bearing witness. I'm doing what I was taught for the purpose of remembering."

She is among the many grandchildren of Holocaust survivors — often referred to as the Third Generation — who feel an obligation to share memories of the *Shoah*.

The bond that many in the Third Generation have with their grandparents has been noted by psychologists and researchers who have studied the effect of the Holocaust on families.

For many survivors, it was easier to share their experiences with their grandchildren than with their children, says Peppy Margolis, director of the Institute of Genocide and Holocaust Studies at Raritan Valley Community College in New Jersey, who recently produced a 30-minute documentary titled *The Second Generation: Ripples from the Holocaust*.

Through the dozens of interviews that she conducted, Margolis says she found that for survivors in general, the Holocaust was "too close" and "many were still processing what had happened and burying the pain in their work and raising their children."

Their experiences also left many ill equipped to be parents, adds Margolis, herself a child of Holocaust survivors. "But the majority talked to their grandchildren and not with the same pain and bitterness; enough time has passed and it's not as traumatic."

Marion Achtentuch, 83, with her granddaughter, Shira Sheps.

While her film explores what it means to be a member of the Second Generation and to grow up with a parent who lived through the Nazi atrocities and World War II, she says it also has helped those of the Third Generation to better understand their own parents.

Though his grandfather died before he was born, Aaron Biterman, 29, says the experience of living in a home with a parent suffering from the trauma of surviving the Nazi death camps took a toll on his father and aunt. His grandfather never talked about the Holocaust, he was so traumatized, Biterman recalls his father telling him.

"He lived but wasn't living," Biterman, a fundraiser in Arlington, Va., says of the grandfather he never met.

His grandmother also survived the Holocaust in Poland and for many years wasn't eager to share her experiences. Yet after she retired, Biterman says, she started to open up. Eventually she recorded her story with Steven Spielberg's *Shoah* Foundation and began speaking to student groups.

But knowing that his father had grown up in a home "where something was the matter" only strengthened Biterman's desire "to connect with my family history and to my story." In 2006 he started a Facebook group for grandchildren of the Holocaust that today has more than 2,000 friends.

"It's just a network to organize, ask questions, get answers, and educate others," he says.

"It is important that the past not be forgotten," Biterman says. "There is a lot of misinformation out there, but we had direct experiences with [Holocaust] survivors. We are the ones with the biggest obligation to share the evidence that was in our backyards. It is up to us to preserve the memory."

For Daniel Brooks, 35, the grandson of four Holocaust survivors, a need to reconnect with other grandchildren of Holocaust survivors led him to start 3GNY, a nonprofit organization in New York, seven years ago.

With more than 1,500 members in a database, ranging from college age to their 40s, the group meets approximately once a month, Brooks says, sometimes for a Shabbat dinner or for an educational event. To commemorate *Yom HaShoah*, 3GNY informally supports events held by synagogues and the Workmen's Circle.

The Third Generation, he says, should not rely on the Jewish establishment to document the lives and experiences of their grandparents or even every Holocaust survivor.

"We all have an obligation," Brooks says. "If not for us, no one will know these stories. Most will be lost, but each one has meaning."

An increased sense of urgency, he says, has fueled members of 3GNY to organize speaking events at middle schools in the hope that sharing their grandparents' stories with the next generation — a demographic that he worries will feel a wider disconnect to the events of the Holocaust — will leave a lasting impression.

"For them, [it could become] like talking about the Civil War," Brooks says. "It doesn't compare to listening to a survivor, but we carry on our grandparents' stories and the lessons of the Holocaust. It hits them."

CELEBRATING THE ST

PHOTO HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE AMERICAN SOCIET

Matthew Levy; Sima Katz, 2012 Annual Spring Luncheon Honoree; Eli Zborowski, Chairman of the American Society for Yad Vashem; and Marilyn Rubenstein, 2012 Annual Spring Luncheon Chair.

Eli Zborowski, Chairman of the American Society for Yad Vashem, delivers his address at the Annual Spring Luncheon.

Rochel Berman, 2012 Annual Spring Luncheon Guest Speaker, delivers her speech at the Annual Spring Luncheon.

Eli Zborowski, Chairman of the American Society for Yad Vashem; Adam Lindenbaum; Iris Lifshitz Lindenbaum, 2012 Annual Spring Luncheon Honoree; Stella Skura, 2012 Annual Spring Luncheon Co-Chair; Cheryl Skura; Mrs. Lindenbaum; and Elizabeth Zborowski, Cultural Director, American Society for Yad Vashem.

Young Leadership Associates.

Matthew Levy introducing his grandmother, Sima Katz, 2012 Annual Spring Luncheon Honoree.

TRENGTH OF WOMEN

TY FOR YAD VASHEM ANNUAL SPRING LUNCHEON

Eli Zborowski, Chairman of the American Society for Yad Vashem; Iris Lifshitz Lindenbaum, 2012 Annual Spring Luncheon Honoree; Cheryl Skura, mother of and introducer of Iris Lifshitz Lindenbaum, 2012 Annual Spring Luncheon Honoree; and Marilyn Rubenstein, 2012 Annual Spring Luncheon Chair.

Rita Levy, 2012 Annual Spring Luncheon Co-Chair, speaks before the audience at the Annual Spring Luncheon.

Marilyn Rubenstein, 2012 Annual Spring Luncheon Chair, opens the Annual Spring Luncheon.

Sima Katz, 2012 Annual Spring Luncheon Honoree (seated third from left), and her family.

Iris Lifshitz Lindenbaum, 2012 Annual Spring Luncheon Honoree; and Eli Zborowski, Chairman of the American Society for Yad Vashem (center), with a group of Young Leadership Associates.

Gloria Jacobs; Celina and Marvin Zborowski; and Doris Gross.

REPORT FROM YAD VASHEM

THE INSPIRING STORY OF ELI ZBOROWSKI

BY GREER FAY CASHMAN, THE JERUSALEM POST

In April, the Israeli launch of the book *A Life of Leadership: The Life Story of Eli Zborowski* – a survivor of the Holocaust and one of the key torchbearers of its memory – took place at Yad Vashem. Speaking emotionally before a packed room in the Yad Vashem Synagogue – where Judaica from destroyed synagogues of Europe are on display – Zborowski's voice shook as he recalled his parents, Moshe and Zisel, and the role models they were for him.

Launching of the book *A Life of Leadership: Eli Zborowski* at Yad Vashem, Jerusalem.

Zborowski, who was born in *Żarki*, Poland, found himself as the head of the family when his father, a successful leather merchant, was murdered by the Poles in 1942. Yet it was also Poles who gave a place of refuge to other members of his family. Zborowski was a member of the Jewish Combat Organization, acting as a courier between ghetto fighters and Polish partisans. After the war, he rescued more than 100 orphans and developed a youth village in the *Feldafing* DP camp.

He subsequently moved to the United States, where he built up a successful career in business and dedicated his life to Holocaust remembrance and education. He established the American Society for Yad Vashem, which he led for 30 years, and through which he raised more than $100 million for Yad Vashem.

"During the darkest days of the *Shoah*, we all dreamed of Israel. How appropriate that the launch of my memoirs is in Jerusalem," he said.

Yad Vashem chairman Avner Shalev noted that at a young age, Zborowski took on the responsibility of caring for his family and that this sense of responsibility is what has constantly motivated him.

"His commitment and mission toward Holocaust remembrance is so deep that he is willing to say, '*naa'se v'nishma*' – I will do and I will listen," said Shalev. "It has been his lifelong mission to commemorate the Holocaust."

Prof. Dina Porat, chief historian of Yad Vashem; Dr. Yitzhak Arad, deputy chairman of the Yad Vashem Council (and formerly chairman of Yad Vashem); Dr. Lilly Naveh, Zborowski's daughter; and Rabbi R. Yehoshua Berman of Bar Ilan University, who is the son of the book's authors Rochel and George Berman, also spoke of Zborowski's dedication to commemorating both the Holocaust and the Jewish world that once existed in Europe.

RIGHTEOUS AMONG THE NATIONS FROM UKRAINE HONORED BY YAD VASHEM

Yad Vashem posthumously honored Vladimir Chaikovski and his parents Pavel and Teofila Chaikovski, as Righteous Among the Nations from Ukraine.

Bogdan Chaikovski, son and grandson of the Chaikovskis, and the son of the survivor, accepted the medal and certificate of honor on their behalf.

On the eve of World War II, more than 4,000 Jews lived in *Buczacz*, in the *Tarnopol* district, about half of the town's population. On July 5, 1941, *Buczacz* was captured by the German forces.

Giselle and Joseph Ackerman lived in *Buczacz* with their five children: Radzia, Yehudit, Malka, Dora, and Chune. Yehudit was born in 1924 and at 17 years old went to work cleaning homes in the city. Among the houses she worked at was that of Michail Chaikovski.

On November 27, 1942, an *Aktion* took place in *Buczacz* and some 2,500 people were sent to the *Belzec* extermination camp.

Among those murdered in the *Aktion* were Yehudit's mother Giselle and Yehudit's three younger siblings. Her older sister Radzia was discovered hiding with her young son, and they were shot to death on the banks of the river.

After the massacre, Yehudit's father parted from her, telling her to "save herself at any cost." In that same year Joseph Ackerman was murdered.

Yehudit turned to her employer's brother Vladimir, who had been outspoken in his empathy for the Jews and in his willingness to help them. Vladimir hid Yehudit in his rented apartment in *Buczacz* while simultaneously supplying food to other Jews hiding in the city. Some time later, Vladimir and Yehudit left the city for a village named *Kordybanovka*, where his parents Pavel and Teofila lived. His parents received Yehudit graciously, hiding her in the grain silo under haystacks.

Searches on the Chaikovski's farm ensued, but luckily Yehudit wasn't discovered in her hiding place. Fearing for her life, Vladimir and Yehudit began moving from

place to place, with Yehudit posing as Vladimir's sister, Olga.

After the war, Yehudit and Vladimir returned to *Buczacz*. In 1950, they married and had two sons. In 1999, their eldest son Bogdan moved to Israel. Yehudit herself lived in Israel for a year's time, after which she returned to Ukraine, where she currently resides. Vladimir passed away in Ukraine in 2001.

In 2011, the Commission for the Designation of the Righteous Among the Nations at Yad Vashem decided to award Vladimir Chaikovski, and his parents Pavel and Teofila Chaikovski, the title of Righteous Among the Nations.

HISTORIANS RACE CLOCK TO COLLECT SURVIVORS' STORIES

BY MEREDITH MANDELL, USA TODAY

Zvi Shefel recalled the day the German army arrived at his Polish town of *Slonim* in the summer of 1942. The soldiers immediately began mass exterminations and eventually killed more than 25,000 Jews, including his mother, father, and sister.

There is nothing in that town that Shefel, 87, can find about his family, he said while attending the Yad Vashem Holocaust memorial April 19 for the "Day of Remembrance" commemoration of the 6 million Jews killed in the Nazi genocide of World War II.

"I've visited all the archives in Belarus to find the names of people, but they weren't there because the archives of *Slonim* were burned by the Germans when they retreated — but we have to keep the memory of what happened in order to never forget," he said.

The annual remembrance was observed in Poland and other nations as well, and it took on special meaning this year to historians who are trying urgently to collect the remaining testimonies of eyewitnesses as their numbers dwindle.

One survivor dies in Israel every hour, according to the Foundation for the Benefit of Holocaust Survivors in Israel, a nonprofit group based in Tel Aviv that helps care for needy survivors. Today, there are 198,000 survivors in Israel; 88% are 75 or older.

Israel's Yad Vashem memorial contains the largest archive in the world of historic material related to the Holocaust — or *Shoah*, as it is known in Hebrew — and it has been intensifying its campaign to record the accounts of survivors. Teams of historians have been dispatched to interview elderly survivors in their homes and collect artifacts.

"We are really racing against the clock to find every survivor and get their stories told before they die," said Cynthia Wroclawski, manager of the *Shoah* Names Recovery Project.

Since its establishment in 1953, Yad Vashem, an Israeli governmental authority, has collected 400,000 photographs, recorded roughly 110,000 victims' video testimonies, and amassed 138 million pages of documents on the Nazis' genocide of Jews in Europe. It was after the Holocaust that the United Nations approved in 1947 what many Jews had sought for decades: a permanent homeland in what is now modern Israel.

At Yad Vashem on April 18, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said in a speech that the lesson of the Holocaust is not only to remember the past, "but to learn the lessons, and more importantly to implement those lessons, to ensure the future of our people."

Despite the immense scholarship on the Holocaust, many unknowns remain, including the identities of roughly one-third of the Jewish victims.

In 1955, Israel began creating a page of testimony for each victim, and by 2004, Yad Vashem had 3 million names when it first uploaded the names database to the Internet. Survivors have since added pictures and scanned letters to the victims' individual pages in what have become "virtual tombstones." At the end of last year, 4.1 million names had been recovered, Wroclawski said.

"We are trying to find them by name, which is an expression of an individual's identity. The Nazis tried to exterminate not only the people but every memory of the individual and strip away their humanity and any memory of them," Wroclawski said.

Shefel created the Slonim Jews' Association in Israel for the few survivors from *Slonim*, which is now a part of Belarus. He and members of his group have been putting together a list of names from memory and came up with 3,000 for the Yad Vashem remembrance project.

"It's very hard to connect the names," said Shefel, who read off the names of his family members who perished, as did many others at the memorial. But "without history, there is no future."

SURVIVOR DONATES PRIZED PRAYER BOOK TO YAD VASHEM

When Holocaust survivor Irene Haya Weiss of Toronto heard her daughter was going to Yad Vashem to take part in an education seminar, she gave her a little blue prayer book to donate to the Holocaust museum.

The *siddur*, which she had written by hand from memory in 1945 while in a German forced labor camp, had been in her possession for 66 years.

It helped her live through the worst time of her life. But now, at age 91, Weiss felt it was time to donate it to the museum in Jerusalem.

"She said she would like to share it with other people in a museum so that all may see," said her daughter Tova Dror. "At home it will just sit on a shelf."

Originally from a village outside *Satmar* (nowadays *Satu Mare*, Romania), she and her family were deported to Auschwitz in 1944. Upon arrival at the death camp she was separated from them by Josef Mengele.

"She was sent one way and her parents and brother went the other," Dror said.

After several months, Weiss was transferred to a munitions factory where conditions were somewhat better.

There, she found a booklet and wrote the transliterated Hebrew prayers onto its empty pages using Hungarian script. She dedicated the makeshift prayer book to her parents and brother, hoping they would be reunited after the war. They were among the six million Jews murdered by the Nazis.

After the war Weiss made aliya and raised a family. After her husband died she moved to Toronto to be with her daughter and her family.

Yad Vashem will add Weiss's little blue *siddur* to its growing collection of Holocaust-related artifacts so that future generations may learn about the genocide during World War II.

EXCRUCIATING DETAILS EMERGE ON JEWISH GHETTOS

BY RANDY HERSCHAFT AND VERENA DOBNIK, AP

Even after decades of in-depth Holocaust research, excruciating details are only now emerging about more than 1,100 German-run ghettos in Eastern Europe where the Nazis murdered hundreds of thousands of Jews.

And there were about 200 more ghettos than previously believed, said Martin Dean, editor of the recently published *Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos, 1933-1945, Volume II*. It's part of a long-term effort to document every site of organized Nazi persecution, beyond the well-known Warsaw ghetto and extermination camps like Auschwitz.

In this ca. 1941–1942 photo, people walk on a commercial street in the *Lublin* ghetto near a sign forbidding entry, Poland.

It "gives us information about ghettos that would slip into historical oblivion and be forgotten forever if we didn't have this volume," Holocaust scholar Lawrence Langer said. "Who knew there were more than 1,000 ghettos?"

More Jews died during World War II in Poland and the western Soviet Union — today's Ukraine, Belarus and Lithuania — than the estimated 1 million gassed in Auschwitz, Langer said.

"The people are dead, but at least we have the memory of the place where they lived and some knowledge of who killed them," said Langer, an 83-year-old professor emeritus of English at Boston's Simmons College.

The museum fields inquiries daily about survivors' families using the new information — some of it from non-Jews divulging locations of unmarked mass graves.

Researchers at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington painstakingly collected details for the encyclopedia's more than 2,000 pages from the communities where Germans herded Jews and killed them if they tried to escape.

Researchers and writers scoured the world to find new witnesses, study archives opened after the fall of communism and read thousands of survivors' texts and testimonies in many languages.

For town after town, village after village, and even just spots in the countryside, Dean and his team assembled pieces of a grisly puzzle, which he said "shows that the Nazis made a concerted effort to find every last Jew in every last place" and eliminate each one.

Dean is a Holocaust scholar at the museum's Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies and former senior historian for the Nazi War Crimes Investigation Unit at Scotland Yard in London.

One tiny town in Ukraine, *Mizocz*, reflects the horrors repeated over and over across Eastern Europe. Its entry was written by a survivor who now lives in Pennsylvania and is one of the fewer than 10 percent of Eastern European ghetto dwellers who survived the war.

Helen Segall, now 81, was 11 when she witnessed SS troops torching her town of about 2,000 residents, with hundreds of hidden Jews burned to death before they could escape. Others were killed outside the town.

"People had to undress and walk in small groups into the trench and lie face down, where they were shot by an SS man helped by a Ukrainian *Schutzmann*," she wrote, using a German word for local policeman.

In two days — Oct. 13 and 14, 1942 — the 300-year-old town "ceased to exist," wrote Segall, who is now writing her own memoir.

She also wrote an encyclopedia entry for *Dubno*, her Polish birthplace, where her father and two brothers were dragged from their home and murdered in the local cemetery. The ghetto was established there on the first day of Passover in 1942.

In this October 26, 1943, photo, Jews are gathered at an assembly point in the *Kaunas* ghetto in Kaunas, Lithuania, for a deportation action, most likely to Estonia.

Hunger and diseases took their toll, she wrote, and on a lilac-scented May day, a deep ditch was dug nearby. SS troops armed with whips and dogs rounded up the elderly or ill and shot them to death. The rest were forced to work for the Germans in factories and construction, and on the railroad.

Some of the Jews who lived in the Polish city of *Krakow* were helped by Oskar Schindler during the liquidation of the ghetto there, later working in the enamel factory portrayed in the film *Schindler's List*.

In this July 1941 photo, civilians drag a Jewish man through a street in Riga, Latvia, as a member of the German police looks on.

Another encyclopedia on World War II ghettos was published in 2009 by Yad Vashem in Jerusalem, Israel's official memorial to Holocaust victims. The *Encyclopedia of the Ghettos* sums up the story of each ghetto for either lay readers or researchers.

The two-part tome compiled by the U.S. Holocaust museum and published in early May by Indiana University Press includes more listings, with extensive scholarly footnotes and bibliographies.

The two projects "are complementary," says Dan Michman, the head of Yad Vashem's Institute for Holocaust Research, who wrote the introduction to its encyclopedia.

The rest of the seven-volume U.S. project is expected to be completed in the next decade, tracking more than 20,000 sites of wartime persecution of both Jews and non-Jews.

The new volume covers ghettos from Moscow to today's German border, and St. Petersburg to *Yalta*, in Ukraine.

The next volume will cover camps and ghettos run by states aligned with Nazi Germany, like Vichy France, Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Slovakia, Italy, and Croatia.

WIESENTHAL CENTER ADDS THREE NAMES TO MOST WANTED NAZIS LIST

BY OFER ADERET, HAARETZ

On the eve of Holocaust Remembrance Day, the Simon Wiesenthal Center announced three new names had been added to its list of most wanted Nazi war criminals. All three have a Canadian connection and two are currently in Canada.

The Wiesenthal Center, based in Los Angeles, which tracks Nazi war criminals and anti-Semitism, has given Canada failing marks on pursuing Nazis within its borders.

The two suspects in Canada are Vladimir Katriuk, said to have been the commander of a Ukrainian army unit that committed mass murder in Belarus, and Helmut Oberlander, who allegedly served in one of the mobile killing units, the *Einsatzgruppen*, that murdered large numbers of Jews in southern Ukraine.

Katriuk fled to Canada after the war, but in 1999, after Canadian authorities discovered his past, he was stripped of his Canadian citizenship – but it was reinstated in 2007, a move ratified by a Canadian court in 2010. However, new evidence has surfaced recently of Katriuk's alleged war crimes, which the Wiesenthal Center hopes will lead to a reconsideration of his case.

Oberlander likewise has had his Canadian citizenship repeatedly revoked on account of his Nazi past, but then restored, and it is now pending again. The *Einsatzgruppen*, to which he was allegedly deployed, are believed to have killed more than 23,000 people, mostly Jews.

Helmut Oberlander was a member of a notorious Nazi death squad that executed 91,678 people in southern Russia.

The third wanted man is Laszlo Csatary, who as a police commander in Hungarian-occupied Slovakia is alleged to have played a key role in the deportation of 15,700 Jews to Auschwitz in the spring of 1944. After the war he, too, fled to Canada. The Canadian government stripped him of citizenship in 1997 and he left the country voluntarily, and is now living in Hungary.

"Despite the somewhat prevalent assumption that it is too late to bring Nazi murderers to justice, the figures clearly prove otherwise," said Efraim Zuroff, the center's director in Israel. "We are trying to ensure that at least several of these criminals will be brought to trial during the coming years. While it is generally assumed that it is the age of the suspects that is the biggest obstacle to prosecution, in many cases it is the lack of political will, more than anything else."

Over the past 11 years, about 90 Nazi war criminals have been convicted for their wartime deeds by courts worldwide, and some 80 new indictments have been filed against those suspected of war crimes, Zuroff said. Also, more than 3,000 new investigations have been opened against suspected Nazis.

Appraising the justice meted out by different countries where Nazi war criminals live, Zuroff lauded German authorities but took the governments of Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, and Ukraine to task, along with Sweden and Norway, which he said refuse to prosecute war criminal suspects because of their statutes of limitations.

A Wiesenthal Center report gives high marks to the United States, Italy, Spain, and Serbia, along with Germany, for their pursuit of perpetrators of Nazi war crimes. The prosecutor's office in Hungary also got high marks for its efforts, but the center rebuked Hungarian courts for their laxness in actually trying suspected Nazi criminals.

CELEBRATING THE STRENGTH OF WOMEN

THE AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR YAD VASHEM ANNUAL SPRING LUNCHEON

(Continued from page 1)
still feel like the guests who attend are my 'Yad Vashem family.' And speaking today about the life of Eli Zborowski, I feel that I have been invited to talk about the family patriarch.

"Eli Zborowski has been a central figure in my life for the past two decades. I must admit, it hasn't always been an easy relationship. He's far more diplomatic than I am, much smarter, and certainly a better negotiator. In any difference of opinion, I rarely came out ahead. Despite this, there is a feeling of mutual admiration and trust. The projects we have undertaken together have been interesting, challenging, and productive.

"Born and raised in Eastern Europe, Eli is part of a generation of Jews who do not often give a compliment directly. Instead he voices his appreciation through a third person. In 1999, our son Josh interviewed Eli for *Lifestyles Magazine*. Before they got down to *tachlis*, Eli told Josh, 'You know I have great respect for your mother's ability and talent.' When Josh repeated this back to me, I was amazed, but at the same time flattered. As a matter of fact, it gave me the courage to apply for the job of Executive Director of the ASYV.

"When I got the job, Josh asked, 'So, why do you think he hired you?' I immediately shot back with, 'Because I speak Yiddish!' To some that might be an inadequate reason to hire a person for a key administrative position. But for us, Yiddish speakers, the language telegraphs a commonality of experience and trust. It means you emanate *fun undzere mentchen* – you come from our people. In essence you are part of our inner circle.

"I recall on one occasion, during my tenure as Executive Director, a very prominent person in the Jewish community agreed to be the guest speaker at the Society's annual tribute dinner. After the invitations were mailed, he wrote to say he couldn't make it. I ran to Eli's office in a rage. I wanted to write this guy a letter that would make the paper burn. To my surprise, Eli was disappointed, but very calm and collected. Diplomat that he is, he said to me in Yiddish: *Er speit mir in ponim un ich muz zogen az es regent* – 'He spits in my face, and I have to say "It's raining!"'

"George and I embarked on this book project three years ago. In *A Life of Leadership* we sought to do two things in telling Eli's story:

"Place his pre-war experience in a historical context;

"Trace and analyze patterns in Eli's life that would help us understand the scope of his post-Holocaust leadership activities. For example, we traced his interest in children and young people from his rescue of teenagers who were orphaned by the *Shoah* to his establishment of a Youth Village in the *Feldefing* Displaced Persons Camp. In this country, he was the Grand Marshal of the Israel Day Parade and Chairman of the American Zionist Youth Federation. In 1975 he established a chair in Holocaust Studies at Yeshiva University, and in 1996, he created the Young Leadership Associates of the ASYV, which launched an educational program for teachers of the Holocaust.

"It took two people to write the book, but more than 50 people to tell the story. We researched archival material and reached out to family, friends, communal leaders, and business associates throughout the world. When we completed the manuscript, George said:

"'After having worked with Eli for 20 years, I feel that I have finally truly encountered him. Now I know who I want to be when I grow up.'

"So what did we learn? Let me share some highlights:

"ELI LEFT *ŽARKI*, BUT *ŽARKI* NEVER LEFT ELI: His vivid and detailed childhood memories bring to life a world that vanished. He told us about his erev Shabbes visits to the *mikvah* which served as a *bod* – a bathhouse – on Fridays.

"'I started to accompany my father to the bathhouse – when I was about three years old...The bathhouse consisted of three rooms: a pool with cold water, another with warm water, and finally a sauna – the *shvitz*. Even if there were other children there, I preferred to stay close to my father. He thoroughly scrubbed my body with a brush made out of dry leaves that had an extraordinary aroma – one that was incredibly powerful, especially in the sauna. The weekly bathhouse excursion made me feel very cared for and drew me even closer to my father.'

"In the Zborowski home in Forest Hills, stories about *Žarki* and *der grig* – the war – were ever present. It is interesting to note that even though Lilly and Murry had never met their paternal grandfather, for years they both fantasized about his return into their lives.

"ELI NEVER SAW HIMSELF AS A VICTIM: Feelings of victimization are common among survivors. So why did he not regard himself as one?

A victim is someone who is helpless. As a bright handsome child, he was the favorite among his extended family. This contributed to building his self-confidence. His mother taught him to speak pure Polish, while his father provided a great deal of business knowledge, negotiating skills and moral strength. As a result, Eli's Holocaust experience was about STRUGGLE and COURAGE rather than VICTIMIZATION and DESPAIR.

"Over the years, Eli has maintained a very warm relationship with non-Jews in *Žarki* and with the Polish government, by whom he is highly regarded. This enabled him to play a significant role in opening the door to diplomatic relations between Israel and Poland. Indeed, Eli Zborowski is a cosmopolitan who speaks many languages and strides confidently on the world stage.

"ELI IS AN ENTREPRENEUR PAR EXCELLENCE: As a young immigrant, he began peddling camera parts door to door in Manhattan. Within a decade, he became president of Sheaffer Latin America.

"ELI IS AN INNOVATOR AND A PERSON OTHERS WANT TO FOLLOW: He has been in the forefront of Holocaust remembrance and can be credited with numerous 'firsts' in this country, including:

"The first *Yom HaShoah* commemoration;

"The first survivors umbrella organization;

"The first publication, *Martyrdom & Resistance*, devoted to Holocaust remembrance.

"In each of these endeavors he has gathered around him a cadre of people who were inspired by his vision and dedication and chose to lend their support to these projects.

"In the case of the first *Yom HaShoah* program in 1964, which took place at the YIFH, he mobilized not only the entire congregation, but the entire organized Jewish community in New York. His efforts were the impetus for making *Yom HaShoah* an annual event, institutionalized in houses of worship throughout the world.

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"We have been overwhelmed and gratified by readers' response to the book:

"Yocheved Zemel, an Israeli book critic, has referred to Eli as a modern-day Ulysses. She said, 'But unlike Ulysses who suffered from false pride, Eli has maintained his humility and his belief in God and his fellow man despite all his ordeals.'

"On a lighter note, I would like to share the response of a middle-aged non-Jewish woman I met at the gym. She came running up to me after she read the book and said: 'I think your book is fantastic. It's even more exciting than Harry Potter. Are you planning a sequel?'

"And finally, Sir Martin Gilbert, Winston Churchill's official biographer, who wrote the Foreword to the book, said: 'In this book there is not a single dull page, not a single story that does not resonate today, with the capacity to inspire new generations.'

***

"I wish to thank all of you, MY YAD VASHEM FAMILY, for being such a gracious audience. And George and I would like to thank you, Eli, for allowing us to document YOUR remarkable journey and in so doing providing us with the most fulfilling personal and professional experience."

FOR LITHUANIA, $50 MILLION HOLOCAUST COMPENSATION A STEP FORWARD, BUT JEWISH BITTERNESS REMAINS

BY BEN SALES, JTA

Lithuania's 800-year-old connection to its Jewish population broke down in 1941, when the Nazis invaded the country and murdered nearly all of its 200,000 Jews – often with the complicity of local Lithuanians.

In April, 70 years on, Lithuania finally passed historic compensation legislation to provide some $50 million in compensation to Jewish families whose property was confiscated during the Holocaust. Jewish groups hailed the move as a milestone for Lithuanian-Jewish relations.

But lingering bitterness on both sides over the discussion of Lithuanian complicity in the Holocaust remains an obstacle to better ties.

Some Jews are concerned that Lithuania has yet to confront its own role in the Holocaust.

"Relations have to be promoted within a context that is based on mutual respect and respect for historical truth," said Jonathan Brent, the executive director of the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, which was founded in prewar Lithuania. "Everywhere you go searching for the truth, the truth cannot be found without conflict."

On the flip side, many Lithuanians say Jews focus too much on the Holocaust.

Three years ago, during negotiations over Holocaust compensation between the Lithuanian government and the Jewish community, a Lithuanian tabloid ran a cover featuring an oversized American Jewish official demanding money from a miniaturized Lithuanian prime minister. "Give it now!" screamed the headline.

The president of a Lithuanian museum in Chicago, Stanley Balzekas Jr., said Jews should not take Lithuanian anti-Semitic inclinations "personally."

"The Jewish leaders have to be sensitive," he said. "The terrible consequences that happened with the Holocaust aren't going to go away. That shouldn't be forgotten. But it shouldn't cloud the future."

Harley Felstein, an American Jew with Lithuanian roots who lives in Washington, wants to focus on positive aspects of Lithuanian-Jewish history. Last fall, he launched a campaign called the Sunflower Project to promote Lithuanian-Jewish events in the United States, and organized Jewish trips to Lithuania, including exchanges of high school students between Israel and Lithuania.

In April, Felstein convened a group of Lithuanian and Jewish community leaders for a discussion in Chicago focused on improving ties.

"If you're going to do a reconnection between the Lithuanian and the Jewish people, you don't want to enter into the situation through conflict," Felstein said. "You want to do it through learning and nurturing. If our project is successful, there won't be any negativity left."

The idea for the project was born when Felstein's 16-year-old, Benjamin, traveled to Lithuania in 2010, found Jewish cemeteries in disrepair and sent photos to his father. Felstein, who works for a cemetery as a funeral counselor, was inspired.

"We want to reconnect the Jewish world back with the Lithuanian people," Felstein told JTA. "If we don't take action now, the next generation won't have that information available to them. Our time with survivors who have that linkage is limited."

Lithuania has a rich Jewish history. The country's capital — Vilnius, known to Jews as Vilna — was the center of Orthodox Judaism in Eastern Europe, home to the original YIVO, and the hometown of Rabbi Eliyahu ben Shlomo Zalman Kramer, the 18th century Jewish sage known as the *Vilna Gaon*.

Today, only about 3,000 Jews live in Lithuania.

In recent years, ties between Lithuania and Israel have been improving. Between 2009 and 2011, Israeli and Lithuanian diplomats visited each other 20 times. Last year, Lithuania designated 2011 as the year of commemorating the Holocaust. The Lithuanian ambassador to the United States, Žygimantas Pavilionis, said he believes that differences between the communities will dissipate as Lithuania moves away from the anti-Semitic legacy of the Soviet Union.

Just as it took countries in Western Europe decades to examine their roles in the genocide of the Jews, so too it will take time in Lithuania, Pavilionis said. "It took some time to build from scratch, from the distortion of reality," he said.

Already, Pavilionis said, the Lithuanian government is training teachers to educate schoolchildren about the Holocaust.

Alexander Domanskis, past president of the Lithuanian World Center in Chicago, said Lithuanians should learn about the Holocaust.

"I THOUGHT I WAS THE LAST JEW LEFT"

Continued from page 6)

marching. On both sides I heard the Germans with the dogs and the gunshots. And we were marching in the middle of the street, on the road, passing by everyone and certain that someone would open fire at any minute. But no one paid attention to us.

"Hell on both sides, people being shot and terrible screams, while we marched in the middle as if we were air. With every step, my heart went up to my throat and I sensed my parents' fear. It was a surreal situation. Minutes of walking felt like eternity.

"Four mounted policemen passed us, we felt the end was near, but they just kept on going, split to both sides while we marched between them toward the barrier, crossed the barrier, and continued to a different part of the ghetto, where we got help."

PEDIGREE DOG IN POOR NEIGHBORHOOD

Thanks to the money hidden by the father, the Sztykgold family members remained in the ghetto until its very last moments.

"At first there were 1,000 people on one meter (3.2 feet) in the ghetto until it became impossible to walk on the pavement. Then there were the raids and the number of people in the ghetto was reduced.

"When I left the ghetto, two weeks before the uprising, there was no one on the street anymore. There was a terrible silence. The only ones who remained in the ghetto were those who had a job. Father got me and mother fake certificates and we decided to escape, but at the last minute he announced he wouldn't be joining us.

"Grandfather was a religious person, and he thought that what was happening to us was a punishment from above, and that one can't escape such a punishment. He insisted on staying, and father told us he couldn't leave his father and escape, even if he had a hideout waiting for him. Mother and I escaped on our own to a hiding place in one of Warsaw's poorest neighborhoods."

Yoram recalls the dog he had when the ghetto was established. "A beautiful pedigree dog which we had during our childhood, until one day my parents decided it was too much, that we cannot continue keeping a pet and feeding it while people are dying of hunger.

"Father bought poison and decided to put her to sleep. But three days later she suddenly came back to life. We were a religious family and we decided to try again. Father decided to smuggle her out and paid for the smuggling."

He never imagined he would see the dog again, several hours after arriving with his mother at a hideout outside the ghetto.

"Father must have made sure that the dog would be returned to me. I was so happy to see her again after everything I went through. It was a moment of joy.

"But less than half an hour later, Polish crooks smelled an opportunity. They immediately suspected that we were Jews, because it was impossible for anyone in such a poor neighborhood to have a well-groomed pedigree dog. They immediately asked for money so as not to hand us over to the Gestapo. We were forced to flee again."

ON GERMAN OFFICER'S LAP

The new hideout didn't last long either. While Yoram and his mother went out to catch a breath of fresh air, the Polish landlady who hid them went through their belongings and found fur and a pair of crocodile-skin shoes the mother had smuggled.

"Until her very last day, mother always made sure she was meticulously dressed and had an impressive look," Yoram stresses. "What is this, ma'am?" the Polish woman shouted as the two returned from their short walk outside. "Where did you get such expensive stuff?"

The mother replied, "You want to know where it's from? It's a great story, I must tell you. But first I'll feed the child for a few minutes, and then I'll sit down and tell you."

Yoram's mother prepared a small meal for him, and when the Polish woman wasn't looking she packed a small bag and slipped outside.

Yoram will never forget that night. In the freezing cold the two hit the road, all alone in Warsaw's poor neighborhood. The next hiding place was at the other end of the Polish capital.

"The curfew was supposed to start in a short while and we knew there was no way we would make it unless we took a tram which only the Germans could use. Mother had nerves of iron. She told me some bedtime stories about the moon and stars and then she said, 'We're getting on the tram.' And I'm no idiot, I understood what that meant.

"We waited for it to become even darker and walked to the Germans' tram. We got on the streetcar, mother looked in and intentionally chose to sit in the only place facing two German officers. She sat down confidently and smiled, and they smiled back at her.

"I was so scared I couldn't talk. I wasn't scared I would utter nonsense; I was scared I would wet my pants and they would discover our trick.

"Mother was a beautiful woman and they fell for her charm. One of them courted her and the other reached out to me and put me on his lap. Throughout the journey he told me stories and showed me things through the window. At the end of the trip they kissed my mother's hand and we got off at the station."

ESCAPE FROM TOY SHOP

Yoram and his mother split. He was handed over to the Christian nanny who had taken care of him before the war. He remembers the day he arrived with her at the playground overlooking the ghetto.

He stood near the carousel, next to children and parents amusing themselves at the sight of the burning ghetto. He was forced to pretend that he was entertained, like everyone else, "by the sight of people falling off the rooftops like candles, from the gunshots and smoke. And that was when I knew that my father and grandfather were still in there."

Only seven years old, he already knew what the end of the world looked like.

Mother Helena hid at a Polish friend's house. Every two weeks she visited her son Yoram for several minutes at the nanny's house. One day, Yoram recalls, during a short walk, the nanny asked to tell Helena something.

"The nanny said that one of her friends who knew about me told her husband. And he asked to know where she was hiding me and where mother was hiding. He told her that if they turned us in they could secure their economic future forever. My mother was smart enough to understand the situation.

"She trusted the nanny, but was afraid she was being followed, so every minute was dangerous. She stopped outside a toy shop and asked the nanny to wait for us outside for a moment because she wanted to buy me a present.

"We entered the store and mother turned to the saleswoman and asked if there was another exit. The woman pointed to a different door. We escaped, leaving the nanny outside."

LAST JEW IN THE WORLD

Helena led Yoram to the last hideout, where he stayed until the end of the war, in the town of *Żyrardów* near Warsaw. He lived with a Christian family which got a lot of money for hiding him.

Yoram with his sister and mother.

"I was pretty free to walk around there and get a breath of fresh air. They knew I was Jewish, but they got good money to watch me."

When the announcement was made about the end of the war, Yoram assumed he had been left alone in the world.

"I hadn't met even one Jew during that period and I assumed everyone had died, that I was the last Jew in the world. I was only nine, but I was concerned that I had been left all alone and didn't know what to do in the world."

His mother Helena and sister Wanda managed to survive and unite on the other side of the Vistula River, which was liberated six months earlier by the Red Army. Half a year passed before the mother and sister could reach *Żyrardów* and visit Yoram.

They found him sick and weak, his body swollen from hunger and covered with wounds. It took him months to recover.

His mother volunteered in a Jewish children's home operated by the Joint organization in *Otwock* and brought him there. Alongside 130 children, many of them orphans left alone in the world, Yoram began a long rehabilitation process with his mother and sister by his side.

In 1949, the children's home was shut down and Yoram moved in with his mother, who had remarried a Jew who survived the Holocaust.

At the age of 21, Yoram left Poland and immigrated to Israel, where he met his sister Wanda, who had made aliyah several years earlier. He enlisted with the IDF and then studied architecture. He married Liora, and they have two children and six grandchildren.

ESTONIA: NAZI SAFE HAVEN

Sixty-five years after many Fascist leaders were sentenced to execution or prison, Estonia is in the spotlight for neo-Nazi activity acting as a shelter for several convicted war criminals.

With SS marches regularly held throughout the state, many fear the country is increasingly embracing one of history's darkest chapters.

One of the marchers – Mikhail Gorshkov – is ranked eighth on Simon

Veterans of 20th *Waffen* Grenadier Division of the SS meet on the *Sinimaed* hills.

Wiesenthal's list of most wanted Nazi war criminals.

"He directly participated in a murder of 3,000 Jews in Belarus in the 1940s. Documents proving it were provided to the Estonian authorities," says the chairman of the anti-Fascist committee of Estonia, Andrey Zarenkov.

Estonia's anti-Fascist committee says the proof of Gorshkov's atrocities in a Belarusian concentration camp is solid and undoubted. But instead of seeing off his days from behind bars, he now lives the life of a free man in this Baltic state.

"Gorshkov was deported from the US and stripped of US citizenship. That says a lot, doesn't it? Tallinn gave him shelter and tried to hide him here, but then under international pressure the authorities had to initiate an investigation," Zarenkov reveals.

However, the probe yielded no results. After months of investigation, Estonian authorities closed the case.

The advisor of the office of Estonian Prosecutor General Carol Merzin said that "A well-grounded doubt remains that the Gorshkov mentioned in the materials is not the Mikhail Gorshkov who is at present a citizen of the Republic of Estonia. The case will be closed, as it has been impossible for the investigative team to find any additional evidence."

The decision raised eyebrows in Israel – at first. But then Simon Wiesenthal's center recalled which country they were dealing with.

"I called Washington, spoke to the people who handled his prosecution case about whether they had any doubt about [Mikhail Gorshkov's] identity. And they said no, none whatsoever," insists Efraim Zurov from the Simon Wiesenthal Center.

And the Gorshkov story is not a one-off case. From sanctioning SS veterans' marches to glorifying former Nazi collaborators – this has been Tallinn's policy for the past decade.

Recently, one man made just about every headline in Estonia. Almost on a scale of a national holiday, in October the country marked the 90th birthday of Harald Nugiseks, the only remaining holder of the Iron Cross, one of the highest awards in Nazi Germany.

The Nuremberg Tribunal sentenced the Nazi leadership to either executions or prison terms 65 years ago. This trial of history was meant to get rid of Nazism for good. But the SS marches in Baltic states, and other cases of rehabilitation of Fascism nowadays, suggest that history lessons have not been fully learned.

POLAND'S HALT OF RESTITUTION PLANS ANGERS MANY

BY VERENA DOBNIK, AP

Before the Nazis arrived, Maurice Deluty's life followed a rhythm familiar to so many Jews in small Polish towns. His father, a grain merchant, would stop work before dusk on Fridays to observe the Sabbath with his family, sitting down to a meal prepared on a wood-burning iron stove, the matzo bought from a bakery in their small town near Warsaw.

Deluty's parents and sister were killed in the Holocaust and his father's grain warehouse was destroyed. But the family home

Piotr Sokolowski, a psychology professor, speaks in front of a home that his family owned before World War II, in Warsaw, Poland.

still stands — and the 87-year-old Deluty, who now lives in Queens, New York, says he deserves to get the property back, or at least compensation. He is the rightful heir and desperately needs the money as mounting medical costs eat up his meager income.

But it's a battle he feels he has lost with a decision by Poland's government to suspend work on a law that would have offered compensation to people who had private property seized during the Nazi and Communist eras. He says he's running out of time and energy, and has a message for Poland's government: "Shame on you for what you are doing to (Holocaust) survivors in this time of their great need."

The U.S. government also expressed its disappointment over the failure to pass a law that affects both Jews and many non-Jews, sparking an angry outburst from Poland's foreign minister, who made it clear he didn't appreciate a lecture from Washington.

The government of Prime Minister Donald Tusk argues that the financial crisis has left it too broke to pay even partial compensation for seized property. Government spokesman Pawel Gras said Wednesday that if the law took effect, the state would have to immediately pay out 20 billion zlotys (€7 billion) to former property owners, most of them non-Jews. He said it's an obligation "impossible" for the debt-burdened state to meet for the next two years.

That marks a change of tone from 2008, when Tusk vowed during a visit to Jerusalem to get a law passed. "There is nothing worse that saying I'll give it back, and then not doing so," Tusk said at the time.

Now that Tusk is not doing so, many are furious.

"Any democratic country which claims to practice democracy and good human behavior has to practice it. Otherwise, it's a farce," Deluty said during an interview at his Queens home. "How can they be democratic when they're violating such human rights?"

Even Poland's President Bronislaw Komorowski condemned the decision to stop work on the law, calling it "a disgrace for Poland."

Komorowski, who is aligned with Tusk's governing Civic Platform party but is elected separately from the government, also acknowledged what many critics frequently note — that Poland is the only young democracy from the former Eastern Bloc that hasn't passed any reprivatization or recompensation law.

The government says it will resume work on the law sometime in the future — but that will be too late for many of the elderly people who were dispossessed.

The issue is often described as one of "Jewish restitution," but in fact only about 15 percent of the seized property in question is claimed by Jews, with the bulk of it claimed by non-Jewish Poles who owned homes, factories, and other property. Still, the issue weighs heavily on relations between Poland and Jewish groups due to its unresolved nature and the fact that before the war Poland was home to 3.5 million Jews — Europe's largest Jewish community.

In some cases, the land was first seized by the Nazi German occupiers and then taken over by Communists in the postwar era. Sometimes it came as part of a Communist policy of dispossessing aristocrats or others of privilege — or simply because the state coveted the real estate.

People have been struggling for years to regain property, and some have succeeded through the courts. Many others fail.

Deluty returned to Poland in 1992 and obtained a deed to his home from municipal authorities. But a judge told him his house had been sold by the Polish government after the deportation of the Jews from the ghetto in his hometown of *Nowe Miasto*. He might have been able to reclaim it had he returned immediately after the war, but a wave of anti-Semitic violence against Jewish Holocaust survivors prompted him to flee the country.

The judge told him he had no right to the house "because 'you did not come back to live here,'" he recalled. "Instead of showing a little empathy, he talked to me as if I'm annoying him. ... 'What do you want here?' he says. ... It was like talking to a dead wall."

The issue of righting these wrongs raises complex moral questions.

Is it right to compensate former landowners if it means cutting welfare payments in a country burdened by an unemployment rate of 13 percent, an enduring economic legacy of the painful transformation from Communism to a market economy?

Should those Poles who suffered the oppression and deprivations of Communism have to pay higher taxes today so that the state can compensate prewar landowners, some of whom used their money and connections to find refuge in the West during those hard times?

How can one even begin to address wrongs in a country that was invaded and occupied by Germany and the Soviet Union, and saw Warsaw and other cities razed to the ground, 6 million citizens killed, and its borders radically redrawn after the war?

Since a large swath of western Poland once belonged to Germany, there are also fears that a policy of compensation could open a Pandora's box of Germans seeking to regain former property.

Yet Poland's dispossessed owners and their heirs say property stolen by Communists remains stolen property to this day, and that if this young democracy wants to live up to its ideals — and its constitution — it must honor the sanctity of private property.

The United States was "deeply disappointed" by the Polish decision to suspend work on the law, Stuart Eizenstat, special adviser to U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton on Holocaust-era issues, said in March. "We believe this is a matter of justice for both groups," he said.

That sparked an angry response from Poland, which jealously guards its national sovereignty after two centuries during which it was controlled by outside powers most of the time.

Foreign Minister Radek Sikorski said: "If the United States really wanted to do something for Poland's Jews, a good moment would have been in the years 1943–1944, when most of them were still alive, and when Poland pleaded for that through the testimony of Jan Karski. Now the intervention is a little late."

Karski was a wartime emissary of the Polish government-in-exile who had gathered firsthand evidence of atrocities in the Warsaw ghetto and the *Belzec* death camp and carried the reports to the West. Though the Allies were by then already fighting the Germans, Karski pleaded with them to do more to stop the genocide.

Among the non-Jews who remain disappointed at the lack of resolution over this issue is 61-year-old Piotr Sokolowski, a psychology professor who belongs to a third generation of heirs fighting to regain an elegant prewar villa in Warsaw.

The pale yellow home, which overlooks a small park, was bought before the war by a great-uncle who was a government cabinet minister in the 1920s. After the Nazis invaded, the Gestapo took it over. Then in the 1950s it was seized by the Communists. Today it remains in state hands, with the Polish Academy of Sciences — a state institute — renting it to private companies. Or "milking it" for the income, as Sokolowski sees it.

He and his siblings have been trying for 20 years through the courts and other legal avenues to regain it. Despite documents proving ownership, they have gotten nowhere.

"I am fighting but I am hitting (a) wall," Sokolowski said. "The government uses every possible trick in the legal book to keep it for themselves."

In the meantime, the house seems to be falling into some disrepair, with plaster chipping off the front. He is convinced that the state is avoiding costly repairs because it realizes one day it will have to give it back.

In the meantime, he says his generation is grooming the next to keep up the efforts.

YOM HASHOAH AROUND THE WORLD

(Continued from page 2)

ily," Hermano said.

Still bearing the camp number 3,241 tattooed on his forearm, Auschwitz survivor Willy Manela recalled its unspeakable horrors.

"Words cannot convey what happened here in Auschwitz. It's unfathomable," said the Polish Jew who made a life for himself in Ireland after the war.

"It's my dream for the young people who are marching here not to forget history. They aren't allowed! They cannot forget what hate of fellow human beings can lead to," he added.

An elderly man looks at the portraits of Macedonian Jews who were killed in the Nazi extermination camp *Treblinka*, displayed in the Holocaust Memorial center of the Jews of Macedonia in the country's capital Skopje.

"My grandparents were in Auschwitz and in the ghetto and if they had not been liberated by men like these, I would probably not be here today," said 27-year-old Shani from Israel.

"My grandparents were murdered here in Auschwitz. Because the Allied soldiers liberated the camp just in time, I had a future and can now tell my grandchildren about the Holocaust," added 83-year-old Irving Roth, who was freed by U.S. troops when he was a 15-year-old after the westward January 1945 death march from Auschwitz to *Buchenwald*.

Moldovans are seen through a Star of David as they wait to place flowers at the Holocaust remembrance memorial in Chisinau, Moldova.

Israel's former chief Rabbi Meir Lau, as well as US and Canadian World War II veterans who liberated other Nazi death camps, notably *Buchenwald*, joined the march, which wound from Auschwitz to the killing fields of *Birkenau*.

There, six large torches were lit to blaze in front of a memorial.

More than one million people, mostly European Jews, perished at Auschwitz-Birkenau, operated by Nazi Germany in occupied Poland from 1940 until it was liberated by the Soviet Red Army on January 27, 1945.

The site was one of six German death camps set up in occupied Poland, a country which was home to pre-war Europe's largest Jewish community.

Many Auschwitz victims were sent to its notorious gas chambers immediately after being shipped in by train. Others were worked to death as slave laborers.

Among the camp's other victims were tens of thousands of non-Jewish Poles, Soviet prisoners of war, Gypsies, and anti-Nazi resistance fighters from across Europe.

Thousands of youth from Israel, the United States and other countries marched between Auschwitz and *Birkenau* to honor the millions killed in the Holocaust.

HOW A TOP NAZI'S BROTHER SAVED LIVES

(Continued from page 5)
president of Tobis-Sascha-Filmindustrie, Austria's largest film production company. Pilzer was Jewish, which gave the Nazis the perfect excuse to ban his studios' films in Germany — so they could subsequently take over the company when it began to falter. When the Gestapo arrested the toppled film mogul in March 1938, Albert Göring intervened.

SCRUBBING THE STREETS IN SOLIDARITY

"Albert Göring used the power of his family name and pulled out all the stops, first to find out where my father was and then to make sure he was released immediately," Pilzer's son George later testified.

That was no isolated incident, and many people had similar testimony to present after 1945. Alexandra Otzop, for example, recalled, "My husband and his son from his first marriage were persecuted in the fall of 1939. Mr. Göring managed to get them deported, instead of being sent to a concentration camp."

It's said that Albert Göring once even got down on his hands and knees to scrub a street in Vienna, out of solidarity with women who were being bullied by storm troopers. The women's tormentors asked his name and were horrified by the answer.

While his brother was hard at work perfecting his air force, Albert obtained fake papers, warned friends of impending arrests, and provided refugees with money. Again and again, he deftly used his name to intimidate public officials.

It was a bizarre situation. The overly ambitious Hermann knew about Albert's activities, yet did nothing to stop him. Albert later testified that his brother had told him it was his "own business" if he wanted to protect Jews, so long as he didn't get Hermann in "endless trouble." Albert, meanwhile, had a nearly schizophrenic relationship with Hermann, trying to keep the private person and the politician separate. "As brothers, we were close," he said.

But as time passed, Albert Göring abandoned the caution his brother had demanded of him. In late 1939, the younger Göring himself took an influential position, becoming export manager for the Skoda automobile factory in the Czech city of *Brno*. From this position, he also supported the Czech resistance, activists later testified. If their statements are accurate, Albert Göring revealed not only "the exact location of a submarine dockyard" but also the plan to break the non-aggression pact with the Soviet Union. This sensitive information, the Czech resistance fighters stated, was successfully passed on to Moscow and London.

This photo shows Albert Göring with his third wife, Mila Klazarova. Hermann Göring did not approve of his brother's marriage to Mila, whose Slavic background made her an "*Untermensch*," or subhuman, in his opinion. But Albert married her anyway in 1942 in *Salzburg*. Hermann did not attend the nuptials.

FLEEING TO *SALZBURG*

But even that isn't the whole story. Göring is also believed to have saved prisoners from the *Theresienstadt* concentration camp in 1944. "He said, I'm Albert Göring from Skoda. I need workers," Jacques Benbassat, the son of an associate of Albert's, later related. "He filled the truck with workers, and the concentration camp director agreed to it, because he was Albert Göring. Then he drove into the woods and released them."

A number of notes turn up in German files that prove these stories were not simply made up. The Gestapo's Prague bureau, for example, complained that Göring's office at the Skoda factory was "a veritable nerve center for 'poor' Czechs." The general of the Prague police, SS-*Obergruppenführer* Karl Hermann Frank, considered Albert Göring "at the very least, a defeatist of the worst sort" and asked permission to arrest him in 1944 on "profound grounds for suspicion."

Now the man who had helped others escape became the persecuted one. Multiple times, Hermann Göring had to intervene on Albert's behalf, all the while warning him that he wouldn't do so forever — with every German plane shot down, the once untouchable head of the *Luftwaffe* found his star was on the wane. Shortly before the end of the war, Albert fled to *Salzburg*, Austria.

These two very different men met just once more in an American detention center in *Augsburg*. "You will soon be free," the war criminal Göring is said to have told the younger Göring who saved Jews, on May 13, 1945. "So take care of my wife and my child. Farewell."

While Hermann Göring, sentenced in *Nuremberg*, escaped execution by committing suicide in October 1946, the Americans remained suspicious of Albert Göring. His name had become a burden for him. Although the last of a series of caseworkers did recommend his release, Göring was turned over to the Czech Republic and tried in Prague for possible war crimes, because Skoda had also manufactured weapons.

Only after many former Skoda employees testified on Göring's behalf were the charges dropped, and Göring was acquitted in March 1947. He died in 1966 in a Munich suburb, an impoverished and bitter man. Despite being a highly qualified engineer, he had been unable to find work in postwar Germany. Being Hermann Göring's brother, a fact that had saved his life in years past, ultimately became a curse.

BOOK DETAILS GERMAN CITIZENS' ROLE IN END-OF-WAR KILLINGS

(Continued from page 4)
civilians become involved, when it was already clear that the Nazis' "final victory" was a fantasy?

To answer this question, Blatman cites the example of the guards, a group of people who had become merciless sadists over the years. The concentration camp guards saw themselves as frontline soldiers against the enemy within, and as defenders of the Aryan race and the superior nation. Now that they were no longer working in the camps, they continued their mission, except that they were relieved of their prescribed routines. Worried about being caught by the Allied soldiers in the company of bands of walking skeletons, they chose to kill the potential witnesses instead.

Similar motives also turned many people on the home front into prepetrators when the trains filled with prisoners suddenly arrived in their towns. Mayors, local party officials, and men with the *Volkssturm* militia were determined to prevent the oppressed concentration camp inmates from gaining their freedom in their own backyards and exacting revenge for the injustices they had suffered. This logic led them to believe that they were protecting the welfare and safety of their fellow citizens by killing the strangers in their striped prison uniforms.

A decade of indoctrination, or what Blatman calls a "genocidal mentality" that had systematically dehumanized the Jews and the Slavs, led to the collective hunt. Adolescent members of the Hitler Youth often reached for their guns as a matter of course.

Of course, there were also farmers who handed bread or potatoes to the starving prisoners or concealed them. There are also accounts of cases in which prominent local residents, including a lower-level Nazi official and a respected attorney in *Burgstall* in the *Altmark* region of eastern Germany, rescued larger groups.

But many of the marches ended in disaster, as was the case in *Gardelegen*, a town in east central Germany, where US soldiers found hundreds of charred and mangled bodies in a barn in mid-April 1945. They were the bodies of prisoners from various camps who had been forced inside.

It was later discovered that people had volunteered to guard the prisoners, "including ordinary civilians, some of them armed with hunting rifles, who mutated into prison guards of their own volition," Blatman writes. The massacres began when the prisoners were being marched to an empty cavalry school in *Gardelegen*, where they were housed temporarily, and where adolescents boasted: "We're going hunting, to shoot down the zebras."

Men from the *Volkssturm* militia, police officers, soldiers from a paratrooper division barracked nearby, guards, and civilians helped drive the doomed prisoners into the barn. Then they locked the doors, lit gasoline-soaked straw on the ground and tossed hand grenades into the building. Anyone who attempted to escape the inferno ran into a hail of bullets. Some 25 prisoners survived, while about 1,000 died.

A few days later, the victims were given a burial with military honors. The Americans ordered the residents of *Gardelegen* to attend the ceremony.

"Some will say that the Nazis were responsible for this crime," Colonel George P. Lynch, chief of staff of the 102nd US Infantry Division, told the Germans. "Others will point to the Gestapo. The responsibility rests with neither. It is the responsibility of the entire German people."

HOLOCAUST FAMILY WEEPS AS LAST PORTRAITS OF VICTIMS GO ON SHOW IN ISRAEL

BY GWEN ACKERMAN, BLOOMBERG

Dvora Milka Semmel fixes us with a resigned grimace.

She has a blue kerchief, lined face, and brown eyes. She peers from a portrait painted months before she was gunned down by the Nazis with 53 fellow labor camp inmates.

Her 79-year-old granddaughter, Nira Gold, stares immobilized at the painting

"Dvora Milka Semmel, *Mikhailowka* Camp, 1943" by Arnold Daghani. In April 1943, Semmel and their daughter Zyla were executed together with other 53 labor camp inmates.

with tears welling, as she seeks solace from her 73-year-old sister Amira Bar.

"The Nazis took the elderly out of a line-up — that was grandmother," Gold says. "The minute they took her, the oldest daughter ran after and they were both shot. Right in front of everyone. I just wish there was a way to tell my mother" that the painting exists, she says. "I'm crying for her."

Bar nods. Their mother took them to Jerusalem's Yad Vashem Holocaust Museum often when they were children and "looked for so long" for something from her mother. Her grandmother's likeness, hung next to that of Gold's grandfather, hangs in an exhibition, "Last Portrait: Painting for Posterity," at Yad Vashem.

About 6 million European Jews were killed in the Holocaust during World War II in a Nazi campaign across Europe that in-

"Peter Hans Edel (Hirschweh), *Sachsenhausen*, c. 1944-1945" by Felix Cytrin. Edel was an artist who worked on producing money bills during World War II.

cluded random executions, plunder, and death camps. Most of the faces that look out from the exhibit's charcoal, pencil, watercolor, and oil portraits didn't survive.

Sketches include those of men who printed fake foreign money for the Nazi regime and whose story was commemorated in the movie *The Counterfeiters*.

For Avraham Zolenfeld, who says he was the youngest counterfeiter, the portraits are less significant than his two return trips to *Sachsenhausen* to revisit the printing press.

"I don't recall at all the faces except for those I saw after I was freed," Zolenfeld, 87, says, shaking his head. "I don't want to disappoint but I prefer to remember places rather than people."

The exhibition's portraits are grouped thematically and into specific categories. The blurry lines and downcast glances of the subjects in one such group reflect the precariousness of existence in the camps and ghettos.

Moritz Muller worked in the hospital of the *Theresienstadt* ghetto and started painting and sketching the patients he cared for. He recorded the date of each portrait and dates of many of the deaths.

Jacob Lifshitz, active at the *Kovno* ghetto, buried all of his drawings in the Jewish cemetery a few days before the ghetto's liquidation. He died of starvation. His wife survived to return, unearth the

"Baruch (Benedykt) Semmel, *Bershad* Ghetto, 1943" by Arnold Daghani. Semmel escaped from a labor camp in August 1942 before living in a ghetto and moving to Israel.

drawings, bring them with her to Israel, and donate them to Yad Vashem.

Four Czech artists in *Theresienstadt* used caricature, a style which allowed them to capture the faces of many people in just a few strokes. Their subjects added captions to their likenesses such as that done by Max Placek on which Viktor Ullman, the Czech composer who was sent to Auschwitz in 1944, scribbled: "Don Quixote and Sancho Panza."

"What is really characteristic and surprising is that we almost don't find Holocaust attributes in these portraits," curator Eliad Moreh says. "The message is that they wanted to be remembered as human beings and not as victims."

"Last Portrait: Painting for Posterity" runs through Fall 2012 at Yad Vashem in Jerusalem.

POLAND ISSUES COINS HONORING FAMILIES WHO SAVED JEWS

Poland has issued commemorative coins to honor three Catholic Polish families who were killed by the Nazis for having rescued Jews during the Holocaust.

The two coins, in denominations of two zlotys, worth about 65 cents, and 20 zlotys, worth about $6.50, honor the Ulma, Kowalski, and Baranek families.

On March 15, 1943, German auxiliary police discovered eight Jews hidden in the home of Wincenty and Łucja Baranek, in the village of *Siedliska*. The police killed the Jews immediately and then shot the Baraneks and their two sons in the backs of their heads.

Adam and Bronisława Kowalski hid two Jewish neighbors in their house in the village of *Ciepielów*. Other Jews were hidden in other homes in the village. In December 1942, the Kowalskis, their five children, and the Jews they were hiding were among at least 34 people killed

Poland's commemorative 2-zloty coins honoring the Ulma, Baranek, and Kowalski families.

when Nazi police, after being tipped off, set fire to houses where Jews were believed to be hidden.

Józef and Wiktoria Ulma hid eight Jews in the attic of their house in the village of *Markowa* for 18 months. After being informed on in 1944, the couple, their six children, and the Jews they were hiding were all killed.

It is "thanks to such people that about 30 thousand to 40 thousand Jews survived the occupation of Poland," Jerzy Halbersztadt, the former director of the forthcoming Museum of the History of Polish Jews, wrote in the official brochure for the coins. "And although most of our fellow citizens did not know how to, or were unable to, resist the crimes, the accomplishments of the noblest and bravest people should give us the strength to cope with difficult problems in our history."

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