The United Nations paid tribute to the six million Jews and countless others massacred in the Nazi Holocaust with a solemn ceremony in the General Assembly Hall, a rebuke to Holocaust deniers, and a warning from Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon of the perils of anti-Semitism and hatred of any kind.

"The United Nations was founded to prevent any such horror from happening again. Yet tragedies from Cambodia to Rwanda to Srebrenica show that the poison of genocide still flows," he said in a message marking the International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust, held every year on 27 January, the date on which Auschwitz-Birkenau, one of the worst German Nazi concentration and extermination camps, was liberated in 1945.

Mr. Ban recalled his own visit to the camp in November as he walked through the "infamous" gate bearing the metal slogan "Arbeit macht frei" (work makes you free) and stood near the crematoria that burned the corpses of so many victims. "I will never forget my visit," he said.

"I saw the barracks where Jews, Roma, Sinti, homosexuals, dissidents, prisoners of war and persons with disabilities spent their final days in the most brutal conditions," he added, calling for unflagging vigilance against bigotry, extremist ideologies, communal tensions and discrimination against minorities.

UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay, recalling her own visit to Auschwitz-Birkenau, has a "simple message" for all those who deny that the Holocaust happened, or who engage in anti-Semitism and other forms of religious, racial or ethnic intolerance or discrimination.

"Visit this historic and terrible place," she said in a message marking the Day. "It is a truly humbling and harrowing experience to feel the chill of evil and immense tragedy that permeates its walls and grounds. It is important to feel — not just to know in an abstract way — where such behavior can lead."

Each year, on 27 January, we take time to remember the victims of the Holocaust and to reflect on how it came about, and how the world at large failed so disarmally to prevent it. The Holocaust stands as a searing reminder of the perils of discrimination and intolerance, and of just how powerful and deadly the incitement to racial hatred can be," she added, stressing the imperative of reacting quickly and firmly to discrimination and violence against individuals and entire communities, wherever they occur.

Ms. Pillay noted that despite the revulsion of the full horror of the Holocaust, the flames of hatred and persecution have risen again to consume other countries, people and societies — from the killing fields of Cambodia to the forests of Srebrenica in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the hills of Rwanda.

"Even today, in many places around the world, people are persecuted or discriminated against because of their race, religion, origin, sexual orientation or political opinions, and in countries such as Syria, the Central African Republic and South Sudan, people are still being maimed and slaughtered because of the group to which they belong," she warned.

"We need to stop turning a blind eye to the warning signs of serious human rights violations whenever and wherever they appear. That much, at least, we can do to honor all those millions murdered en masse by their fellow human beings, who attempted to justify war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide with hate-inspired political philosophies and propaganda.

Opening the commemorative ceremony, General Assembly President John Ashe stressed that the Day underscored the international community’s determination that "such unfathomable horror and unseemly cruelty would have no place in this world."

"Today, we are gathered here, to bear witness for all those who were brutalized, who suffered, and who died, and we are also here to bear witness so that we the living never allow such a terrible tragedy to occur in our shared human history," he said.

"We will not forget them, we have not forgotten them, and they have not left us in vain. The sheer ferocity and pervasive cruelty of the Holocaust brought to fore a deep and powerful moral imperative that crimes of such enormity must be forever eliminated from this planet."

"This moral imperative calls on the international community to ensure that this horrendous crime against humanity, including various subsequent derivatives thereof, must never be repeated in any way, shape or form."

Giving the keynote speech at the ceremony, film director, writer and producer Steven Spielberg stressed that the world cannot emerge from the Holocaust until there are no more genocides, until "the unthinkable becomes impossible..."

"Tragically we are all aware that the Holocaust is with us today in ongoing attempts at genocides all around our planet," he added, highlighting the UN’s role in bringing home the message.

"The United Nations is one of the most important institutions that humanity has created, not only because of that shared hope that it would accomplish what’s set out in its Charter, but because the United Nations provides a place for representatives of all the peoples of the world to listen to witnesses telling their experiences, and after listening, policy is made. This is a place that testimony forms the basis of action."

(Continued on page 14)
As WWII drew to a close, Hitler sought the rapid annihilation of every remaining Jew. A group of Revisionist Zionists enlisted a Swiss-born elder son of ship-owner and industrialist Samuel Edison Woods, and persuaded him to embrace Zionism. Woods, Samuel Edison Woods, and persuaded him to embrace Zionism. He was born to limmer, and was a voluble one. It originated with Dr. Jean-Marie Musy, and via him to Himmler, was a movement. It was a remarkable episode largely over-looked to this day, the effort was partially successful.

BY JOANNA M. SAIDEL, THE TIMES OF ISRAEL

On November 3, 1944, Adolf Hitler’s deputy, Reichsführer SS and General Plenipotentiary of Nazi Germany Heinrich Himmler, was traveling on a German military train from Breslau to Vienna. Sitting with him was his longtime friend, Dr. Jean-Marie Musy, the former president of the Swiss Confederation.

Their conversation that day set in process a remarkable saga that led to thousands, or possibly even tens of thousands — of European Jews being saved from Nazi extermination. It ranks as one of the more extraordi-nary stories of the war, and yet it is an all but unpublicized one.

Musy had known Himmler since the 1930s and had been the publisher of a pro-German newspaper, La Jeune Suisse. During that period he had worked to reduce the prominence of Jews in economic and public life. But by 1944, he had reversed his position, stopped his publication and decided that the Nazis were criminals and murderers. Unbeknown to Himmler, Musy had gone so far as to switch his loyalties and become an emissary of the Irgun, the Revisionist Zionist movement.

Unsurprisingly, the Irgun’s route to Musy, and via him to Himmler, was a convoluted one. It originated with Dr. Reuben Hecht, who worked as an agent in Switzerland. It led through Samuel Edison Woods, and persuaded him to embrace Zionism. Woods, in turn, introduced Hecht to Yitzhak and Recha Stembuch, an Orthodox Jewish couple who ran the Swiss branch of the Emergency Rescue Committee (Va’ad ha-Hatzalah) of the Union of Orthodox Rabbis. They established contacts with the papal nuncio to Switzerland and gradually gained influence with the broader Swiss diplomatic community. And in September 1944, they came into contact with Musy, recruited him to the Zionist cause and, astoundingly, proved able to negotiate with Himmler through him.

A 1944 conference at Yad Vashem, and the resulting documentation, indi-cated that these negotiations ulti-mately saved the lives of many thou-sands of Jews. As World War II was drawing to a close, Hitler ordered the extermination of all remaining Jews in Nazi death camps throughout Europe. But under pressure from Musy, Himmler — the monstrous architect of the Holocaust, now seek-ing to save his own skin and that of his comrades rather than go down with the ship as Hitler intended to do — countermanded the Führer’s order.

Himmler’s late November 1944 countermand ordered a halt to the murder of Jews throughout the Reich and called for the destruction of the gas chambers at Auschwitz-Birkenau. This order, it need hardly be stated, came far too late to save the millions upon millions of Jews and others whom the Nazis had murdered. Himmler, it also need hardly be stressed, was a central cog in that genocidal Nazi machine. His interven-tion to counter Hitler toward the very end of the war was entirely cynical and self-motivated. It was also not universally implemented. Hitler him-self worked to ensure that his will not be subverted. And lower-level com-manders took independent actions in the chaos at war’s end. Despite Himmler’s orders to the contrary, there were death marches which con-tinued until the last day of the war.

But scholarly data indicates that at least some of the Jews who were still alive in the camps when the war ended were there because of Himmler’s intervention — a counter-mand that led Hitler to condemn his former faithful deputy for betrayal.

Evidence of Himmler’s interven-tion and its consequences derives from a number of reliable sources — some of which were cited at the 1974 Yad Vashem confer-ence — including testimony from the Nuremberg war trials, the Rudolf Kastner war trial, the Archives of the Holocaust, the Hecht Archive (which includes an enlightening interview of Hecht by Monty Noah Penkovor, pro-fessor emeritus of Jewish history at the Machon Lander Graduate Center of Jewish Studies in Jerusalem), and US Foreign Service documents.

These documents indicate that Musy was able to persuade his old friend Himmler that, while the war was lost, there was still a natalwed window of opportunity available to him: that if he worked against Hitler to keep camp inmates alive, stopping the deportations and suspending killings and execu-tions, he could expect somewhat more favorable international treat-ment and a greater chance of post-war survival.

It was these issues that were dis-cussed by Himmler and Musy on that November 3 journey to Vienna. Two weeks later, on November 18, Musy informed Himmler in writing that the United States government was pre-pared to participate in negotiations with him, through Musy, via its consul general in Zurich, Woods, over the possible transfer of hundreds of thou-sands of Jews from concentration camps in the Reich to freedom via Switzerland. On November 24, 1944, Himmler ordered gassings to stop and crematoria to be destroyed at Auschwitz and its 51 sub-camps.

Subsequently, a first trainload of 1,200 Jews from Theresienstadt con-centration camp were indeed released, as agreed upon, but no other Jews were liberated in this man-nner under the Musy-Himmler agree ment. Hitler intervened and halted the plan to move these Jews out of Nazi territory by train. Instead, a secondary plan evolved, by which many thou-sands of Jews were ultimately saved through Himmler’s intervention in Hitler’s evacuation plan and by stop-ping the complete destruction of the concentration camps late in the war. Dr. Rudolf Kastner, the former pres-ident of the Hungarian Zionist Organization, said in a 1945 affidavit: “After the fall of 1944 Himmler grant-ed several concessions. Thus he per-mitted the departure for Switzerland of 1,700 Hungarian Jews deported to Bergen-Belsen and also agreed to suspend the annihilation of the Jews of the Budapest ghetto. Himmler per-mitted the handing over to the Allies of the Jews of the Bergen-Belsen and Theresienstadt without a shot being fired, which in his eyes and the eyes of his colleagues was a very gener-ous concession, and certainly one [for] which he expected some political concession to be granted in return. In hopes of contact with the Western Allies, Himmler even made concessions without any economic returns. To this end Himmler might be ascribed the general prohibition dated 25 November 1944, conciliating that fur-ther killing of Jews….” [Adolf Eichmann, at first, did not obey this order.”

Hitler was unprepared for Himmler’s tentative step toward a conciliatory posture, completely clear to him until April 1945. Himmler had been known as der treue Heinrich, “the faithful Heinrich.” But though discredited to the Führer throughout the war, Himmler was not part of Hitler’s inner circle. And despite his unconditional obedi-ence to Hitler — which lasted at least until late 1944 — Himmler preferred socializing with rank-and-file German soldiers. It was of great importance to Himmler that German concentration camp guards be treated as prisoners of war rather than being shot on the spot when Allied victors entered and took over the camps.

As Himmler issued orders to release trainloads of Jews, he was met with resistance and counter-command s from Hitler. Underlings faithful to the Führer brought news of the release of the first trainload of Theresienstadt Jews to Hitler’s attention, and the transfers were halted. Now the second ary course of action went into effect — the effort to halt death marches and the preservation of camps marked for destruction. Himmler was able to partially prevail and keep some camps intact, pre-venting the immediate death of many prisoners.

The material that follows is drawn primarily from the documentary sources cited above. It comprises compelling testimony about the events and procedures used to influ-ence Himmler to change his course of action.

Twisting Himmler’s Arm Until It Broke

Himmler was no hero for his late wartime actions. He was guilty of genocide and crimes against humanity. Nonetheless, the story is worth telling because of the noble efforts of those who twisted Himmler’s arm until it broke. They were not the only people who attempted to influ-ence Himmler, but they were possibly the most successful. And they may be the least well known.

The story of this fascinating story, which has received scant editorial notice, unfolded during testimony in the famous Kastner war trial. The trial itself sought to determine the innocence or guilt of one Jew but, in return, it revealed the audacious and at least partly successful effort to save Jews through negotiations with Himmler. Under questioning by the defense, Hecht revealed how emissaries of the Irgun and also agreed to suspend the annihilation of the Jews of the Budapest ghetto. Himmler per-mitted the handing over to the Allies of the Jews of the Bergen-Belsen and Theresienstadt without a shot being fired, which in his eyes and the eyes of his colleagues was a very gener-ous concession, and certainly one [for] which he expected some political concession to be granted in return. In hopes of contact with the Western Allies, Himmler even made concessions without any economic returns. To this end Himmler might be ascribed the general prohibition dated 25 November 1944, conciliating that fur-ther killing of Jews…. [Adolf
RETURN TO AUSCHWITZ: HOW ISRAEL KEEPS HOLOCAUST MEMORIES ALIVE

BY KEVIN CONNOLLY. BBC NEWS

The number of people who sur-

vived the Holocaust is dwind-

ling — they are all now old men and

women. But the Holocaust carries a

special importance for Israel. Can it

ensure that the next generation knows,

and does not forget, what happened

in Europe seven decades ago?

Under a lightless Polish sky as dull

and flat as a sheet of beaten lead the

Israeli flag flutters listlessly in the light

wind.

There are not many touches of
color to be seen at the gates of

Auschwitz, and the blue Star of

David stands out on its crisp while

background.

The Israeli soldiers carrying the flag
have not come as tourists, of course —

they are here as an official military de-

legation to learn the lessons of the

Holocaust and to piece together frag-

ments of family histories that were

shattered by war and by genocide.

The Israeli delegation is marching in the

footsteps of the many Jews who

took their last steps here.

This is the spot where German SS

officers rapidly assessed which pris-

oners looked fit and strong enough to

be sent to the wooden blockhouses

on one of the Eastern Transports —

where the slave laborers lived. The

German officers working at the camp

in the late summer of 1944.

"I think it's a way of saying that even

if things remained the way they were]

that in two genera-

tions from now no one would even

know that this place existed. It's much

easier now that I know I'm passing

things on to youngsters. Perhaps it

will stick now and each generation will

pass it on to the next generation.

There is the arrogance and inhu-

manity of wanting a swimming pool to

be built just a few hundred meters

from the gas chambers and cremato-

rium of the Holocaust, of course.

But that aside, you do find yourself

wondering how the Germans can

have been thinking about the con-

struction of a swimming pool in the

month when the Americans liberated

Paris and the Russians began closing

in on Warsaw, just a few hundred kilo-

meters north of Auschwitz.

The Germans had planned to carry

out the Holocaust under the darkness

of a brutal military occupation in some

of the most remote parts of Europe.

Surely they must at least have begun

to fear, as the Nazi armies were

pushed back, that their crimes would

be detected and punished?

It is a small but telling detail from

those circumstances to find the varia-

tion of light and shade to make a

speech compelling, to hold an audi-

ence, but this is an extraordinary per-

formance — a shaft of light that illumi-

nates the darkness through which he

lived.

When it is over I ask Yael Sela-

Arbel, a captain, what difference it

makes to hear the story of the camp

firsthand from a survivor.

"I've been crying a lot," she says.

But just being there, for her, has been

important.

"I think it's a way of saying that even

though everything was done to erase

this nation, it's living, so it's a private

victory and a national victory, our

country, our achievements. It's a way

of saying: 'Here we are — you want-
to erase us but here we are, we are

strong, and we are capable and

advanced and we are everything the

people who you murdered expected

us to be.'

Any period of history changes when

there is no one left alive who remem-

bers it at first hand.

I can remember writing stories back in

1998 about the 80th anniversary of

the end of World War I when you
could talk with men who'd fought on

the Somme or at Jutland, and with the

women who had nursed them.

Fifteen years on from that moment,

they are all gone.

And who knows, perhaps 15 years

from now all the Holocaust survivors

will be gone too.

Yechiel Aleksander feels that those

who endured these horrors have a

special responsibility to talk about

them.

When you meet him, you are

reminded that the rest of us have a

special responsibility to listen.

Before we left Israel for Poland I

wanted to try to understand a little

more about the role the survivors play

in passing on the memory of the

Holocaust.

I spent some time with Asher Aud,

who lives with his wife in a homo-

cely apartment in a block of sheltered liv-

ing units in the middle of Jerusalem.

His wife, Haya, likes to paint, and she

loves her grandchildren. Those two

passions have between them filled

almost every available inch of hanging

space with pictures and photographs.

Your eye is drawn, though, to a

wooden panel that Haya made to

mark her husband's 70th birthday, on

which scenes from his life are etched

into the wood in brightly colored inks.

One panel, decorated with rings and

hearts, marks the day they married.

Another records the births of each of

their four children.

A third commemorates Asher Aud's

time in Auschwitz.

Just above the biographical panel

on the wall is an old-fashioned chim-

ing clock with one of those old-fash-

ioned movements of weights and

sauces that mechanically chops each
day into minutes.
BOOK REVIEWS

GONE TO PITCHIPOÏ

1941: The Year That Keeps Returning.

REVIEWED BY ADAM KIRSCH, TABLET

“W]e referred to our absent friends as having ‘gone to Pitchipoï,’ an imaginary far-off place, in ghetto-jargon . . . . Although there were ominous rumors, we just couldn’t grasp in our young minds that they could be true, that anything so terrible had befallen our missing relatives and friends.

All Holocaust survivor memoirs document a miracle. No Jew was supposed to survive Hitler’s ‘extermination plans’ — and as one delves deeper into those devilish ‘plans,’ it is incredible that any did! No less importantly, all Holocaust survivor memoirs document the unconscious memory of what happened as nothing else can. For, indeed, the resultant work is written by an individual who was there, who lived it, and lived to tell the terrible tale. Thus each memoir is invaluable. Thus each memoir — confirming and adding information and nuance — completes the unimaginable picture of a time that must be thoroughly and accurately recorded and remembered . . . . in the name of those who cannot speak, who were murdered by the Nazis and their eager collaborators.

Written by Rubin Katz, Gone to Pitchipoï: A Boy’s Desperate Fight for Survival in Wartime is, as advertised, a miraculous tale. In it we read how on September 7, 1939, the Nazis took over the author’s small Polish town of Ostrowiec Świętokrzyski. We read how they methodically proceeded to wipe out all its Jewish community, employing the same deadly techniques they used to wipe out all the Jewish communities that had the misfortune of falling under their ‘jurisdiction.’ Concomitantly, the self-sacrificing love of the author’s eight family members — one for the other — that made it possible for some of them to survive . . . . Frighteningly, we also see how pure ‘luck’ often made the difference between life and death. Survivors will be the first to tell you that! Meanwhile, throughout Gone to Pitchipoï, we read of the few surviving Jews only grew!

Poles were dismayed at the thought of Jews coming back to reclaim their properties and possessions, which they had meanwhile appropriated. Hence, they were often greeted by former neighbors and acquaintances with an unenthusiastic, ‘Oh, you’re alive!’ The result: “It has been estimated that well over a thousand Jews were killed in the pogroms that swept Poland after the war, but the true figure can never be known.”

On the other hand, and on a completely different and positive note, Gone to Pitchipoï also tells us of the heartfelt work of the distingtuted rabbi Dr. Solomon Schoenfeld, from London. He came to Poland in 1946 to locate and rescue Jewish children, bringing them back with him to England. How he took care of his charges, how he sheltered them back into life — it’s a beautiful and cautionary story that the world should also know about. Rubin Katz, the author of the work here under review, was one of those lucky children.

In sum, beautifully and sensitively written, Gone to Pitchipoï is an important addition to Holocaust study. It will most definitely be highly appreciated by the layman and scholar alike.

* * *

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

ONE OF THE MOST REMARKABLE BOOKS ABOUT THE HOLOCAUST WAS JUST PUBLISHED

(Continued on page 11)
SURVIVORS RECALL KINDERTRANSPORT ESCAPE

BY NAOMI KOPPEL, AP

The operation was called Kindertransport — Children’s Transport — and it was a passage from hell to freedom.

Kristallnacht had just rocked Nazi Germany. The pogroms killed dozens of Jews, burned hundreds of synagogues and imprisoned tens of thousands in concentration camps. Many historians see them as the start of Hitler’s Final Solution.

Amid the horror, Britain agreed to take in children threatened by the Nazi murder machine.

Seventy-five years ago the first group of kids arrived without their parents at the English port of Harwich, and took a train to London’s Liverpool Street Station.

Some 10,000 children, most but not all Jewish, would escape the Nazis in the months to come — until the outbreak of war in September 1939, when the borders were closed.

From London the children went to homes and hostels across Britain. But their parents — the few that eventually made it over — were placed in camps as "enemy aliens."

Many of the children settled in Britain, having found their families wiped out by the Nazis.

December 2 was World Kindertransport Day, with events to mark the anniversary in many countries. These are the stories of five Kinder in their own words.

OSCAR FINDLING, 91

My father was not a German citizen. On the night before Kristallnacht, he was arrested by the Gestapo.

That was the last I saw of my father. As soon as we found out (about the Kindertransport), my mother went to where the committee was and put my name down. She wouldn’t put my brother down because, she said, “I don’t want to lose both my sons on one day.”

I’ll never forget the last words my mother said: “Will I ever see you again?”

Prophectic words.

Kindertransport. My parents applied, and by pure luck I was one of the chosen ones. I was not yet 10 years old.

My parents took me to the station. I said goodbye to my grandparents. My grandfather was to die a few weeks later. My grandmother was one of the 6 million people who died in the extermination camps, with her two sisters, many cousins, many nephews and nieces.

We finally arrived at the border. You can’t imagine the relief of being in Holland, to have passed Nazi Germany. It was fantastic to feel free at last.

Kindertransport, from Austria to escape Nazi persecution, sits at his home in London.

I was two years in a hostel in Manchester. The committee got me a job in a fur shop. Once I was over 18 I was allowed to go to London. In 1944 I got papers from the Ministry of Labor that I had to go in the army.

It took me 30 years to get my parents’ story together. Basically they were put in the ghetto in 1941 and in September 1942 they were all put on the cattle trains. They were sent to a place called Belzec, which was one of the well-known gas chambers near Treblinka.

And that was that.

—

Already 16 when he arrived in June 1939, Findling, who grew up in the eastern German city of Leipzig, is the oldest surviving Kind.

After a career in garment manufacturing, he now lives with his second wife in London.

HERBERT LEVY, 84

My parents had tried to get out of Germany for many years but it was very difficult to get into anywhere until the British government allowed children to come on the Kindertransport.

As soon as we found out (about the Kindertransport), my father was not a German citizen, he still works as a vicar. Having escaped death really, and by pure luck I was one of the chosen ones. I was not yet 10 years old. It’s made me immensely grateful to Britain.

I was two years in a hostel in Manchester. The committee got me a job in a fur shop. Once I was over 18 I was allowed to go to London.

My parents applied, and by pure luck I was one of the chosen ones. I was not yet 10 years old. My parents took me to the station. I said goodbye to my grandparents. My grandfather was to die a few weeks later. My grandmother was one of the 6 million people who died in the extermination camps, with her two sisters, many cousins, many nephews and nieces.

We finally arrived at the border. You can’t imagine the relief of being in Holland, to have passed Nazi Germany. It was fantastic to feel free at last.

Secondly, making it into Britain, but the third is: I was not even 10 years old. It was very lucky.

I was taken to a place in Sussex. A lady had let the committee have her very large place for the refugees. I stayed there until 1940. At that time a new regulation came in that enemy aliens — and of course we were classed as enemy aliens — were not allowed to be within so many miles of the coast because we might be spies. And so we had to leave. I was taken on for free by the Jesuits in a boarding school.

Having escaped death really, and my parents having escaped death, it’s made me immensely grateful to God, and I suppose the fact of becoming a priest is the result of that.

In this photo, Oscar Findling, 91, who was brought to England by Kindertransport from Germany to escape Nazi persecution, sits at his home in London.

Our mother came with us on the train because being a proper Aryan German, she could get a visa. So I experienced it as a family outing. I remember saying, “Are we nearly there? Are we nearly there?”

My mother had to go back (to Germany). She would have been an enemy once war broke out. She brought us to our first foster family, which was a vicar and his wife in Kent. The vicar was a lovely man but his wife obviously didn’t want refugees foisted on her. She was very cruel to us.

The second foster family had five children and they treated us exactly the same as their children. But where we were living there was in the path of the doodlebugs, and that absolutely fascinated (my brother) Martin. So we had to be moved. Our third family was on a farm. I was in seventh heaven with the animals.

I had no nationality for the first 18 years of my life. The Nazis took away citizenship from all the Jews and Gypsies. I had to travel on a document that was a sheet of paper with “person of no nationality” written across the top. It had such a deep effect on me.

RUTH BARNETT, 78

I was only 4 when I came to England so I have snatches of memory. My dad was a judge in Berlin. He was summarily sacked when the Nazis came into power in 1933. He did get out and he went to Shanghai, which was awful because of the war between Japan and China.

Our mother came with us on the train because being a proper Aryan German, she could get a visa. So I experienced it as a family outing. I remember saying, “Are we nearly there? Are we nearly there?”

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Barnett’s father was Jewish but her mother was not. She arrived in February 1939 with her older brother Martin. Having worked as a psychotherapist, she speaks today in schools about the Holocaust and seeks to highlight the fate not only of Jews but also of the hundreds of thousands of non-Jewish children who perished in the Holocaust. (Continued on page 15)
B

the summer of 1942, the Allies had a plan to exterminate all Jews in countries occupied or controlled by Germany. But Washington didn’t believe Riegner. Labeling his cable as “utterly fantastic,” it suppressed the message.

Soon after the Riegner cable, Richard Lichtheim, a Zionist leader in Geneva, wrote a report that reached both London and Washington. He told world leaders that nearly three million Polish Jews had already been murdered, as well as a majority of all Jews living under Nazi rule. In 1942, the Allies and neutral nations welcomed the United Nations declaration “against the bestial policy of cold-blooded extermination.”

The international media jumped on the story. The death camp transports kept on rolling. Early in 1944, the international Jewish community confirmed the specific action. It was too late to save the Jews to the Allies, Karski delivered a powerful message to world leaders in London, New York and Washington, including British Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden and President Franklin Delano Roosevelt. He not only — as a descendent of the heart-wrenching atrocities he had witnessed; he also warned that trains continued to transport Jews to the death camps almost daily. Karski also delivered to the Allies a list of requests from Polish Jews. The first was to bomb German cities in reprisal for the continued murder of Jews, then to drop leaflets telling the Germans why the bombs were falling. The Allies rejected the request because it involved killing civilians.

Next, Polish Jews demanded that the Allies and neutral nations welcome the Jews who had managed to escape the Nazi net. For the most part, the world turned a deaf ear. As Anthony Eden put it: the best way for the Allies to help Jews was “to win the war.”

Polish Jews directed their next two requests to their government-in-exile. They demanded that the underground Home Army punish — as a descendent of the heart-wrenching atrocity — the Germans who had fasted, and instead of simply forswake all Jewish connections and pray…. The barrack was filled with an unbearable wailing. The women

In a daring escape, Sasha Pechersky saved hundreds of Jews from Hitler’s infamous death camp. But thousands had to die first, as the world watched and did nothing.

To demonstrate the punishment to be inflicted, with Yom Kippur as the deadline. The occupa-

tional fine on the local Jewish community authorities imposed an astronomical fine on the local Jewish community.

In his diary, Rabbi Shimon Huberband described his experiences in the Polish town of Piotrkow in the aftermath of the September 1939 German invasion. The occupa-

Allied soldiers.

ty, with Yom Kippur as the deadline. The occupa-

tion authorities imposed an astronomical fine on the local Jewish community.

As requested, Karski also reported to the Polish government-in-exile that the Warsaw ghetto was poised to rise up against the SS, the Gestapo and their foreign collaborators. The ghetto fighters desperately needed weapons. The Home Army eventually gave them twenty guns.

Finally, Polish Jews asked the Allies to ransom Jews from Berlin. The Allies rejected that request, arguing that if they did so, the ransom money would fund the killing of even more Allied soldiers.

Having rejected every recommendation, the Allies had only one option left — issue a strong condemnation of Hitler, the Nazis and the Final Solution. On December 17, 1942, the United States, Great Britain, France and the Soviet Union, among other nations, signed a strongly worded United Nations declaration “against the bestial policy of cold-blooded extermination.”

The international media jumped on the story. The death camp transports kept on rolling. Early in 1944, the international Jewish community confirmed the specific action. It was too late to save the Jews.
RETURN TO AUSCHWITZ: HOW ISRAEL KEEPS HOLOCAUST MEMORIES ALIVE

(Continued from page 3)

There are nights when Aud hears every one of those minutes measured out. Even when he manages a little fitful sleep he knows, without checking, exactly what time it is when he wakes up. It is a legacy of the camps. Maybe the superhuman watchfulness that helped you to stay alive, maybe a kind of anxiety that seems to linger on in those years of terror and never left. Either way it is there.

The cold seeped into his bones too. As the Germans retreated westwards from the advancing Russians in the bitter winter of 1944-45 they took the survivors from the camps with them. They wanted to stop them testifying to the Russians about what had happened in places like Auschwitz, of course, but they also intended to put the prisoners back to work at camps deeper inside German territory.

Aud can remember at one point collapsing into the snow and ice wearing only a thin shirt and pair of trousers and knowing that he would die if he stopped moving and surrendered to the numbing cold. He remembers wriggling desperately to stop his skin from freezing to the icy ground. When he's back in Poland, even in August, he finds himself wrapping up warm against the chill that only he feels — like the anxiety, the cold must have soaked into him and never left.

He goes back often. He's one of a group of survivors who accompany the many Israeli delegations — schoolchildren, civil servants and soldiers — who now visit the death camps every year.

Like a lot of other survivors, he feels a responsibility to keep the memory of the Holocaust alive. As time passes, their numbers are steadily thinning.

There are very few people alive who remember the German invasion of Poland in September 1939 as adults. Even to remember it as a child — to have been 10 years old, for example, remember the German invasion of Poland. How could he have been 10 years old? Aud himself, although he was only 11 years old, had managed to prove to the Germans that he was strong enough to work in a construction gang. The judgment that he was fit enough for slave labor as a child saved his life.

The Jews of Zdunska Wola were formed into a single long line and ordered to parade past a group of German soldiers. There was more casual brutality of course — they were kicked or punched or hit with rifle butts as they filed past. But this was not just another exercise in casual humiliation.

Every so often someone would be pulled from the line and ordered to stand to one side. Aud was among this group. His mother and younger brother were not. They walked on, away from him. He never saw either of them again.

Aud had been selected to join a slave labor gang in the camp at Auschwitz. His mother and brother were taken to Chelmno, a camp where the Nazis were making their first experiments in the mass murder of Jews deemed unfit for work.

His voice as he tells the story is steady but his eyes are distant. Every time he describes that day he is reliving it all, the sounds and smells of the field extraordinarily vivid.

He understands the value of telling his story — he sees it as a duty. But it doesn't get any easier with the passing of time.

Modern Israel sees in the Holocaust a clear message for the modern world — that the Jewish people are always safe if they have their own state, a state that has to be strong.

Holocaust survivors are honored — valued as firsthand witnesses to the great horror that is one of the defining events of modern history.

That wasn't always the way. The truth is, the legacy of the Nazi attempt to wipe out the Jews of Europe wasn't always seen with such clarity.

The new state of Israel absorbed the survivors of the camps — DPs, or displaced persons, in the jargon of the postwar era — but the process wasn't always easy or smooth.

The historian Tom Segev describes the difficulties in his book The Seventh Million - in particular the cultural and political gulf between Israelis who had migrated to the region as a political choice in the 1930s and those who came after 1945, in the chaos and devastation of the immediate postwar period. He explains it like this.

"In the first years after the Second World War in Israel the Holocaust was very little talked about — in effect it was a taboo. Parents didn't talk about it to their children and children wouldn't dare to ask. It was a period I describe as The Great Silence."

In part the sheer immensity of the Holocaust — the weight of the violence and depravity — made it incomprehensible to anyone who hadn't lived through it.

Segev argues that the Zionist pioneers who had come to the Middle East to build a new type of Jewish society couldn't understand why the European Jews who were murdered hadn't resisted Nazi rule.

Why, in the historian's words, had they "walked like sheep to the slaughter house"? The truth was of course that Hitler's Germany had perfected a brutal version of totalitarian rule in which effective resistance was almost impossible. But it may have been impossible to understand that too.

There was also a human dimension to that political gulf between the survivors and the rest of Israeli society.

Tom Segev explains it like this: "Even if you leave the ideology aside, how do you relate to someone who has that blue number on his arm? You open your door in the morning and you see the number."

If it's someone who has that blue number on his arm, what do you do? How do you live with such a person? Do you want them to tell you what happened to them?

The Seventh Million covers the story of the First Blow. A young Holocaust survivor made his way to Israel and described what had happened to him in his concentration camp, of how the commandant had beaten him senseless, landing 80 blows on his head and body. He found that his story was doubted, disbelieved.

Surely, it was reasoned, if he'd really been beaten so extensively he would be dead.

That skepticism, that downright disbelief, was the 81st blow.

A great deal has changed since then. Israel's national memorial center at Yad Vashem on the hills outside Jerusalem is a thriving center of research as well as a moving museum. The judgment that it is impossible to understand that too. But it may have been impossible to understand that too.

It is working to improve our historical understanding of what happened during the Holocaust and to improve the way the subject is taught. And in parallel with those tasks, the simplest and saddest job of all continues to this day — the job of recording the names of the individuals who died.

Yad Vashem's chairman Avner Shalev tells me that in the immediate postwar years only a few survivors' stories were published. Today more than 11,000 memoirs have been produced all over the world — more than half of them since the turn of the century.

The change in attitudes towards Holocaust survivors started in 1962, when Israeli agents found Adolf Eichmann living in Buenos Aires.

His trial began a kind of national catharsis, and the survivors' stories of suffering and barbarism began to be heard more widely.

Israel's founders had mentioned the Holocaust in their declaration of independence back in 1948, but it was the prosecution of Eichmann that placed the suffering of the survivors at the center of national life.

A lesson began to crystalize, not just about the need for Israel to be strong, but for the Jews of the world to recognize that they couldn't depend on anyone else to guarantee their safety.

Even during what Segev calls the Great Silence, some Israeli families had been piecing together fragments of evidence about the fate of those who died.

A few years ago the Israeli newspaper Yedioth Ahronoth published the
THE USES OF NAZI “DEGENERATE ART”

BY NEIL LEVI, THE CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

The recently disclosed discovery, in a Munich apartment, of about 1,400 works of 20th-century European art seized by the Nazis has brought to light the first hints of a morally and politically complex story. The works, displayed in a new and still not fully explored exhibition of modern art in a way that people were not — could not — about, say, the Weimar Republic, Communism or the Jews. Neile, story also adds that of modernist works, the Nazis seized did not appear in the notorious exhibition. Works by Picasso and Matisse were found in the Gurlitt apartment but not on the walls of “Degenerate Art.” In Munich visitors saw an exhibition predominantly concerned with displaying German artists: Nolde, Barlach, Kirchner, Dix, Grosz. The point of the exhibition was to present visitors with reflections of these works, who did own them, promote them or purchase them on behalf of German cultural institutions, were, of course, not so fortunate. That these works have been discovered in such fine condition is rightly a cause to celebrate. But their survival is also a significant fact. We deceive ourselves about both the power of modernist art and what it meant to the Nazis if we think, almost 75 years to the day after Kristalnacht, that in this recovered art we are seeing anything like the return of the dead, however dearly we might wish it were so.

Neil Levi is an associate professor of English at Drew University. He is the author of Modernist Form and the Myth of Jewification.
tune to join the Irgun in 1939 as "Repatration Commissioner." He was sent to Switzerland, where he became involved in aiding illegal immigration to Palestine and in rescuing Jews trapped in Nazi Europe. Hecht set up a close contact with US consul general Woods, who was one of the most successful intelligence gatherers of World War II. Hecht built a close contact with US intelligence in Switzerland, to bring them out to the Swiss Union, and a several-time politician, formerly the head of the Swiss Union, and a several-time politician, formerly the head of the Swiss Union, and a several-time politician, formerly the head of the Swiss Union, and a several-time politician, formerly the head of the Swiss Union, and a several-time politician, formerly the head of the Swiss Union, and a several-time politician, formerly the head of the Swiss Union, and a several-time politician, formerly the head of the Swiss Union, and a several-time politician, formerly the head of the Swiss Union, and a several-time politician, formerly the head of the Swiss Union, and a several-time politician, formerly the head of the Swiss Union, and a several-time politician, formerly the head of the Swiss Union, and a several-time politician, formerly the head of the Swiss Union, and a several-time politician, formerly the head of the Swiss Union, 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Hecht: When I lived in Zurich, later, I made my job there, for the New Zionist Organization and others, and Hatzalah, and Irgun propaganda, and then Sam Woods once told me: Why don't you work with the Sternbich group? Why are you not working with an organization which has other connections? The Jewish connection in America. And he invited Sternbich and me together in his office at the Consulate General.

The connection between Hecht and Woods was based on mutual needs.

Hecht: He gave a lot of information which he received from me directly to America, not through the channels of Dulles... because with Dulles — he knew that with Dulles it was for months and months without being forwarded... Dulles didn't even want it. Dulles was, I wouldn't say an antisemite, I don't know, but according to Woods, Dulles was not interested in the Jewish problem in Europe because he thought that this is a nuisance for the Allied war effort... Now there were three-Americans: McClelland, Dulles, who was an enemy, and Woods, who was the strongest, I could even say, practically the only helper through the official intelligence...

Reuben Hecht: I explained to him [Woods] Zionism, it was new to him, he became fascinated, and the realization that a person had to be blacker than black and place the mark of Cain on his forehead, but it is also possible to describe him as purer than the white snow and regard him as 'the righteous of our generation.' A man who exposed himself to mortal danger in order to save others.

Kastner has remained a controversial figure in Israel; to this day, no street has been named after him. His trial, however, was of great benefit to the state in that it brought to light wartime events that otherwise might never have been documented. Among them, the negotiations between Woods, Hecht, the Sternbuchs, the US government, the Irgun, Musy, and Heinrich Himmler.

THE MUSY CHANNEL

During the Kastner trial, on April 6, 1954, Hecht was interrogated as the seventeenth witness for the defense by advocate Tamir, who questioned him about his connection with Musy.

Shmuel Tamir: Did you work with a man by the name of Musy? Who was he?

Hecht: He was a Swiss Catholic politician, formerly the head of the Swiss Union, and a several-time member of the Swiss Government. He had very close connections with the Swiss parties, also with the Swiss Parliament. He knew Himmler many years before the War.

Tamir: Why did you choose him as your mediator between you and Himmler?

Hecht: In view of all our experiences, the Committee came to the realization that a person had to be obtained who could acquire Himmler’s confidence and needed not (Continued on page 11)
REPORT FROM YAD VASHEM

"TRACES OF LIFE"

Nazi ideology not only blamed the Jewish people for the world’s troubles, but also targeted every Jewish child for annihilation — the most extreme expression of genocide.

When the new permanent Jewish exhibition in Auschwitz-Birkenau was being devised, Yad Vashem approached world-acclaimed artist Michal Rovner to create a work for the space devoted to the 1.5 million Jewish children murdered during the Shoah.

Rovner decided not to build a tribute or memorial, nor to deal directly with aspects of the murder. “At Auschwitz-Birkenau, we are already in the territory of murder,” she explains. “Therefore, I wanted to create a space that will reflect the children themselves.”

For more than two years, Rovner studied the drawings and paintings made by children during the Holocaust. To this end, Yad Vashem created a special collection for her from its own archives as well as other sources worldwide — most notably, the Visual Arts Collection of the Jewish Museum in Prague.

“One day, I was sitting at Yad Vashem looking at children’s diaries and sketches from the Holocaust, and suddenly I felt how much power there can be in just a small detail in the margin of the page, I decided not to change, or appropriate the drawings. Those children’s families, homes, friends, belongings, landscapes and freedom had been taken away from them. Tragically, the vast majority of them left no sign behind them. Only very few were able to document the essential thing they were able to hold on to; their art. They expressed their drawings. Within a situation in which they had no choice, in front of a piece of paper they had a certain freedom to express themselves and the way they saw reality.

“One can almost feel the urgency of the situation in many of the drawings. They are reflections and details of the life they were forced to leave behind, and the new reality they encountered. These drawings are their legacy — and our inheritance.”

In order to study and orient herself with the vast amount of drawings and their elements, Rovner divided them into themes. She then assembled different fragments and small details, creating a composition that flows without telling a direct story.

Remaining true to her undertaking not to change or produce her own version of the drawings, Rovner decided to copy the fragments with a pencil, exactly as they are written, so that the walls of the room could draw on whatever they can — quite often, even on the walls surrounding them,” she comments. With just a pencil and copy paper, one by one, detail after detail, Rovner drew each line again on a scale of 1:1. The drawings,wire the children’s markings, are a powerful testimony given the记录 of the children’s Shoah.

Originally recordings of Jewish children during the Holocaust from that period, singing and playing, echo in the background, “appearing” and “disappearing.” An accompanying text, composed especially for the exhibit by renowned Israeli author David Grossman, completes this unique effort to give presence to the world of the Jewish children, forever shattered by the Holocaust.

“The visitor enters an empty space in which nothing is displayed, only the footnotes of children’s voices and some of their marks on the wall,” concludes Rovner.

The delicateness, the fragility of these drawings is further magnified by the stark reality of the camp, viewed through the bare windows. These drawings and voices, these “traces of life” are like hovering souls. They express a powerful testimony in just a few strokes of a pencil.

“FOR A FEW DAYS’ LEAVE”

MOTIVES FOR PARTICIPATING IN THE MURDER OF THE JEWS

BY DR. DAVID SILBERKLANG

Why did people make the decisions they made and act as they did during the Shoah? Asked about guarding deportation trains to Auschwitz-Birkenau, one German reserve policeman regretted that he had not had the opportunity to guard such a train, “since the guards were supposed to.” He had not had the opportunity to guard such a train, “since the guards were supposed to.” He had not had the opportunity to guard such a train, “since the guards were supposed to.”

Those children’s families, homes, friends, belongings, landscapes and freedom had been taken away from them. Tragically, the vast majority of them left no sign behind them. Only very few were able to document the essential thing they were able to hold on to; their art. They expressed their drawings. Within a situation in which they had no choice, in front of a piece of paper they had a certain freedom to express themselves and the way they saw reality.

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Three articles examine local attitudes and behavior toward Jews in Poland and France. Joanna Tokarska-Bakir’s anthropological analysis of the participants in the Kielce pogrom of 4 July 1946 shows how three competing varieties of anti-Semitism — traditional/religious, racist/nationalist and leftist — coalesced into widespread participation in the pogrom that cut across party lines. In his review of three recent books on rural Polish attitudes toward Jews during the Shoah, Samuel Kassow highlights the betrayal encountered by many Jews in the Polish countryside. Generally, the Poles who denounced Jews, turned them in or killed them in rural areas were respected, decent, hard-working men. Meanwhile, Sanford Gutman’s review of two books on aspects of daily life in Vichy France finds that professional, personal and material interests underpinned attitudes toward Jews. Thus, five articles point to mundane rather than ideological motives as the main factors that underlay the decisions of everyday citizens to participate in murder — or, alternatively, to abstain.

Alongside these examinations of ordinary citizens, three eminent historians analyze the motivations of governments and decision-makers in their policies toward Jews. Randolph Braham in his comparative analysis of six German-allied countries (Bulgaria, Croatia, Finland, Hungary, Romania and Slovakia); Jonathan Joly in his critical review of Alain Michel’s book on Vichy policies; and Omer Bartov in his analysis of Peter Longerich’s biography of Heinrich Himmler. A twisted notion of decency and cold governmental calculation stand out in these analyses. Himmler believed that the murder of the Jews was an expression of SS “decency.” Braham finds that the most important factor in each German-allied country’s policies toward Jews was the leaders’ changing perception of Germany’s fortunes in the war, which could either lead to genocidal murder or to its suspension. Joly argues that the Vichy regime was driven by a pursuit of national regeneration and collaboration in its criminal deportation of Jews who were not citizens.

All the above and other important articles reflect the broad scope developed in this journal by Livia Rothkine, its editor for 15 years, who passed away shortly before this issue of Yad Vashem Studies was completed. Livia played a major role in developing Yad Vashem Studies into a leading international journal, and 41:1 is a fitting tribute to Livia Rothkine’s legacy.
ONE OF THE MOST REMARKABLE BOOKS ABOUT THE HOLOCAUST WAS JUST PUBLISHED

(Continued from page 4)

Independent State of Croatia was established in April 1941, its population included about 39,000 Jews. Of those, 6,000 survived the war, and 31,000 were killed; 24,000 were killed on the territory of Croatia and Bosnia, mainly by the Ustasha; 6,000 were deported to Auschwitz and other death camps in Poland — they were arrested by the Ustasha and deported by the German SS. *

The persecution of Jews, in Goldstein's description, was in stark contrast with the generally peaceful and well-assimilated life of the Jewish community in Croatia. When I asked him if, growing up in the 1930s, he felt that he was a Croat or a Jew, he replied, "My feeling was that I was a Jew — but integrated into the life of Croatia. Karlovac, where I grew up, was a town of 25,000 inhabitants and there were something like 300 Jews. We had Hebrew lessons — I still remember some Hebrew from those three years of lessons. My father was a young Zionist in his student days; he wasn't Orthodox or even religious, but he took me to the synagogue four or five times during the year. We were Jews very openly, without any complexities."***

U sing evidence that only became available much later, Goldstein traces his father's likely fate, as he was moved from jail to jail, and finally to Jadovno, where 3,000 prisoners were executed en masse in the summer of 1941 who remain, in Goldstein's probable: a police chief named Milan Stilinovic. Stilinovic released Goldstein's mother from jail along with a number of other prisoners, sparing them from certain death at the hands of the Ustasha. He arranged for her to get a travel pass to enter the Italian zone of occupation, from there she was able to join the Partisans, along with her two sons. After the war, this brave action was counted in Stilinovic's favor, and he was spared the death penalty meted out to many collaborators. Yet at the same time, Goldstein writes, "during his mandate more than one hundred people had been sent to Jasenovac," the main Croatian death camp. "Why then did he not resign?" Goldstein asked. "Or at least feign illness and seek a transfer?" The answer, like so many answers in this story, remains out of reach. ***

S tillinovic's hesitation to fully embrace the Ustasha's regime of terror was understandable, Goldstein shows, by many Croats. Terror was necessary, the Ustasha believed, because Croatia was far from the ethnic homogeneous state of their dreams. The main problem was not the small Jewish community, which numbered a mere 40,000, but the enormous number of Serbs — 1.8 million of them, nearly a third of the state's whole population. To achieve a pure Croatia, the Ustasha would have to murder or drive out almost 2 million people.

Their attempts to do this led to disaster, not just for the victims, but for their own regime. In 1941, Goldstein describes how the Ustasha turned even Croat public opinion against military life as feeling "natural." Today, Goldstein speaks proudly of the role the Partisans played in rescuing the Jews of Yugoslavia. "Of the 8,500 Jews who survived, 5,000 sur-

(Continued on page 13)

DEAL WITH THE DEVIL

(Continued from page 9) to fear retribution. **

Tamir: What were the intentions of Musy, who was not a member of the Committee and was not a Jew? What were his intentions and his aims in this matter?

Hecht: It was impossible to find any Christian or Jewish person who was ready to intervene for the benefit of the Jews before the National-Socialists entered the country. There was to be a man who would intervene, who could influence, who would take upon himself the risk of life of the many journeys connected with the matter.

Tamir: What did you understand about his aims? Why was he interested to do this?

Hecht: Musy was considered, towards the end of the War, as a very conservative politician, reactionary and Catholic. He was also a strong opponent of Communism in Europe. Therefore, we were convinced that he is the suitable man who could be received by Himmler and gain his confidence.

Musy first met with the Streibuchs in October of 1944 and wrote to Himmler at that time, requesting a meeting. Two weeks later Himmler agreed and the November 3 meeting on the train to Vienna was set.

Himmler and what was discussed.

Hecht: Musy's activity was entirely political — the intention was to explain to those German circles, who otherwise understood, that the War was lost, that the persecutions of the Jews created a terrible impression abroad, and to tell this to Himmler to his face. In November, to make this clear to him that the catastrophic impression would be a bit less catastrophic if at least now the remaining 600,000–800,000 Jews would be released, who, according to the famous (earlier) order of Himmler were to be destroyed as well.

In order to enable the Musy- Himmler agreement, Musy attempted to arrange the transfer of medical materials to the Reich at the request of Himmler during the second meeting on January 15, 1945, at Wildbad in the Black Forest. The Nazis were in need of medicine, trucks and other material. Two days later, Himmler demanded from Musy five million Swiss francs' worth of medicine and relief supplies in exchange for freeing and delivering trainloads of Jewish concentration camp prisoners, promising the release of 1,200 to 1,800 Jewish prisoners every one to two weeks from Germany through Switzerland to final safe destinations.

Reuben Hecht was questioned by advocate Tamir about this agreement and the Winter trial.

Tamir: The negotiations between you and Himmler included the cessation of the annihilation in the camp? Did it contain anything about this? What were the trains which would leave for Switzerland?*  

Hecht: The beginning of the negotiations was to release all the Jews of the camps through Swiss passage to overseas, in trains of every week or two with 1,200 to 1,800 persons per train. Musy and the Sternbuchs attempted to acquire the materials from emis-

Reuben Hecht.

Hecht: When Musy informed Himmler that he wanted to talk with him on an important matter, he received within 14 days a message that Himmler would receive him. That was proof for his really having the right approach to Himmler. Tamir again asked Hecht what Musy hoped to achieve in his talks with Himmler and what was discussed.

Hecht: Musy's activity was entirely political — the intention was to explain to those German circles, who otherwise understood, that the War was lost, that the persecutions of the Jews created a terrible impression abroad, and to tell this to Himmler to his face. In November, to make this clear to him that the catastrophic impression would be a bit less catastrophic if at least now the remaining 600,000–800,000 Jews would be released, who, according to the famous (earlier) order of Himmler were to be destroyed as well.

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(Continued on page 12)

(Continued from page 12)
Musy claimed that he would effect the release of Jewish deportees by the Jewish circles in question, to November of 1944. Musy had volunteered 'old friend' Heinrich Himmler early in 1945. Musy undertook the first of a series of negotiations with Himmler during the spring of 1945, because of his interest in the treatment of Jews by the SS in the West. Musy had told us, should, after the release of all the Jews, be at the disposal of the International Red Cross for assistance to the Americans.

In exchange for the release, the United States was to provide surely in the form of cash held in escrow and a promise that, in exchange for not destroying the camps as Hitler commanded, Himmler would be guaranteed by the American army that the camp guards would receive treatment like the Wehrmacht soldiers, be regarded as war prisoners, and not be shot on the spot but rather brought before a military court. A promise came from the Americans that they would abide by this request under two conditions.

The first condition was that the camp guards wear American uniforms. The second, that it should be understood, in spite of this agreement, that each one personally would be responsible for war crimes. Meaning, that he would not be shot on the spot, but put before a court, and if it could be proved that he had killed people, he would be punished. We have proof that such an agreement was made.

**A FIRST “RESCUE TRAIN” BUT NO SECOND**

Negotiations with the United States continued through the war's end. The Americans assured the Swiss government that refugees admitted to Swiss territory would be promptly evacuated to Allied territories overseas and that the cost of their upkeep and transport would be paid by the US.

Confirmation of the deal with Himmler is evident in the United States diplomatic correspondence, dated March 23, 1945, of Foreign Service Officer Roswell D. McClelland, on the subject: 'Musy's negotiations with Himmler past few months with a view to obtaining a liberation of Jewish deportees.'

In it McClelland writes: "As briefly as possible this is the story of Musy's efforts to secure the release from Germany of Jewish deportees. Acting on behalf of an orthodox Jewish organization with headquarters in the United States, Musy undertook the first of a series of trips to Berlin to confer with his 'old friend' Heinrich Himmler early in November of 1944. Musy had volunteered, after having been approached by the Jewish circles in question, to use his influence with Himmler to effect the release of Jewish deportees still remaining in German hands. Musy claimed that he would accomplish this with 'political arguments,' along the lines of pointing out to Himmler that it was in Germany's interest (and in the Nazis' interest) to make some humanitarian gesture at this point in the war which could only react favorably on the treatment of Jews in the Soviet Union."

McClelland did not trust Musy and suspected that he was motivated by personal political and monetary gain, charging that he was a Nazi sympathizer and "a very dangerous individual." McClelland was no friend of the Zionists. His role in the entire episode was of interest to Professor Penkover when he interviewed Hecht on January 7–8, 1942. Hecht affirmed that McClelland had stalled efforts to bomb the railways leading to Auschwitz.

**Hecht:** It was one of the ideas of the Committee... that to bombard the railway crosspoints and the stations before Auschwitz and the crematoria could have saved hundreds of thousands of Jews. Because till they would repair it, especially if several refusal to liberate Jews, demanding the continued evacuation of all concentration camp prisoners; thus, the killing of the half-million prisoners left in the concentration camps primarily by means of “death marches” in the spring of 1945. Hecht requested an immediate meeting with Hitler himself, but this was denied. In light of Hitler's order, Musy and the Sternbuch Committee focused their efforts on getting Himmler to give an order that the camps were to surrender to the Allied Forces intact. Pressure from Musy caused Himmler to rescind Hitler's evacuation order. Himmler wielded immense power which almost rivaled Hitler's. Himmler was chief of German police. He united the Gestapo and Criminal Police, thereby effectively removing police personnel, finances, actions and operations from external judicial or administrative review and consolidating all power. He had the power to plan, initiate and control the pace of German resettlement by means of “death marches” in the spring of 1945.

In March 1942, the Jews of the Lublin Province of Poland are deported to the Belzec death camp. In March 12, 1945, promising to hand over the camps, intact, to the Allies, thereby countermanding the orders of Hitler. Himmler was exploring every available avenue of survival. He appeared to himself: having done work, releasing Jews would result in good press. Advocate Tamir, questioning Hecht during the Kastner trial, asked how the Swiss press had reacted to the Prime Minister's announcement. Hecht confirmed that he did. Hecht: This began by there being a joint journalists' conference with the Prime Minister, in which an official announcement to the press was laid down, which was given on behalf of the Swiss Prime Minister and the President of the Swiss Confederation, Eduard Von Steiger.) The prime minister was in different ways. The part of the press that had explanations from us showed understanding for the entire problem.

Tamar: And the remaining press? Hecht: There were newspapers who brought negative and untrue information, like, for instance, that the action, so to speak, was done in order to bring a number of leading Nazis under American protection, or that for this action much money had been paid, and these reports harmed us very much.

Hecht found himself with the understanding of going to the president of the Swiss Confederation, Von Steiger, and to Socialist journalists who were opposed to writing positive things about the Kastner operation, and explaining the Zionist position. He detailed this experience in his interview with the prime minister.

Hecht: I had to explain to them that, in order not to destroy the rest of the Jews, but to save them, we are ready to fight with the Allies, our request to make bombardment on the rails, we are ready, also in a certain way, to fulfill their demand — after it, everybody is free to say that this was blackmail. So I went to the Socialists. It was the most difficult thing, a Socialist newspaper — and explained to them, you don't want to praise Himmler, so at least that story of the railways behaved very well by bringing these people not like cattle, to Auschwitz, but in normal, human railway trains without overfilling, in a normal way, in a decent way, and without payment, which they did. Now I found a kind of half-dumping in the end and half-not-fullfilling the demand.

But we had a lot of enemies who chose to the Germans, said to Himmler: Look, the Jews, even this they don't fulfill. Even here they didn't praise us. And here, Musy had to recount, and he was able to do it. And we said: After the war, after it's finished, you can tell the truth — it was blackmail. Now the trains were so important, not only because they saved a lot of hundreds of Jewish lives, but mainly it proved it would be able to bring hundreds or tens of thousands of Jews out of Germany, and here the Jewish organizations failed completely. They started to discuss, we want to pay them not money, or we don't want to give them trucks. Sternbuch was ready, all of us, when McClelland and the Americans said: You are not allowed to give the Germans medical supplies and "trucks for Jews," otherwise you'll get on the Black List. We said: Okay, we are getting on the Black List. In order to save Jews, we are ready to give them trucks.

(To be continued in the next issue)
RETURN TO AUSCHWITZ:
HOW ISRAEL KEEPS HOLOCAUST MEMORIES ALIVE

(Continued from page 7)

extraordinary story of a photograph which hung on the wall of the office of Meir Dagan, who rose to become head of Mossad, Israel’s external intelligence agency.

It is a slightly battered black-and-white print showing a scene from 1942 in the village of Lukow in central Poland. An older Jewish man is kneeling on the floor surrounded by German soldiers.

It is Meir Dagan’s grandfather, who is known to have been murdered a short time later.

The picture came to light when Dagan’s father returned to his home village after the war, to look for Jewish survivors.

They asked a local Polish man to take some photographs. When he handed over the film roll and they eventually had it processed, they discovered at its start the picture of the Germans surrounding the helpless old man. The photographer must have been taken photographing for the newly arrived Nazis too.

But in the ability of people like Asher Goldstein to somehow come through it. When the service is over, some of the Israeli soldiers light candles and place them on the railway tracks that brought so many of the Jews of central Europe to their deaths all those years ago.

The photograph is appalling, but it’s historically interesting too. The young Germans are not Aryan supernmen but ordinary soldiers called up into their reserve infantry battalions for service in Poland.

It’s worth examining the soldiers’ attitudes — they do not look to me like men who feel they’ve been caught doing something reprehensible. They look like men posing for a photograph which they intend to display on the mantelpiece in years to come.

Meir Dagan rose to become one of the most powerful men in Israel, and throughout his career he had the photograph of his grandfather and the Germans on the office wall.

The lesson he reads into it is simple: “We have,” he tells me, “no choice but to rely on ourselves... and there’s a hard moral lesson from the Holocaust that anyone could become a murderer. The killings weren’t carried out by fanatics but by what might be called normal men.”

Outsiders may ask if there isn’t a downside to the way in which Israel draws a lesson about the need for eternal vigilance from a story of such unremitting darkness — but it’s not a point of view you hear very much in Israel.

Meir Dagan drew that clear connection between the vulnerability of the Jews in German-occupied Poland in the 1940s and the defense of the modern Israeli state.

He is not alone in that. When the current prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu talks about Israel’s deterrence to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons, he couches it in terms of a determination that there will never be another Holocaust.

Behind every story of survival in the Holocaust lies a miracle of good luck — something to make you reflect on the randomness and fragility of all of our lives.

If you were taken to a camp like Auschwitz in late 1944, for example — just a few months before it was liberated by the Red Army — you stood a much better chance of surviving than the families who came on the transports in 1942.

The real story of the Holocaust, of course, is the story of those who did not survive.

In Kielce on the Israeli delegation’s long coach journey through Poland from Warsaw to Auschwitz I spend some time with Brigadier General Royi Elcbets, its commander.

He speaks with huge passion about the overall political lesson of such visits — Israel’s needs a personal moral he draws himself about the special need for Jewish families to invest in their children and in the future.

His grandmother came from Kielce. As darkness began to fall across Europe in the 1930s, she fled to France and endured a desperate and dangerous war that would make a compelling story in itself.

Of her large extended family that stayed behind in rural Poland, not a trace remains.

All we know for sure is that they vanished into the flames of the Holocaust. They were probably taken to Auschwitz because it was the closest of the camps.

General Elcbets sees himself as a kind of bridge between the past and the future.

His grandmother died in the 1990s, but she passed on her knowledge of the relatives who died to him, and he in turn teaches his children. At the right time is right, he will bring them to Poland.

“Obviously I will come with them — I think they’re waiting for it,” he tells me. “I think it is very important for the next generation to have the memory and the knowledge of the Holocaust and its implications. I will transfer the knowledge. It’s my duty as a father.”

General Elcbets isn’t alone in these sentiments.

In 2009, the Israeli Institute for Democracy conducted an opinion poll asking Israeli Jews if they agreed with a number of general propositions about the Jewish state.

The need to remember the Holocaust came first, with a score of 96%.

Towards the end of their day in Auschwitz, the Israeli officers conduct a service rich in patriotic symbolism. The Star of David is raised and the national anthem “HaTikvah” is sung.

But as the last of the pale grey light recedes from the cloudy skies, I find the moments before and after the official service most compelling.

They began to gather for the ceremony, one of the Israeli guides takes out her smartphone and plays a recording of an old Jewish song — “Mein Sheettle Belz” — in the dwindling light.

It has been heard here before. In 1944, an SS officer overheard a 16-year-old Jewish orphan called Samuel Gogol playing it — and then forced him to play it again as families were herded along the last short walk to the gas chamber. It was apparently thought to make it easier to handle the crowds.

Here in the heart of darkness, to listen in the same place where it was played 70 years ago, is to listen to an echo of history.

When the service is over, some of the Israeli soldiers light candles and place them on the railway tracks that brought so many of the Jews of central Europe to their deaths all those years ago.

With the forbidding arches of the old Auschwitz railway building in the background, it is, everyone agrees, an “iconic” image. Almost everyone passes to photograph it. It strikes me that there is something more in the moment too.

The tiny flickering lights stretching down the railway lines into the dark distance remind me of the way men and women suffered here and have somehow come through it.

Auschwitz is, of course, a warning from history.

But in the ability of people like Asher Goldstein and Yechiel Leaksander to endure, to survive and to remember, it is an inspiration for the future too.

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But in the ability of people like Asher Goldstein and Yechiel Leaksander to endure, to survive and to remember, it is an inspiration for the future too.
January 27 is also the date on which Auschwitz was liberated 69 years ago. "The noble acts of courage performed by liberators, rescuers, and the Righteous Among Nations remind us that we are never powerless," Obama said. "In our lives, we always have choices. In our time, this means choosing to confront bigotry and hatred in all of its forms, especially anti-Semitism.

Obama also said people should condemn "any attempts to deny the occurrence of the Holocaust," and do "our part to ensure that survivors receive some measure of justice and the support they need to live out their lives in dignity."

On this International Holocaust Remembrance Day, Michelle and I join the American people and our friends in the State of Israel and around the world as we reaffirm our obligation not just to bear witness, but to act. "May God bless the memory of the millions, and may God grant us the strength and courage to make real our solemn vow: Never forget. Never again."

** Israel — Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on January 27 berated the international community for showing indifference to the threat posed by Iran, comparing Tehran to the Nazi regime and implying that the world was not fulfilling its obligation to prevent a second Jewish Holocaust. "Even today when there is broad agreement that the Holocaust took place should have been prevented, the world doesn't feel any sense of urgency regarding a regime that calls for our annihilation, and even welcomes with open arms the man who represents it," Netanyahu said, referring to Iranian President Hassan Rouhani. "They all just ignore their throats and greet [his] smiles with smiles of their own," he said in comments released to the press for International Holocaust Remembrance Day.

Netanyahu added that Israel received "disproportionate" treatment, which "shows us that persecution of the Jews perpetuates 2,000 years of anti-Semitism."

A statement issued by the office of President Shimon Peres struck a decidedly different note, calling on global citizenry to "not be satisfied by condemning the Holocaust but rather join our hearts and hands to ensure that we live in a world where another Holocaust is impossible."

"The Holocaust is a great warning to us all," the president wrote. "Forgetfulness is a menace; we must remember and remember to love and respect everyone no matter the color of their skin or the origin of their birth. Moses taught us that every human being was made in the image of the Lord; no one has the right to take that away. We have a duty to remember the past but also to improve the future; this is not just a memorial day but a call to us all to move ahead, never forgetting the past but never losing hope in the future."

Earlier in the day, opposition leader Isaac Herzog spoke at the Auschwitz-Birkenau death camp in southern Poland and vowed that Israel would continue to fight against racism and its consequences.

Speaking to a group that included nearly half of Israel's parliament, marking the 69th anniversary of the liberation of the concentration camp, Herzog said it was the Jewish state's mission to "join the American people and our friends to the press for International Holocaust Remembrance Day. From left: Jonny Daniels, coalition chairman MK Yariv Levin, singer Andrea Bocelli, opposition leader Isaac Herzog, and Immigrant Absorption Minister Sofa Landver.

Ceremonies were accompanied by two exhibitions at UN Headquarters under the theme "Remembrance Week: Journeys through the Holocaust," marking the 70th anniversary of the deporta-

** USA — President Obama urged the nation and world to remember the vic-

** Germany — Ceremonies were held in Germany and Poland to commemorate victims of the Third Reich, with a survivor of the Nazi siege of Leningrad telling the German Parliament of the horrors that unfold-

** Russia — Russian President Vladimir Putin marked the day by visiting the St. Petersburg Piskaryovskoye Memorial Cemetery, which contains a mass grave for about a half million victims of the siege, including one of Putin's brothers. "It is our duty to remember the resi-

** Israel — Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on January 27 berated the international community for showing indifference to the threat posed by Iran, comparing Tehran to the Nazi regime and implying that the world was not fulfilling its obligation to prevent a second Jewish Holocaust. "Even today when there is broad agreement that the Holocaust took place should have been prevented, the world doesn't feel any sense of urgency regarding a regime that calls for our annihilation, and even welcomes with open arms the man who represents it," Netanyahu said, referring to Iranian President Hassan Rouhani. "They all just ignore their throats and greet [his] smiles with smiles of their own," he said in comments released to the press for International Holocaust Remembrance Day.
INTERNATIONAL HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE DAY COMMEMORATED AROUND THE WORLD

(Continued from page 14)

As a reminder of today's small, but active, far-right movements in Germany and other European nations, several posters denouncing the Holocaust were found in a town in the northern state of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, police said. The posters, with the words "International Day of the 6-million Lie," were found on the walls of several government buildings in the town of Grevesmühlen. Denying the Holocaust is illegal in Germany.

** Hungary — Hungarians collaborated with Nazis in some cases, and killed millions of Jews with their hands. In a rare public acknowledgment of a wartime past that Jewish groups say is often glossed over, in a statement prepared for Holocaust Memorial Day, President János Áder said that if the war had gone according to the plans of Adolf Hitler and his Hungarian Fascist allies, Jews would have been exterminated completely from Hungary. "Auschwitz may be hundreds of kilometers from Hungary but it is part of Hungarian history," Áder wrote. "This death camp was the scene of the inhumane suffering, humiliation and death of nearly half a million of our compatriots."

Jewish groups have criticized the center-right government of Prime Minister Viktor Orbán for what they see as its lackluster attempt to fight anti-Semitism. Minister Viktor Orbán for what they saw as its lackluster attempt to fight anti-Semitism. Orbán's predecessor, Ferenc Gyurcsány, as well as by professors, students and foreign lecturers from Israel, Croatia and Bosnia and Herzigovina.

** Serbia — Crimes committed against Serbs, Jews and Roma in World War II must not be forgotten, and the Holocaust must be remembered in order to prevent such mass exterminations from happening ever again, an international conference on the Holocaust said on January 27.

The conference, titled "The Holocaust against the Serbs, Jews and Roma in World War II," was held at the Faculty of Business Studies and Law in Belgrade to mark International Holocaust Remembrance Day.

Organizational Committee President Zivota Radosavljevic said that the objective of the conference is to encourage establishment of new scientific facts about the victims of World War II, primarily Serbs, Jews and Roma.

The message that a crime like the Holocaust must never happen again needs to lead to decisive future generations, which will also be a contribution to reconciliation in the former Yugoslavia, he said.

Historical materials on the Holocaust in Serbia are not given enough attention, and one of the objectives of the conference is to establish a database of protagonists whose testimonies can contribute to shedding light on this complex matter, Radosavljevic said.

"Ultimately, the conference proceedings will be made, and we plan to commemorate the victims on this day every year, with a view to focusing primarily on Staro Sajmiste," Radosavljevic said.

"Staro Sajmiste was a Nazi concentration camp in Belgrade. The conference was attended by around 70 participants, representatives of governments and non-governmental organizations and ethnic minorities, as well as by professors, students and foreign lecturers from Israel, Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

** THE SAVIOR OF SOBIBOR

(Continued from page 6)

Although the Allies exerted pressure on Pope Pius XII to cosign the U.N. declaration, he chose not to. Jewish and world leaders privately asked him to excommuniate Hitler, but he declined to do so. And when they pleaded with him to condemn Hitler and the Nazis by name, he spoke eloquently about the dignity of man, freedom of religion and the sanctity of life.

(Continued from page 5)

Eve Willman, 80: "I became one of my aunt and uncle's children. My cousin became my brother and sister." I went to the first foster home — a Unitarian minister and his wife. They didn't have any children. I remember that she was very strict and precise. After a year they couldn't keep me anymore and so I went to the next foster home ... to an extremely nice family. But one of my uncles who had been a rabbi was most concerned that I didn't have any Jewish instruction. And so I went to another family. It was not such a nice family.

My uncle and aunt were then established in West Hartlepool. I went there for a holiday. It was such a wonderful turning point in my life somehow. My aunt said, "When you come back, you will be with us forever." I was 11. I became one of their children. My cousins became my brother and sister.

My father survived the war. My mother was able to work and she worked in a factory, and the factory was bombed. She was killed just before the end of the war so I never saw her again.

It was really a wonderful thing that the government did to let 10,000 children in who probably would have lost their lives. But it's happening again. It isn't happening to Jews, but look at the children in Syria.

Willman, an only child, arrived from Vienna in April 1939. She later obtained a PhD in biochemistry and worked as a researcher and biology teacher. She lives in London and has never married.
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