The 60th Anniversary of Yad Vashem Tribute Dinner held on November 16th was a very memorable evening. We were honored to present Mr. Sigmund Rolat with the Yad Vashem Remembrance Award. Mr. Rolat is a survivor who has dedicated his life to supporting Yad Vashem and to restoring the place of Polish Jewry in world history. He was instrumental in establishing the newly opened Museum of the History of Polish Jews in Warsaw.

SIGMUND A. ROLAT:
“YAD VASHEM ENSHRINES THE MILLIONS THAT WERE LOST”

Beyond my gratitude for being recognized here tonight, there is a deeper gratefulness to Yad Vashem for its tireless effort to resist forgetfulness and perpetuate memory. For that is exactly what my older brother Jerzyk told me in November 1943 when I was hiding in an attic after the big ghetto in Czestochowa was liquidated. Jerzyk was leaving with five other young friends to fight the Germans — he was the youngest, he was 18 years old. As he embraced me one last time, he told me to remember all I saw — MUSISZ ZAPAMIETAC! — Zakhor. Those were the last words I heard him say. I remembered those words and they guided me throughout my life, but especially in the last few years. And just last month in a moving and glittering ceremony in Warsaw, the president of Poland and the president of Israel helped us open the Museum of the History of Polish Jews, where our rich 1,000-year history is painstakingly and beautifully showcased and preserved for future generations. But nowhere are my brother’s last words to me more evident than in my dedication to and support of Yad Vashem.
The debate about what to do about the Claims Conference once the last of the survivors dies is not new. Established in 1951 to secure compensation and remembrance from Germany, the Claims Conference has negotiated successfully for an estimated $70 billion for survivors and survivor needs over the course of its existence.

Most of that money has come directly from Germany in the form of pensions and compensation payments, with the Claims Conference acting only as the processor of payments and verifier of claims. As each survivor dies, these payments cease.

The Claims Conference also has a bucket of discretionary funding: billions generated from the sale of heirless Jewish property from the former East Germany. But that bucket, according to a new demographic analysis, is gone, this is the right thing to do. "Time is running out," he said in a telephone interview from Jerusalem. "Something has to be done."

"The hope is that as many as possible will be alive, but there's no guarantee, obviously," he said. "But every person alive today is a victory for justice and righteousness."

"It is the hope that as many as possible will be alive, but there's no guarantee," Zuroff said. "But every person alive today is a victory for justice and righteousness."

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"It is the hope that as many as possible will be alive, but there's no guarantee," Zuroff said. "But every person alive today is a victory for justice and righteousness."
THE HOLOCAUST’S FOREMOST UNSUNG HERO

Moshe Kraus was behind one of the largest rescue operations of the Holocaust. Using his wit, initiative, and unparalleled courage, Kraus saved between 40,000 and 100,000 of Budapest’s Jews. So why has no one ever heard of him?

BY EMILY AMROUSI, ISRAEL HAYOM

In 1986, a 78-year-old man named Moshe Kraus died in Jerusalem. You probably don’t recognize the name. He was never commemorated in any way. He is not mentioned in any Holocaust encyclopedias. But Moshe Kraus is responsible for the largest rescue operation during the Holocaust, on a huge scale. An industrialist Oskar Schindler, with his resourcefulness and courage, managed to save 1,200 Jews; Kraus saved tens of thousands.

Historians are divided on the exact number, but the most conservative estimate talks about at least 40,000 people, and some estimates are even as high as 100,000 Jews who escaped the Nazis in Hungary thanks to this daring man.

The year is 1944. The Nazis are stepping up the pace and sending more and more Jews to their deaths in the gas chambers at Auschwitz, the extermination of Hungary’s Jews. A spacious glass factory located at 29 Vadasy Street in Budapest is granted extraterritorial status under the auspices of Switzerland. Some 3,000 Jews barricade themselves inside this building, dubbed the Glass House, for three months.

More and more homes in Budapest are turned into Swiss “safe houses,” barring entry to Germans and the local complicit Hungarian authorities, and housing thousands of Jews. The Swiss embassy grants 40,000 Jewish certificates recognizing them as foreign Swiss nationals. Tens of thousands of additional documents are forged which are used to allow Jews to leave Germany. A photo taken by an unknown photographer during that time depicts masses of people crowding out of the building’s doors holding out their arms. Not only Christians saved Jews during the Holocaust; Jews also managed to save thousands.

The story of the Glass House survivors is one of the most inspiring heroical events of that era. Much like the man behind the operation, Kraus, this event has somehow evaded public attention and was largely overlooked until public recognition it deserved.

A MATHEMATICAL TRICK

For Hungary’s Jews, the Holocaust started long after Europe’s skies became saturated with smoke from crematoriums. Some 20,000 Jews who fled the Nazis in occupied countries sought refuge in Budapest, which was considered safe. But in March 1944, after the German invasion of Hungary, the Nazis began deporting Jews from outlying Hungarian towns to extermination camps in Poland. Within the span of eight weeks, about half a million Jews from the Hungarian periphery were sent to their deaths, at a pace of about 12,000 per day. Entire communities were wiped out, one after another.

In April 1944, two Slovakian Jewish prisoners managed to escape from Auschwitz. Rudolf Vrba and Alfred Wetzler met with the head of the Slovak Jewish Council, Oscar Krasniansky, and gave him very detailed accounts of what was happening at the death camp. Krasniansky translated their account and compiled a 32-page report (the “Auschwitz Protocol”) providing, for the first time, accurate and detailed information on the methods and dimensions of the Nazi extermination machines. Kraus read the report and decided that at that point 1.75 million people had been killed at Auschwitz, and that the camp was preparing for the arrival of 500,000 Hungarian Jews, slated to be killed.

By the end of May that year, Moshe (Miklush) Kraus had gotten his hands on Vrba and Wetzler’s report. Kraus was one of the heads of the Zionist movement in Hungary and he direct the Palestine Office in Budapest. He added his own report to the Auschwitz Protocols detailing the transport and extermination of the Jews in the large Hungarian towns. The report named every individual from every city and district. He then did everything in his power to disseminate the two reports.

These documents made their way to the regent of the Kingdom of Hungary, Miklos Horthy, and to all the important political figures in Hungary. An international news agency picked up the story and distributed it, and the reports created quite a stir in Switzerland. Swiss public opinion applied enormous pressure on Horthy. The pope, U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill and Swedish King Gustaf V all sent letters of protest to Budapest. Roosevelt’s letter to Horthy included a military threat. As a result, Horthy put a stop to the deportation of Jews.

Between July and October of that year, before Horthy was deposed and the Arrow Cross Party rose to power, Kraus, together with other Palestine Office workers, approached Swiss diplomat Carl Lutz, who was stationed in Budapest as vice-consul and head of the office that represented British interests. Lutz was sympathetic to the Jews, having served in the Swiss consulate in Jaffa. He and Kraus had the idea to turn the 1,500 individual certificates into family certificates, including the families of 1,500 Jews in these protective documents — 7,800 people in all.

A month and a half after the Nazi occupation, when ghettos were at their peak and the extermination camps were at their height, Kraus and Lutz, with the help of anti-Nazi Hungarian foreign office workers, bought up yet another manipulation: They turned the 7,800 certificates back into individual documents, applying them to families as well, allowing them to save about 40,000 people, all of whom now possessed immigration documents issued by Switzerland. The International Red Cross, Britain and Switzerland recognized the 40,000 documents. The Nazis officially recognized only 7,800, but Kraus continued his efforts to get Nazi recognition for the full 40,000.

“The wait (for a reply) was long, and we didn’t know the reason,” Kraus wrote in an article, “until we found out something very strange: Someone had informed the German legation that the 7,800 documents applied to individuals, not families. That someone was one of us — Dr. Kastner.”

Lutz gave the certificate holders protective passes, simply referred to as “Swiss Passes” — which identified the bearers as Swedish subjects awaiting repatriation and thus prevented their deportation. The documents issued by the Swiss Legation in Budapest stated that the Swiss embassy’s department of foreign interests confirmed that so and so appears in a collective Swiss passport, and should be treated as having a valid passport. The collective passport included tens of thousands of names. In order to disguise the fraud, Lutz numbered the individuals in question between 1 and 7,800 — the number that had already been approved by the local authorities.

Five hundred Glass House employees who handled these documents were made into Swiss embassy employees, enjoying all the consular benefits. They were exempt from wearing the yellow star, and some of them were allowed to use the embassy vehicles and the consular telephone as part of their “consular” work. They were also allowed to carry the Swiss flag, driven by a Swiss driver.

The Swiss consulate in Budapest was too small to take on such an enormous operation. Arthur Weiss, the Jewish owner of the Glass House, gave Kraus keys to his enormous factory, and Lutz issued Swiss diplomatic immunity to the building. A Swiss flag was hung at the entrance. Brazenly, Weiss announced three times a day that individuals holding Swiss documents are exempt from reporting for duty and can move freely during all hours of the day (Jews were forbidden from exiting their houses for more than two hours each day).

Thousands of Hungarian Jews clamor to the Glass House in search of Swiss papers, including Kraus already slated to cross the border into Germany. A photo taken by an unknown photographer during that time depicts masses of people crowding the building’s doors holding out their arms.

As Kraus stepped up their rescue efforts. Beyond the 40,000 certificates, now tens of thousands are issued forged documents, printed by the local press at Budapest. Literature can be found everywhere — on paper stolen from the same printing house that printed the valid documents for the Swiss. The documents provide entry, and should be treated as valid (Continued on page 12)
JEWISH PARTISANS OF THE SOVIET UNION DURING WORLD WAR II

The Eternal Nazi: From Mauthausen to Cairo, the Relentless Pursuit of SS Doctor Aribert Heim.


REVIEWED BY DR. DIANE CYPKIN

The Eternal Nazi tells the gripping story of the hunt for Aribert Heim, and the German detective who relentlessly pursued him.

“Everything would have been different if I had come from a happy home with people who cared about me,” Josef Mengele wrote in the 500-page autobiography discovered after his death. Mengele was both a doctor and a genocidal killer. When Mengele drowned in 1979 while swimming off the coast of Brazil, he became a weakling. His crimes were committed from 1942 and 1943 in the Austrian concentration camp Mauthausen, where inmates called him “Dr. Death.” After the war, he became a weakling. Mengele was both a doctor and a genocidal killer. When Mengele drowned in 1979 while swimming off the coast of Brazil, he became a weakling. His crimes were committed from 1942 and 1943 in the Austrian concentration camp Mauthausen, where inmates called him “Dr. Death.” After the war, he became a weakling.

When Kulish and Mekhennet traveled to Cairo to investigate Heim’s life and death there, they found a brief-case stuffed with his memoriablia, including travel brochures, old photographs, and sketches Heim had made of his medical condition. In the brief-case they discovered a long article in which Heim, excited like many anti-Semites by Arthur Koestler’s book The Thirteenth Tribe, argued that the Jews were really descendants of the Khazars and therefore, somehow, did not exist — and that therefore anti-Semitism didn’t exist either. If the Jewish people were a “colossal hoax,” as Heim insisted, then their claims against Germany must also be a fraud, and “anti-Semitism will have no meaning,” since the Jews are not Semites.

In other writings found in the brief-case, Heim compared himself to Menachem Begin, who was about to become Israel’s prime minister. Heim complained that he was being persecuted by his fellow countrymen, rather than honored for his service to his homeland like Begin, who had also killed hundreds. Throughout his final years in Egypt, Heim wrote occasion-

(Continued on page 14)
THE DAY A HOLOCAUST SURVIVOR
GOT REVENGE ON HIS TORMENTOR

BY MARTIN GREENFIELD

He survived the savagery of the Holocaust, made it to America with barely a penny, and became a world-famous tailor in Brooklyn, dressing celebrities and presidents. In his new memoir, The Day a Holocaust Survivor Got Revenge on His tormentor, he tells the story of his extraordinary life. In this excerpt, he explains how the confrontation with the mayor of Weimar, Germany, on a 12-prisoner team to perform repairs outside the camp in nearby Weimar.

Working in the city was a welcome distraction from camp life. Sometimes you got lucky and spotted a potato in a field or smuggled a Trinkel to trade for food. Either way, it was a chance to see the sky, escape the stench of rotting corpses, and confirm that there was still a world beyond the barbed wire. We loaded our gear and marched the few miles to Weimar. The soldiers stopped us in front of a bombarded-out mansion, home to the mayor of Weimar. A big black Mercedes sat out front. The soldiers commanded us to sit the rubble, clear the debris, and begin repairs outside the camp in nearby Weimar.

I walked alone to the back of the estate to assess the damage. Dusty piles of broken bricks lay scattered across the yard. Seeing the cellar door ajar, I slowly opened it. A shaft of sunlight filled the dank cellar. On one side of the space sat a wooden cage wrapped in chicken wire. I walked closer and noticed two quivering rabbits — nimbled on rotten animal food? I thought. In that moment, my numbness to death melted. In its place rose an alien blood lust, a hunger for vengeance unlike any I had ever known. The surge of adrenaline and rush of rage filled my body, my mind, my heart.

Then and there I made a vow to myself. If I survived Buchenwald, I would return and kill the mayor’s wife. I walked into the mansion and spoke to the mayor. On April 11, 1945, 3:15 p.m., the Allies liberated Buchenwald.

I located two Jewish boys who were being raised to believe that life was a contest. They were so obedient. They must have been so mesmerized by the Mercedes that our men. I stepped out of the window. “Two girls!” I yelled. “Give me the keys!” She gave me the keys. “Remember me?!” I yelled. “Do you remember me?!” She had the baby in her arms again. “Don’t shoot!” I screamed. “Don’t shoot!” “Remember me?! I yelled. “Do you remember me?!” Her blond tresses shook violently. She hid her face behind her upraised hand as if shielding herself from the sun. “You had me beaten because of the rabbits. I’m here to shoot you!” I said. “You had me beaten because of the rabbits, I’m here to shoot you!”

The streets outside camp were electric with an ominous sense of disquiet. A smattering of prisoners in striped pajamas ambled in search of non-existent food. I kept my eyes open for any sign of the mayor’s wife. “I … I found your rabbits!” I stammered with a cheerful nervousness. “They’re alive and safe!” “Why in the hell are you stealing my rabbits’ food?” barked the woman. “I … I found your rabbits!” I stammered. “Why in the hell are you stealing my rabbits’ food?”

I lowered the gun and stomped out of the house. I stepped softly to mute the sounds of our wooden clogs on the floor. “Hello?” a voice around a corner said. “Hello?”

Just then the beautiful blond woman turned the corner and let out a screech. She had the baby in her arms again. “Don’t shoot!” she screamed. “Don’t shoot!” “Remember me?? I yelled. “Do you??” Her blond tresses shook violently. She hid her face behind her upraised hand as if shielding herself from the sun. “You had me beaten because of the rabbits. I’m here to shoot you!” I said.

“Shoot her!” one of the boys said. “Shoot her!” The woman’s outstretched hand trembled in the air. My heart pounded against my chest like a hammer. “Shoot her!” the other boy yelled. “That’s what we came here for! Do it!” I froze. I couldn’t do it. I couldn’t pull the trigger. That was the moment I became human again. All the old teachings came rushing back. I had been raised to believe that life was a precious gift from God, that women and children must be protected. “Don’t pull the trigger. I would have been like Mengele. He, too, had faced mothers holding babies — my mother holding my baby brother — and sentenced both to gruesome deaths. My moral upbringings would not allow me to become an honorary member of the SS. Still, extending mercy felt weak. I tried to save face in front of the boys. If I couldn’t be a hardened killer, I could at least be a car thief. “Where is the car?” I yelled. “There is nothing,” she said. “Who’s car?” I asked. “It’s not here,” she said. “I lowered the gun and stomped out of the house and went around back. “You made us come here for nothing?!” one of the boys accused. “I couldn’t shoot her,” I said. “I couldn’t shoot her.” “How many babies did they kill?” he quipped. He had a point. We walked to the large barn behind the house and unlatched the heavy wooden doors. There, covered with hay, sat the big black Mercedes. “That lying Nazi bitch!” one of the boys yelled. “I’ve seen her. I’ve spared her life and she died by my face.” “Wait here,” I told the boys. I marched back into the house, gun drawn, and found her. “This time, I’m really going to shoot you,” I said. “Give me the keys!” She gave me the keys. I jogged back to the boys and the car. “I got them,” I said, rattling the keys in my hand. “Who knows how to drive?” one of the boys asked. “Don’t worry, I do,” I said. “We brushed off the hay and hopped in the car.” “Hurry up! Let’s get out of here,” one of the boys said.

But a sight we must have been: three teenage Jews in striped prisoner uniforms, armed with machine guns, driving a black Mercedes in Weimar, Germany, on our way back to Buchenwald. We smiled, laughed, and talked tough like the men we were.

“Did you see how scared she was?” one boy said excitedly. “I bet she made in her underwear!” We chuckled.

“Look!” one of the boys said, pointing out the window. “Two girls!” I pulled the car to the side of the street. We invited the German girls to take a ride. They must have been so mesmerized by the Mercedes that our raggedy uniforms failed to give them pause. To my surprise, they hopped in. This was the closest any of us had been to attractive girls in a long, long time. We rode with us a few blocks before we dropped them off. I contemplated ditching the car.

After all, we were driving the mayor of Weimar. We were invading the man who was home to the mayor of Weimar. “Why in the hell are you stealing my rabbits’ food?” barked the woman. “I … I found your rabbits!” I stammered.
SURVIVORS’ CORNER

A U.S. RABBI LEARNS OF THE NAZIS’ FINAL SOLUTION

On August 28 1942, the contents of what has been called the Riegner Telegram, which constituted an attempt to get news of the German decision on the Final Solution into the hands of the Allies, were received by American rabbi Stephen Wise, the president of the World Jewish Congress.

Historians have since speculated whether a significant number of Jewish lives could have been spared if Wise had gone public with the infor- 
mation immediately, rather than wait- ing three months to call a press con- ference, as he did.

Gerhard Riegner (1911–2001) was a Swiss Jew who in 1942 served as office manager of the World Jewish Congress office in Geneva, in neutral Switzerland. That summer, Riegner received a report that originated with a German industrialist named Eduard Schulte, regarding the mass murder of a large German conglomerate that did extensive business with the German military. He had frequent contact with senior Nazi officers, and because he himself was opposed to Hitler, took advantage of frequent business trips to Switzerland to pass information he had picked up to contacts at a foreign legation to transmit what he had learned.

On August 8 Riegner visited Howard Elling, the vice-consul at the U.S. Consulate in Geneva, briefed him on what he had been told, and asked Elling to send the material onward to Rabbi Wise, a well-known Reform rabbi, president of the World Jewish Congress, and a friend of President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s. Similarly, Riegner visited a British diplomat, with a request that the same message be sent both to a British WJC official and to Wise.

Three days later, a cable went out from the U.S. legation in Bern to Washington, reporting, in telegraphic style, that “in Führer’s headquarters plan under consideration to extermi- nate all Jews in Europe.”

By August 28, Wise had received four independent state- ments confirming Riegner’s report. According to Wise’s memoir, Welles told him he himself could not release the information to the press, but said, “There is no reason why you should not. It might even help if you did.”

According to Israeli historian Yehuda Bauer, Wise did hold a press conference, but “it received minimal newspaper coverage, because his mes- 
sage was basically ignored until the Bergson group, headed by Hilil Kook… went into action.”

The Bergson Group was far more sensationalistic than the socially respectable Stephen Wise. Nonetheless, it was able to get word out to the United States and Britain.

There are good reasons to believe that the United States could have done more to save Jewish lives dur- ing the Holocaust, both by official channels and through humanitarian channels. But to pin the deaths of Jews on the excessive timidity of Rabbi Wise seems like a case of misplaced blame.

IN EYE OF NAZI STORM, DUTCH JEWS FOUND UNLIKELY REFUGE

BY CNAAN LIPHSHIZ, THE TIMES OF ISRAEL

In her nightmares, Tilly Walvis pic- 
tured German soldiers storming the house where she was hiding and deporting her children and the Christian couple sheltering them.

Walvis had good reason to fear. At the time, her family was living in the home of Albert and Frederika Santing in Hoensbroek, a Dutch town in the southeastern province of Limburg. Next door lived a family of Dutch Nazis, and delivering the hidden Jews to the German occupation forces would have meant praises and a handsome reward.

Fortunately for Walvis, the soldier who entered the house in 1944 was American, and he was looking for Nazis, not Jews. According to an account from the Yad Vashem Holocaust center in Jerusalem, Walvis sought to assure him they were not hostile, so she told him in English that she was Jewish. “Me too,” he replied, bringing tears of joy to Walvis’ eyes and wild cries of excitement from the other family members.

Walvis was among 2,200 Dutch and German Jews who survived the Holocaust in Limburg, a narrow silver rate at one blow this fall three and half to four millions Jews following deportation from countries occupied … Method execution undecided but prussic acid has been considered.”

The sender, who added the caveat that “exactitude cannot be confirmed by us,” asked for the message to be transmitted to Wise.

Although the State Department did not pass the Riegner Telegram on to Rabbi Wise, the British addressee, Samuel Silverman — who was both an MP and a WJC official — sent it on to Rabbi Wise on August 28. Wise contacted Sunner Welles, the U.S. under secre- 
tary of state, who asked him not to pub- lize the information until the State Department had made attempts to veri- fy the telegram’s shocking contents.

In late November, Welles called Wise and informed him that he had received four independent state- ments confirming Riegner’s report. According to Wise’s memoir, Welles told him he himself could not release the information to the press, but said, “There is no reason why you should not. It might even help if you did.”

In 1933, the Jewish population in Limburg stood at 800. Two waves of refugees — Germans before the war and Dutch following the German invasion — brought the Jewish popu- 
lation to 2,200 by 1945, according to van Rens. The 46 percent growth stands in stark contrast to the rest of the Netherlands, which lost 75 per- 
cent of its Jews in the Holocaust — a death rate matched in Western Europe only by Germany itself, with 88 percent, according to the Anti- Defamation League.

Limburg residents speak a unique
ITALIAN PRAISED FOR SAVING JEWS IS NOW SEEN AS NAZI COLLABORATOR

BY PATRICIA COHEN, THE NEW YORK TIMES

H e has been called the Italian Schindler, credited with helping to save Jews during the Holocaust. Giovanni Palatucci, a wartime police officer, has been honored in Israel, in New York and in Italy, where squares and promenades have been named in his honor, and in the Vatican, where Pope John Paul II declared him a martyr, a step toward sainthood.

But at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, the tale of his heroic exploits is being removed from an exhibition after officials there learned of new evidence suggesting that, far from being a hero, he was an enthusiastic Nazi collaborator involved in the deportation of Jews to Auschwitz.

A letter sent to the museum’s director by the Centro Primo Levi at the Center for Jewish History in New York stated that a research panel of more than a dozen scholars who reviewed nearly 700 documents concluded that for six years, Palatucci was “a willing and active participant in the concentration camps.” His own death at age 35 in a camp at Dachau seemed to corroborate his valor.

But Natalia Indrimi, the executive director of the Centro Primo Levi, said historians have been able to review these supposedly destroyed records in the Rijeka State Archives. “When the Nazis occupied the city in 1943, for example, Palatucci was said to have destroyed records to prevent the Germans from sending Jews to the concentration camps. His own death at age 35 in a camp at Dachau seemed to corroborate his valor,” said Indrimi, who has reviewed some of the documents, said the Palatucci case was part of the case being made for sainthood.

The government was eager to rehabilitate itself and show they were better and more humane than their Nazi allies. The Catholic Church was eager to tell a positive story about the church’s role during the war, and the State of Israel was eager to promote the idea of righteous gentiles and tell stories of right-minded ordinary people who helped to save ordinary Jews.

An article in the Italian newspaper Corriere della Sera said that a growing chorus of historians and researchers had called the Palatucci case “a blatant scam orchestrated by friends and relatives.”

BY OFER ADERET, HAARETZ

When the pogrom against Iraq’s Jews known as the Farhud erupted on Shavuot eve in 1941, Hela Saref Kargola was 16 years old. She lived with her family in central Basra, a city in southern Iraq.

“We were at home,” recalled Kargola, who died in 2012. “When we heard the mob screaming outside, we went out onto the terrace. We saw many Arabs crowding at Jewish homes, carrying dozens of household objects and furniture in their arms. They emptied the Jews’ homes and took whatever they could carry,” she recalled.

“Yesterday’s neighbors became today’s enemies. Police officers supposed to keep order took off their uniforms and joined in the killing,” she added. Her descriptions are horrific. “Pregnant women were taken off buses, their abdomens were cut open and the fetuses removed. Elderly people were beaten to death in the streets. Entire homes, said Kargola, were looted to their foundations.”

According to statistics at Yad Vashem, 1,200 Jews were killed, more than 2,000 wounded, and 50,000 were victims of theft during the Farhud (an ancient word meaning imposing brutal terror on the subjects of a regime). “Terrible acts of cruelty were carried out during the pogrom. Female, elderly people and children were murdered and their limbs hacked to pieces. Women were raped. Synagogues were damaged and Torah scrolls desecrated,” according to a brief paper in Hebrew on the Farhud at Yad Vashem’s Web site.

“Why? Why? How did it happen that people who had been guests in Jewish homes a day or two before, who had worked with them and admired them, suddenly turned into monsters? How did they change in such an awful way?” Kargola asked.

A legal strategy that Farhud victims are waging against Israel provides a possible explanation of the motives. Based on the professional opinion of historians, the plaintiffs claim that Nazi Germany was behind it. If they are successful, they are demanding that the government recognize the victims of the Farhud as victims of the Nazis, granting them compensation and benefits similar to those of Nazi persecution law victims.

Their claims, which were denied, are now being clarified by an appeals committee. “If we do not convince them, we will appeal to the District Court and even to the Supreme Court,” says attorney David Yadin, Dov Atzmon and Sivan Baturi, experts in the rights of Holocaust survivors and victims of Nazi persecution, who brought the lawsuit.

How much were the Nazis involved in Iraq?

A look at the professional opinion written by the historians recruited it (Continued on page 13)
Leonard Wilf, ASYV Chairman, recognizes Righteous Among the Nations Varian Fry and Marc Chagall, whom he saved, by presenting an award to Bella Meyer, the granddaughter of Marc Chagall, and James Fry, the son of Varian Fry. They were introduced by Caroline Massel, trustee.

Honoree Sigmund Rolat with his family.

Mark Moskowitz, dinner chair, inaugurates the 2014 Annual Tribute Dinner with Leonard Wilf, Chairman of the American Society for Yad Vashem.
REPORT FROM YAD VASHEM

BY ARON HELLER, AP

W ith survivors dying in growing numbers and their live testi-
monies soon to be a thing of the past, Holocaust commemoration efforts are in-
creasingly focused around preserving the belongings that contain their stories.

In October Israel’s Yad Vashem Holocaust memorial held a first-of-its-kind workshop devoted to the physi-
cal and digital preservation of docu-
ments. Over three days, visiting inter-
national experts discussed the ethical and technical challenges of conserving
originals for history’s sake while crea-
ing a vast digital archive to make them more accessible and user-
friendly.

“The two approaches are not mutu-
ally exclusive,” said Doris A. Hamburg, director of preservation
projects at the U.S. National Archives
and Records Administration. “Accessibility is a major goal for so
many institutions, and conservation helps to facilitate that.”

In the underground Yad Vashem archive containing stacks upon stacks of original documents, books and microfilm, its director Haim Gertner carefully slipped on a pair of white gloves before sifting through a pile of cracked, yellowing pages from a diary rescued from a burning synagogue on
Kristallnacht.

The brittle pages were falling apart; their corners still had traces of soot.

Shoah

2001). The core source for this book,
the first ever published in a Polish-Jewish relation
ship that had been available in
Publications in the 1980s. But it took
considerable work to get the book into print; as the
first of its kind, it was an eye-
opening effort.

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The brittle pages were falling apart; their corners still had traces of soot.

Shoah

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SGE REPORT FROM YAD VASHEM

BY DR. DAVID SILBERKLANG

S cholars often discover new mate-
rial that sheds light on historical events, or at times examine docu-
ments that are widely known but have evaded scrutiny. The latter was the case with Jan Tomasz Gross’s book,
“National Allegories”, first published in Polish in 2000 (English and Hebrew,
2001). The core source for this book,
arguably one of the most important books in the last 30 years on the
Shoa in Poland, was a survivor testi-
money that had been available in
archives since 1945 and a synopsis
that appeared in print in two earlier
publications in the 1980s. But it took
Gross’s incisive analysis and skilled
writing to bring to our attention the sig-
nificance of the murder of the Jews of
Jedwabne by their neighbors. This
opened the door to a new, ongoing
and important branch of research on
Polish-Jewish relations during the war.

The latest issue of Yad Vashem
Studies (42/1, 2014) features two
such groundbreaking articles. Leon
Saltiel’s “Dehumanizing the Dead:
The Destruction of Thessaloniki’s
Jewish Cemetery”; and Dr. Lea
Praiss’ “Jews from the World to
Come: The First Testimonies of
Escapees from Chelmno and Treblinka
in the Warsaw Ghetto, 1942–1943.”

The springboards for both articles are items that scholars have known — the ancient Jewish
cemetery in Thessaloniki (Salonica),
Greece, was destroyed during the
Nazi occupation; and the first testi-
 monies by escapees from the above-
mentioned extermination camps were by Jakub Grojnowski (Szlamek) and Yaakov Krezpicki. Actually, even in the names of these escapees, nei-
ther of whom survived the Shoah,
there is new information. For, as we
now know, Grojnowski was actually a
cover name for Szlamek (Szlomo),
whose family name is uncertain (Feiner, Wiener or Bajler), and Krezpicki was not Avraham, as near-
ly all publications have heretofore
indicated, but Yaakov.

What have Saltiel and Praiss found,
and what light does this shed on the
Shoa?

Saltiel, a doctoral candidate at the
University of Macedonia in
Thessaloniki, recounts the story of the
destruction of the ancient Jewish
 cemetery in the town that began in
December 1942, progressed rapidly,
and was completed by the municipal-
ity of the liberated city after the end of
the war. More than 500,000 graves
were uprooted; gravestones were
used as building materials, even
till very recently; and Aristotle
University was built on the ruins of
the cemetery. This is the first article
to analyze this event in depth,
probing the roles of the main
German and Greek actors behind
the cemetery’s destruction and the
subsequent allocation of the land
and reuse of the tombstones. Local
and regional Greek officials, includ-
ing Church figures, were deeply complicit in the desecration and destruction,
and even decades later various
church officials claimed not to under-
stand why using Jewish tombstones
as building materials might be objec-
tible. The roles of these people
during and after the war raise many
multifaceted issues. Saltiel also uses the story of the destruction of the Jewish
cemetery of Thessaloniki as a
case study on the triangular relations
between the Jews, the German occupa-
tion forces, and the local elites on the eve of the deportations.

This information was enough, why is it not enough, said Jane E. Klinger, the chief conservator at the United States
States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

“It’s because people want to see
the original. They want to get the
t Material out of it. Artifacts, whether they are
documents, manuscripts, photo-
graphs, or objects from Auschwitz — I see
them as memory in a concrete form, in
tangible form. Somebody can tell you
a memory, you can remember
something, but you can’t really hold it
or see it.”

“Sobbing at their own funeral” (Continued on page 15)
BY PETER CRUTCHLEY, BBC

**He had everything to lose. His country was in the grip of the most dramatic examples during World War II of an Italian willing to risk his own life to save the lives of strangers.**

Film director Oren Jacoby is describing Gino Bartali, one of the leading cyclists of his era — a three-time winner of the Giro d’Italia, who also notchéd up two Tour de France victories, 10 years apart, before and after the war.

During his lifetime, Bartali didn’t talk about his wartime activities. It was only after his death in 2000 that details began to emerge, and Jacoby fills in some remaining gaps in a Storyville documentary film about Italy’s secret heroes, due to be premiered this year.

Bartali, a villager from a poor Tuscan family, was reaching the peak of his career as the war approached. He won his first Giro d’Italia in 1936, retaining the title in 1937. Then — to Italy’s delight — he won the 1938 Tour de France. It was a moment the country’s Fascist leader, Benito Mussolini, had been looking forward to eagerly. Mussolini believed that if an Italian willing to risk his own life to help save Jews was worthy of the honor of Italy’s “master race,” says Bartali’s son, Giorgio, says in Jacoby’s film.

"He hid us in spite of knowing that the Germans were killing everybody who was hiding Jews," Goldenberg’s son, Giorgio, says in Jacoby’s film. "He was risking not only his life but also his family. Gino Bartali saved my life and the life of my family. That's clear because if he hadn't hidden us, we had nowhere to go."

Approximately 80 percent of Italian and Jewish refugees living in Italy before World War II survived, partly thanks to the efforts of Italian sympathizers. "It's taken a lot of detective work, by Andrea Bartali and me, to piece together Bartali's story together over the last 14 years," Andrea Bartali says that eventually little by little, his father told him about his actions during the war, but made his promise not to tell anyone at that time. "When I asked my father why I couldn't tell anyone, he said, 'You must do good, but you must not talk about it. If you talk about it you're taking advantage of others' misfortunes for your own gain.'"

According to Jacoby, Bartali's reticence is a “defining characteristic” of many of the Italians who were willing to risk their lives in World War II.

"It didn't want to be acknowledged for what he had done: few of those who helped ever knew his name or what role he played in their rescue," says Jacoby. Last September he was posthumously awarded with the honor Righteous Among the Nations by Yad Vashem.

"When Bartali was stopped and searched, he specifically asked that his bicycle not be touched since the different parts were very carefully calibrated to achieve maximum speed," the citation points out.

Andrea Bartali says his father refused to view his actions as heroic.

"When people were telling him, 'Gino, you're a hero,' he would reply: 'No, no — I want to be remembered for my sporting achievements. Real heroes are others, those who have suffered in their soul, in their heart, in their spirit, in their mind, for their loved ones. Those are the real heroes. I'm just a cyclist.'"

### LESS THAN HALF UNDER AGE 35 ARE AWARE OF HOLOCAUST

If you're under 35, chances are you're unaware of the Holocaust. So says a new global survey released by the Anti-Defamation League, which found less than half of respondents (48 percent) under age 35 knew which found less than half of respondents (74 percent) with agreement with Jewish stereotypes. "If you're under 35, chances are you're under 35, chances are you're unaware of the Holocaust. So says a new global survey released by the Anti-Defamation League, which found less than half of respondents (48 percent) under age 35 knew about it. By contrast, 61 percent of those over 50 said they knew about the Holocaust, during which six million Jews and as many as five million Roma, gays, political and war prisoners, and others were murdered by the Nazi regime in Germany from 1939 to 1945. The poll, which included 53,100 interviews in 96 languages in 101 countries, found about a quarter of the world's population believes some negative stereotypes about Jews are “probably true,” including “Jews are more loyal to Israel than [their home] country” and “Jews have too much power in the business world.” The survey found the West Bank and the Gaza Strip had the highest percentage (93 percent) of people who agree with at least six of those statements. Those areas, known collectively as the Palestinian territories, are home to more than four million Palestinians and have long been a focus of violence and controversy between Israel and the Arab world.

Iraq had the highest number of respondents in any single country, 92 percent, expressing anti-Semitic views. Andorra and North Africa had the highest number of respondents (74 percent) with anti-Semitic views. Iran, at 56 percent, had the lowest of any country in that region.

Elsewhere, Greece had the highest percentage, with nearly seven in 10 people (89 percent) claiming some agreement with Jewish stereotypes. The poll also found that 28 percent believe the number of Jews who died in the Holocaust has been greatly exaggerated. Four percent of global respondents said the Holocaust was "a myth and didn’t happen.”

**By taking on this role, he put himself at huge risk. At one point he was arrested and questioned by the head of the Fascist secret police in Florence, where he lived. For a period he went into hiding, living incognito in a town of Citta Di Castello in Umbria. In addition to this, Bartali hid his Jewish friend Giacomo Goldenberg, and Goldenberg’s family.

"He hid us in spite of knowing that the Germans were killing everybody who was hiding Jews," Goldenberg’s son, Giorgetto, says in Jacoby’s film. "He was risking not only his life but also his family. Gino Bartali saved my life and the life of my family. That’s clear because if he hadn't hidden us, we had nowhere to go."

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### And while 26 percent of respon- dents said they believed six or more of the anti-Jewish statements were "probably true," more (28 percent) said none were true.

The survey also “didn’t find a correlation between anti-Semitic and anti-Israel views,” the Journal noted. In the Netherlands, for example, the survey showed 43 percent of the population had a negative attitude toward Israel, but 5 percent accepted six or more of the anti-Semitic statements.

The Anti-Defamation League survey comes after an annual report, released by Tel Aviv University and the European Jewish Congress in April, which found anti-Jewish attacks fell by nearly 20 percent in 2013. However, the same report concluded anti-Semitism — in the form of “visual and verbal expressions, insults, abusive language and behavior, threats and harassments” — is on the rise.

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Elsewhere, Greece had the highest percentage, with nearly seven in 10 people (89 percent) claiming some agreement with Jewish stereotypes. The poll also found that 28 percent believe the number of Jews who died in the Holocaust has been greatly exaggerated. Four percent of global respondents said the Holocaust was “a myth and didn’t happen.”

**Abraham Foxman, longtime head of the New York–based Anti-Defamation League, called the results “dramatic.”** “You would think — I would think — that 70 years after the Holocaust, with all the marvels of communication, of greater openness, that [anti-Semitism] would be low,” Foxman told the Wall Street Journal. In the United States, 9 percent of those surveyed held anti-Semitic views, down from 29 percent in 1964. Laos was the least anti-Semitic country, according to the poll, with a fraction (0.2 percent) expressing stereotypical views.

In terms of global anti-Semitism, the poll wasn’t all bad news. Less than a quarter of respondents in western Europe (24 percent) expressed anti-Semitic views. Another poll, released by the Pew Charitable Trusts’ research center, found favorable views of Jews are on the rise in Europe.

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THE HOLOCAUST’S FOREMOST UNSUNG HERO

(Continued from page 3)

in some cases they are recognized as forgers by the authorities and their holders are sent to the extermination camps.

When Eichmann and the S.S. seek to bring all the Jews in the Budapest ghetto to Auschwitz, they threaten them with deportation to extermination camps, Kraus approaches Lutz and asks him to grant additional houses extraterritorial status. Lutz purchases 76 houses in Budapest and gives them Swiss immunity. Thousands of Jews possessing Swiss documents are thus safe from deportations to the extermination camps. The Red Cross provides them with food and basic supplies. Lutz’s daring plan is adopted by other diplomats hailing from neutral countries. Swedish diplomat Raoul Wallenberg turns 28 houses in Budapest into Swedish territory, housing 4,500 Jews. The Spanish, Portuguese and Vatican legations act similarly. The Hungarian authorities: Spain is allowed to hand out 1,500 certificates, Portugal and the Vatican 3,000. Signs are posted on the houses declaring that they are under the protection of the legation and that foreigners are not allowed to enter. All the houses protected by foreign legations are dubbed an “international ghetto.”

Kraus purchases another factory, a textile mill, and rents the football association stadium to house the thousands of Jews he saves. Some 3,000 people crowd into the Glass House alone, sleeping side by side, head to toes, not daring to leave the building for any reason. They sleep in every available space, in cellars, in hallways, on tables, in attics. On Shabbat they all hold a collective Kiddush. The attacks against the remaining Jews become worse. The Nazis start deporting Jews to the ghetto, extermination of Jews left outside the ghetto, extermination of Jews left outside the “international ghetto.”

The attacks against the remaining Jews become worse. The Nazis start deporting Jews to the ghetto, extermination of Jews left outside the “international ghetto.” Kraus and Lutz debate whether they should continue issuing the safe houses certificates, but they retreat after Lutz gets his hands on an Arrow Cross uni-

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The Holocaust researcher Dr. Ayala Nadvir explains that it “made no differ-

ence who received [the documents]. Younger men, women, children, they gave them to whomever they could.” According to Kraus’s own account, up to 60 or 70 thousand people were in the safe houses. “It emerged that only 32,000 Jews were in the ghetto, while there were some 150,000 Jews in Budapest at the time,” Kraus wrote after the war. “That is when the authorities decided to start looking for a way to preserve Jews.”

The attacks against the remaining Jews become worse. The Nazis start deporting Jews to the banks of the Danube River, stripping them of their clothes and shooting them to death. Their bodies are then thrown into the river.

“The front of the building was completely crazy,” he says. “I lived in a niche between the office and the top floor, together with several other people. Everyone tried to keep them- selves occupied, so they wouldn’t go completely crazy,” he says.

There was a cellar for Orthodox Jews. They studied Torah in there without stopping. There was an attic for the Hapoel Hamizrachi party. There was a cellar for Hashomer Hatzair with counselors for children and lectures for adults. There was no shortage of lecturers, professors and doctors among us. I remember some- one handing out flers about church reform.

Friedman helped affix photos to printed certificates. “The documents didn’t provide absolute protection, but they guaranteed that those who honored them. There were instances, however, when they tore the paper into pieces and took the Jew.”

“Maybe they did notice, but they couldn’t change extraterritorial laws. They wanted to show the world that they respected international law.”

On December 31, members of the Arrow Cross entered the Glass House compound in order to take us to the Danube. I will never forget it, because of the bitter cold. We were outside for two hours, until the Swiss embassy intervened and they were forced to let us go back in. Apparently the ruling rabbinic council wanted to be seen as a legiti-

mate government, so they respected the Swiss.”

Friedman’s wife, Vera (Zipora) arrived in Budapest from Vienna at the age of 5, shortly after Kristnacht. Her father was taken to a work camp, and she and her mother hid with relatives in the city. When she was 11, the Arrow Cross rose to power.

“One day, Pinhas Rosenbaum came to us dressed as a Nazi officer. We were startled. We didn’t know who he was. After the guard left the building, he immediately started speaking Yiddish so that we wouldn’t be scared. He took my mother and me to the Glass House,” she recounts.

The front of the building was impressive and unusual. It was made entirely of glass. Inside there were offices, a yard and warehouses. People slept on huge tables, and beneath them. Twenty people on the table and another ten below. There were fami-

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“On Shabbat we would hold a collective Kiddush and everyone sang. During Hanukkah we lit candles. We were not afraid of anyone. Mother told us that we were safe and we were told by everyone. Everyone had one suitcase that served as a closet as well as a partition from the person sitting next to me in the chair.”

“The youngsters who were out dressed as Nazis also made sure there was food, and we got food from the Red Cross. Peas, mushrooms, cans. The sanitary conditions were rough — there were only four or five bathrooms for 3,000 people. People stood in line for the bathroom for hours. We bathed once a week. Men bathed in the yard in subzero tem-}

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toward the European continent, not opinion. "Berlin's affairs were directed a physical or ideological foothold to infiltrate Iraqi territory and establish nationalist struggle.

fight against supporters of the British riots were caused by other factors, Nazi involvement in Iraq was margin- Ministry, whose officials claim that Nazi Germany’s lackeys in Iraq. He also believes that the victims of the Farhud should be regarded as "inseparable from the victims and those affected by the Holocaust of European Jewry."

To understand the Nazis’ influ- ence in Iraq, we must return to 1932, the year the British mandate ended. There, Dr. Grobba, Germany's ambassador in Iraq, wrote in a newspaper Al-Alam Al-Arabî, in which he published an Arabic translation of Mein Kampf and other essays containing anti-Semitic propaganda. He sent Iraqi officers and intellectuals on trips to Germany as guests of the Nazi party. He also gave financial support to nationalist youth groups in Iraq and provided them with Nazi propaganda materials. A delegation of the Al-Fatala nationalist youth movement even visited Germany in May 1938, attended the Nazi party conference in Nuremberg and returned to Iraq armed with anti-Jewish messages. "They made an effort to emulate and adopt the extreme anti-Semitism of the Nazis and tendencies of the Hitler Youth," wrote Professor Michael Eppel, former head of the Department of Modern Eastern History at the University of Haifa. This youth move- ment later participated in the pogrom, together with other groups. "The influ- ence of Nazi Germany was the decid- ing factor in directing anger on the street toward physical attack, a pogrom against Jews," he wrote. "The Iraqi politicians who encouraged it and handed out weapons to the worked-up crowd were among Germany’s strongest supporters, and they were very strongly influenced by the spirit of Fascism and Nazism.”

Any discussion about the Nazis’ role in the thugs and racketeers in Iraq and the suffering that the Nazis inflicted is groundless, in comparison with other factors," he wrote, adding, "The mere existence of propaganda is not enough… to base a conclusion about a link, expectation or intent by the Germans to carry out an act against the Jews inside Iraq.

Another figure at the center of the claim is the Iraqi prime minister at the time, Rashid Ali Al-Gaylani, who seized power in a coup in 1941 and established a pro-Nazi government that lasted for two months — the pogrom took place immediately after that of this government. Professor Kerem collected testi- monies proving that al-Gaylani’s gov- ernment had been funded by the Nazis. In a telegram sent on May 21, 1941 from Baghdad, Dr. Grobba, Germany’s ambassador in Iraq, writes that he transferred tens of thou- sands of gold ingots to al-Gaylani. Alongside that, he gives an update about al-Gaylani’s request for 80,000 more gold ingots and mentions the agreement that was about to be signed between Germany and Iraq, which he believes will result in a loan of one million gold ingots to their allies in Baghdad. Money and propaganda were not the only things the Nazis pro- vided to Baghdad. They also sent weapons to Iraq in an attempt to help the Iraqis fight against a common enemy — the British. Professor Kerem found evidence of that in the archives of Germany’s Foreign Ministry and Defense Ministry. He says that in the minutes of a meeting of the supreme German command from May 7, 1941, it is written that "the British might be decided to attack Iraq in every possible way, including sending arms, ammunition, money and military aid." On Toby interpellation anti-Semitism, "The Iraqis were courting the Nazis enthusiastically and beg- ging for their political, financial and military assistance. "The Germans were the Nazis' strongest supporters, and they agreed to send limited assis- tance, which contributed nothing to the administration in Baghdad,” he wrote.

Indeed, the German attempt to help the Iraqis fight the British failed. On May 29, 1941, after the British reached the gates of Baghdad, al- Gaylani fled from Iraq. The Jews thought that the danger had passed, and on the morning of the Shavout festival, June 1, 1941, they emerged wearing their holiday clothing to wel- come the pro-British ruler, who had returned to Iraq. But Iraqi troops set upon them, and within hours Jews were being attacked all over the city and in other places as well.

Farhud, ya ummat Muhammadî! (Farhud, O nation of Mohammed!) was the cry of the mob when the sig- nal was given to murder and rob the Jews, Hela Kargola later said. “Thousands, regardless of gender, age or status, took part in the celebra- tion of slaughter and theft.”

Were the Nazis behind the pogrom, or was it a spontaneous outbreak of frustrated Iraqis? Researchers differ. In the heat of the dispute, an embar- rassing situation has been created in which the state is being asked to defend the strongly pro-Nazi Dr. Grobba. In his professional opinion, Dr. Toby wrote that Grobba “was not of the sort of people who were sworn Nazis,” but rather “a professional diplomat who evidently stayed in office when the Nazis came to power, not because of strong faith in Nazi ideology.”

Dr. Kazaz, the plaintiffs’ expert, was irritated to read these assertions. “The truth is that Dr. Grobba was a professional diplomat serving his country and not his homeland. And let us say that he was ‘not of the sort of peo- ple who were sworn Nazis,’ by Dr. Toby's definition. The question still remains: what kind of Nazi does Dr. Toby think he was? And even if we work on the assumption that he was not a sworn Nazi, he still remains in the category of a Nazi.”
THE NAZI DOCTOR WHO GOT AWAY WITH MASS MURDER

(Continued from page 4)

al coddled letters to his family in Germany. Kulish was in Egypt when he didn’t know him. As Kulish and Mehennet remark, the irony of Heim’s life is that, had he stood trial in West Germany, he probably would have gotten only a few years in prison. German sentences for Nazi criminals like Heim were notoriously light, and acquittals were easily had. Most Nazi perpetrators were not tried at all. By telling Heim’s story, The Eternal Nazi has set the stage for Germany to fully reckon with its Nazi past — a good 30 years.

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or the most part, we see that there are two kinds of perpetrators of war crimes. There is the ordinary man (or, very rarely, woman) who lapses into, or becomes habituated to, killing, and is the brutal monster. There might be some cases in between, though, and Heim could perhaps be one of them. Unlike Mengele, who was a psychopathic torturer through and through, Heim is in some ways a more doublet instance, and therefore a more important one. He was supposed to be particularly evil because he was an educated, high-status, pre-eminently middle-class man. But perhaps he was just being ambivalent rather than sadistic: an even more frightening idea.

Olga Lengler, a survivor of Auschwitz, remarked that less than 10 percent of the SS men there were sadistic, but perhaps they couldn’t remem-

ber a German who had not saved someone at some point. Yet most people were not saved but murdered, and sadism mixed readily with occa-
sional gestures of sympathy. The recent, groundbreaking book by the historian Wendy Lower, Hitler’s Furies, delves into this ethically confu-

sion. Lower’s focus is on German women who committed atrocities in the Second World War. Did they seem to have been rather kind in some ways? The reader keeps coming back to the incalculable paradox at the heart of this story (the only one of Lower’s subjects to serve time for her murders), who first gave food to a hungry group of Jewish boys and then shot them in the back of the neck, just as Hitler’s Jewish boys and then shot them in the back of the neck, just as Hitler’s. How can an ordinary man, who served time for her murders, who first trusts his own words on the subject, was as true a disciple of the Nazi cause as had ever lived. “During the Second World War, our sympathies were with the Germans,” Nasser told the Deutsche Nationalzeitung in May 1964, adding that “The lie of the six million murdered Jews is not taken

seriously at all.” Wehrmacht General Wilhelm Fahrbacher prepar-

ing for Egyptian hostilities for Hitler, explained to his superiors how to destroy Israel in 1948, and Wilhelm Voss, a former SS weapons expert, developed the Egyptian missile pro-
gram. Johann von Leers, a convert to Islam known as Omar Amin, served Nasser as an anti-Semitic propagan-
dist. Von Leers was famous for his lavish dinners parties in which his wife Gisela strutted about in primitive-looking gold jewelry and hinted that she was the reincarnation of a Bronze Age priestess. The circle of old Nazis in Egypt was riddled with spies. Because of the CIA’s partnership with ex-Nazi Heinrich von Pflugendorf, many of the SS men in Egypt drew American paychecks. The most intriguing figure in this crew was Wolfgang Lotz, who was actually a blond, blue-eyed, German-born Jew masquerading as a Nazi. Lotz in fact worked for Mossad. Wary of this treacherous atmosphere, Heim had minimal contact with the other ex-

Nazis in Egypt; in this as in so much else, he was a man of himself.

In February 1979 Der Spiegel broke the story that Dr. Aribert Heim, a Nazi war criminal whose location was unknown, was supporting himself by profits from his Berlin apartment building, the money was being channelled through Heim’s sister in order to avoid getting in trouble for tax eva-

sion, to show that the building’s profits went to Heim and not to her, the sister had to provoke that he was still alive. So, Heim provided an audio-
tape in which he attested to his own existence and to the fact that he was still in hiding, living off rent paid by German citizens. A political firestorm erupted. Heim’s story was everywhere, for all of Germany and the rest of the German public. Millions of Germans had recently been shaken by the vastly popular American-made mini-series Holocaust, which brought home the horrors of the Nazi genocide, and they were newly enthusias-
tic about war-crimes trials for aging Nazi offenders like Heim. Within months, Heim was tried and convict-
ed in absentia and his livelihood seized. He was forced to move to a scruffy run-down hotels, where he became friends with the landlord’s children and tried to teach them English and French. Heim was a fluent speaker of both languages, along with Arabic.) His landlord and his dentist started talking to him about the Muslim faith, and soon Heim was reading the Quran. Heim embraced Islam in 1980 and took the new name Tarek Hussein.

His conversion might have been sin-
cere, but perhaps he merely wanted a better disguise, afraid that Aribert Heim was now a household name, and that the law was closing in on him.

Kulish and Mehennet show that in the late 1950s and early 1960s, as the 1964, tirelessly pursued German war criminals at a time when most of his fellow Germans wanted to forget or excuse the “excesses” of the Third Reich — or protect the perpetra-
tors. The nondescript Aedtner was a man of uncertain birth — from schnitzel and beer whose steely drive to bring Nazis to justice is never com-
pletely explained. Aedtner is the other protagonist of The Eternal Nazi, and he is every bit as significant as the vampiric entity of the title. Heim plays that ageless near-mythic figure, the evil man with a clear conscience, unrepentant to the end. The stolid Aedtner is simply a professional called to a task.

It is just as unclear to Aedtner’s son as it is to Kulish and Mehennet why Aedtner was so dedicated to prose-
cuting Nazis, a job that meant travel-
ing all over Europe to take testi-
 monies, tracking down endless hints and rumors of Nazi fugitives, and fol-
lowing up tantalizing rumors that almost never panned out. (Heim was also a subject of his father’s study in Spain, Chile and a number of other places where he never set foot.) Aedtner’s son says, “He wanted to get them,” the Verbrecher, the Nazi wrongdoers, and that desire made him work endless frustrating hours. The authors think that maybe Aedtner’s dedication to hunting Nazis “grew out of nothing more than an ingrained opposition to suffering, and he could never get over the extreme, almost limitless suffering that the Nazis had caused.”

If this was it, then Aedtner’s simple research work accomplished something more than all the elaborate theories about Nazism put together. Aedtner would never have put it this way, but he probably agreed with the sen-
tence from the Book of Job inscribed in Kulish and Heim, remarks that “the brutal
ditches, many asserted that only a few leading Nazis had real blood on their hands. After the war came the 1960s, then

Dr. Aribert Heim

The terrorists were blood-soaked

fansatics, but they did get one thing

right: In postwar Germany, prominent
ex-Nazis thrived at all levels of society,

including the highest echelons of gov-

ernment. The Nazi past eventually be-

came the defining mark of German

national identity. At least in West

Germany, starting in the 1980s, every

schoolchild saw pictures of emaciated
corpse and was told that all Germans

were responsible for the horror. The

meaning of being German, the school-

children learned, was that Germany

could never do anything like that again. But in the 1950s and ’60s the

consciousness-teaching German
guilt had not yet begun, and Nazi his-
tory existed mostly in what fathers

refused to say to their children, while

husbands concealed from their wives.

Some children rejected their fathers’

utterly; some demanded to know more;

and some loyalty made excuses for

Nazi misdeeds.

Like Mengele’s son Rolf, Rüdiger

Heim shielded a murderer: He visited

Von Leers was famous for his

dist. Von Leers was famous for his

German law declares that a
defendant’s family cannot be prose-

cution. (German law declares that a

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tence from the Book of Job inscribed in Kulish and Heim, remarks that “the brutal
was not the first to reach the ghetto, it
Grojnowski’s was the first report on
“Oneg Shabbat” underground archive
respectively — as recorded for the
extermination camps,
Treblinka
escapees from the
Grojnowski and Yaakov Krzepicki,
Institute for Holocaust Research,
Residents from
more challenging. Dr. Prais’ multilayer-
alyzed here for the first time, and
beyond what earlier scholars have
is only a small fraction of the full doc-
ument, and as Dr. Prais shows, has
handwritten pages). The little that
ested across the gates — “To
Prisoners stood motionless and
slashed their wrists.”

Dr. Prais’ article is the most exten-
sive discussion of Krzepicki’s critically
important testimony to date, while her
precision and insight carry the discus-
gen of Grojnowski’s testimony well
beyond what earlier scholars have
achieved. Krzepicki’s full testimony is
analyzed here for the first time, and
the innumerable crossed-out words and
tines, corrections and marginal
additions make that analysis all the
more challenging.

Krzepicki’s testimony leads us
tepingly along the twining path of
the deportees’ consciousness, from
the lack of clarity following their abduc-
tion to the unbridled, stark horror of
the camp at which they arrived. He is
devise and contemplative of their cling-
ings to scraps of hope based on the
false information fed them by the
Germans. His observations are often
laced with bitter sarcasm, as when he
describes an SS man’s speech prom-
ising newly arrived Jews that they
would work in their trades. “Some peo-
ple began to applaud the German. The
majority of the Jews who had heard
the honeyed speech really calmed
down and once again began to believe
that they were in a work camp. People
regained their places, like chil-
dren in a classroom.”

Still, Krzepicki did show some symp-
athy for children and women in
Treblinka. One story in particular rat-
ted him: “A boy of about eight years,
who had come with his father, was
standing there pleading. He did
not want to undress until he had said
goodbye to his father. His father was
standing on the other side of the
door, unable to reach him. He was
under one guard and his son under
another. But a miracle happened to
him. A Ukrainian corporal who was
standing in the barracks made a
move. He had understood the Polish
words and carried out the child’s wish.
He led the child outside to his father
who took him in his arms and kissed
his soft cheeks and sat him back
on the ground. The little rascal,
now calm, went back into the bar-
racks with his father and undressed
himself. His last wish had been
fulfilled.

“I could not allow myself to think
about this. I had neither the time nor
the head for it, nor could I take it to
heart. Something in me always
warned me. Steer yourself, don’t let
yourself fall apart.”

He also related how the older
women met with their fate. “Some
sought consolation in God and pre-
pared themselves to die with God’s
name on their lips. Some pleaded for
help, prayed for a miracle, a rescue;
others had given up all hope.... The
women’s sobbing was reminiscent of
the sobbing that one hears at funer-
als. Here people were sobbing at
their own funeral.”

He ended with a satirical attitude toward
their Jewish neighbors, as reflected in
the destruction of the Jewish ceme-
tery in Thessaloniki, and Krzepicki’s
involvement in the heart-wrenching
scenes at Treblinka are deeply dis-
turbing and leave us with many ques-
tions. It is to be hoped that these arti-
cles will encourage new research into
these important insights into human
behavior arising from the Shoah.

THE DAY A HOLOCAUST SURVIVOR
RETOURED ON HIS TORMENTOR

(Continued from page 5)

Mercedes?

So I drove the car all the way back
to Buchenwald. In fact, I drove
straight through the camp gates. Only
this time, the irony of the slogan
emblazoned across the gates — “To
each what he deserves!” — made me
laugh.

Prisoners stood motionless and
stared as we coasted into camp.
They must have assumed an impor-
tant dignity or the mayor of Weimar himself
would step out of the fancy car. When
they saw our stripped prisoner uni-
forms, they rushed us. “How did you
get a Mercedes?” someone asked.

“Well,” I said, smiling, “we just got it.”

Throughout my life I had heard that
everything happens for a reason, that
God’s ways were mysterious but pur-
poseful. I believed that. But some-
thing I read decades after my show-
down at the mayor of Weimar’s house
proved to me that in this end, in this
life or the one after, God ultimately
achieves justice.

A friend shared with me an article from
a 1945 issue of Life magazine about Nazi
suicides following the war. Here is a portion
of what it said: “In the last days of the war
the overwhelming realiza-
tion of utter defeat was too
much for many
Germans. Stripped of
the bayonets and bomb-
proofing of war, which had
made them power, they
could not face a reac-
tion or with either their
consciences or their
consciences. These found
the quickest and surest escape in what
Germans call Selbstmord, self-
murder. In Hitler’s Reich,
Germans stopped killing others
and began killing themselves. In
Weimar, the mayor and his wife,
after seeing Buchenwald atrocities,
slashed their wrists.”

That day at the mayor’s house,
God pricked my conscience. In so
doing. He spoke to me in the guise of
shame of killing the mayor of
Weimar’s wife.

I didn’t need to kill her. She did it for
me. In an act of forgiveness, I
achieved justice.

(Continued from page 6)

“SOBBING AT THEIR OWN FUNERAL”

Pages from the wartime account of Yaakov Krzepicki, who escaped from Treblinka.

IN EYE OF NAZI STORM, DUTCH JEWS
FOUND UNLIKELY REFUGE

(Continued from page 6)

(Continued from page 6)
JAMES FRY: “HE LOVED TO FIGHT BATTLES, BIG AND SMALL”

Participating in an event like this causes a mix of emotions for me. I’m proud of my father for his actions in France during the war, but I also regret that he didn’t obtain much recognition in his own lifetime.

He received a medal from the French government in a small ceremony just a few months before he died, but other than that, few people paid much attention to what he had done around 20 years after his death. I know this was deeply disappointing for him.

Another reason that events like this cause mixed emotions for me is that I know that my father did not work alone. He could not have done what he did without a network of collaborators and co-conspirators. These included Jews and others on the Nazis’ enemies list who voluntarily passed up opportunities to leave France and escape danger so that they could stay and help others get out.

I’d like to read some passages from an article about my father that does a great job of capturing these contradictions and describing what a complex person he was. The article is a review of one of the biographies of my father. It was written by Christopher Caldwell and appeared in Policy Review.

I think it does a good job of summarizing not only the remarkable things my father achieved in his 13 months in France, but also the troubles he had in the rest of his life.

I’ll read the beginning and end of the article, and skip over the long middle part that describes his time in Marseille, because we have already heard about some of that today.

I’ve taken the liberty of making a few minor corrections, but the words are almost all Caldwell’s.

Varian Fry may be the great American civilian hero of World War II — although by the time the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor in December 1941, his political activities against the Axis had ended. In 1996, he became the first American to be named Righteous Among Nations by Israel’s Yad Vashem Holocaust memorial — although few Americans knew of the dangerous activities for which he was honored.

As the Marseille representative of the New York–based Emergency Rescue Committee (Emergencies) from August 1940 to September 1941, Fry aided 4,000 refugees from Hitler. He was responsible for the escapes of from 1,200 to 1,800 promised American civilian hero of World War II, but he was fired when he turned one of his reports into a scathing account of the stupidity of the company’s board of directors. He finally exhausted the patience of his second wife, who divorced him in 1967. He died of a heart attack a few weeks later, just shy of his sixtieth birthday.

Fry’s biographer Andy Marinovich aptly described what it was about Fry that made him so deft at heroics and so bad at regular life: “He felt terribly scared and isolated.” Marinovich writes of the Marseille period, “but at the same time he found himself exhibiting a sort of nothing-to-lose daring that thrilled him. He was acting very unlike himself, and he was getting to like it.”

The article concludes:

If Fry was without honor in his own country, it’s understandable. He was impossible to work with, mentally troubled, locked in himself. But let us not forget that he was a prophet, too, and put himself in harm’s way to prevent the future he saw unrolling before him. Not the ideal person, maybe. But certainly the kind that every generation everywhere has always had too few.

Sometimes I wonder if my father’s mental troubles were paradoxically part of the secret of his success as a rescuer. I have trouble imagining he would have volunteered for the mission in France if he had had a family and even a moderately successful career in 1940.

But there is more to it than that, I think. One thing I remember about my father, and which is obvious from the article I just read, is that he loved to fight battles, big and small. For him, righteous indignation was like a drug, and he was addicted.

Unfortunately, throughout much of his life, he let this addiction lead him to behavior that was harmful to himself and often to others. In ordinary life, it is not healthy to fail to recognize that some battles are not worth fighting. It is not healthy to treat every person with whom one has a disagreement as if he or she were the embodiment of evil.