ETHICS AND RESPONSIBILITY:
THE INVESTIGATION AND PROSECUTION
OF NAZI WAR CRIMINALS IN THE UNITED STATES
AND HOW IT RELATES TO OUR CHILDREN

BARBARA GUTFREUND ARFA PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE ON HOLOCAUST EDUCATION

The Education Department of the American Society for Yad Vashem and its Young Leadership Associates held its eighteenth annual professional development conference on Holocaust education on March 13, 2016. This year’s program was generously supported by the Barbara Gutfreund Arfa Endowment Fund for Holocaust Education.

This program is a collaborative effort with the Association of Teachers of Social Studies of the United Federation of Teachers, the Educators’ Chapter of the UFT Jewish Heritage Committee, and the School of Education of Manhattanville College. Participants in this year’s program, which included educators from all five boroughs of New York City and from the tri-state area, received in-service credits for completing the conference.

The program also included a display of the educational unit developed by the International School for Holocaust Studies, “Keeping the Memory Alive: International Poster Competition.” This educational resource, along with our array of traveling exhibitions, is available to schools to enhance their educational programs on the Holocaust.

Through teaching we warn about the consequences of extreme and baseless hatred and prejudice. We educate to promote tolerance in the hope that through our efforts, future generations will make sure that the Holocaust, a low chapter in human history, will not repeat itself. This conference, organized by Dr. Marlene W. Yahalom, Director of Education of the American Society, has proven to be a strong vehicle to promote the mission of Holocaust remembrance and memory through education over the years. The conference was created by Caroline Massel, founding chair of the Young Leadership Associates of the American Society, in 1999.

Caroline Arfa Massel opened the program with very poignant remarks about the creation of this program and the establishment of the Barbara Gutfreund Arfa Endowment Fund for Holocaust Education in memory of her mother, Barbara Gutfreund Arfa, z”l. Ron Meier, executive director of the American Society, gave greetings on behalf of the American Society and spoke about the importance of this program in its efforts to raise Holocaust awareness through education. Carolyn Herbst, past president/past chairperson of the ATSS/UFT, emphasized that this conference is a valuable resource for increasing awareness and sensitivity to intolerance and injustice. Carolyn remarked on the challenge of teaching this topic without reducing the topic to numbers and statistics, and emphasizing the human elements of the events — victims, rescuers, perpetrators and bystanders. She underscored the importance of educators realizing how this topic must be taught and sustained in our educational communities.

Eli Rosenbaum, the former director of the US Department of Justice Office of Special Investigations, and current Director of Human Rights Enforcement Strategy and Policy in the new Department of Justice Section, was our keynote speaker this year. He spoke about the importance of ethics and responsibility, and their continuous presence in his work that included bringing Nazi criminals to justice, and currently incorporates these themes in addressing the enforcement of human rights. Shani Lourie, our colleague from the International School for Holocaust Studies at Yad Vashem, spoke about Facing Moral and Ethical Dilemmas in a World of Chaos.

Our program and theme, “Ethics and Responsibility: The Investigation and Prosecution of Nazi War Criminals in the United States and How It Relates to Our Children,” offered educators strategies on how to incorporate Holocaust studies into their lesson plans and curricula to enable students to realize the importance of seeking justice for Holocaust victims via the ongoing effort to bring Nazi war criminals to justice. This theme also helped educators focus on how to sustain the need for promoting ethics in students’ daily lives and how to offer relevant connections to the Holocaust in this process. The workshop topics complemented the theme of the program: Using Survivor Testimonies in the Classroom; Ripples from the Holocaust — Learning about the Second Generation; Echoes and Reflections; and The Holocaust Liberator Experience through Testimony. Shani Lourie, our colleague from Yad Vashem, presented the workshop on Echoes and Reflections at our program.

The American Society for Yad Vashem

(Continued on page 3)
In Born Survivors, British author Wendy Holden tells the harrowing tale of three mothers who gave birth in the Nazi camps, and the children who, against all odds, survived.

BY JENNIFER FRAZER, THE TIMES OF ISRAEL

Wendy Holden thinks Born Survivors is the most important book she has ever written, and as the author of more than 30 books she would know best. But the British writer goes further. The book, she says, is not just important, but she feels she was destined to write it.

Born Survivors is a meticulously told work of the true stories of three babies born to Jewish Nazi concentration camp inmates as World War II stuttered and stumbled to an end.

In April 1945, Priska, weighing only 70 pounds (31 kilos), delivered Hana on a table in a factory before she and 1,000 other women were deported to Auschwitz. Rachel, just as gaunt as Priska, gave birth to tiny Mark in an open coal wagon, halfway through a seemingly interminable 17-day train journey to the Austrian concentration camp of Mauthausen with hardly any food or water. Anka gave birth to Eva on a cart full of dying women as all three mothers arrived at the camp’s gates.

Miraculously, the babies, and their mothers, survived through a combination of luck, circumstance and perseverance. None of the mothers was aware of the others dire situation, and none of the three surviving children knew — each believing they were the only ones to be born in the camps — until they met for the first time 65 years later.

Holden is a former war correspondent for the Daily Telegraph in the UK and has had a long history writing about violence and oppression.

“My father fought the Japanese in Burma and my mother lived through the London Blitz,” she says, adding that she has always had a great curiosity about World War II and the Holocaust. But she freely admits that even though she has written many books with harrowing scenes, she cried copiously through the writing of Born Survivors — even though it is one of the few Holocaust-related books with a relatively happy ending.

The genesis of the book was an obituary Holden happened to read online, which mentioned that the woman who had died had been pregnant in Auschwitz — although her baby had not survived. Intrigued, Holden looked everywhere she could to see if anyone had tackled this subject before — and, surprisingly, nobody had.

“That was my first piece of luck,” says Holden. The second was discovering that Eva Clarke, the youngest of the three “babies” she would write about, lived not that far away from her, in Cambridge, England.

“I contacted her to see if she would be interested in my telling her story. And Eva replied, ‘I’ve been waiting for you for 70 years,’” says Holden.

“T he babies,” Eva, Mark Olsky and Hana Berger Moran met for the first time at a ceremony in 2010 to commemorate the 65th anniversary of the Wannsee Conference. This convening of American forces of the Mauthausen camp in Austria, where they instantly bonded. All three were eager to have their stories recorded, and Holden regards the book as a legacy and testament to their survival.

“What Gurock demonstrates in his book, The Holocaust Averted: An Alternate History of American Jewry, 1938-1967, deals with counterfactual history, a speculative exploration of what-if’s, and the author is in no way dismissive of the murder of six million Jews at the hands of the Nazis. What Gurock demonstrates in his book is that World War II was a major turning point in American Jewish history, and that many positive things came out of it for American Jews as well as for US-Israeli relations. Had key moments in the run-up to and during the course of the war played out differently, the Holocaust might not have happened. Gurock posits that instead, Jews in America would have had to “run for cover.” They would have had to assume — and maintain — a low profile, never achieving the level of empowerment and agency that we associate with American Jews today.

This is the first time that Gurock, a professor of Jewish history at Yeshiva University and author and editor of 14 books, including Orthodox Jews in America and Jews in Gotham: New York Jews in a Changing City, has tried his hand at counterfactual history.

“Holden’s journalistic background came into full flourish as she began the mammoth research behind the book. Her study, she says, “began to look like Churchill’s wartime bunker. It was just covered everywhere with maps and books as I plotted out how to tackle the book.”

She turned into a “forensic detective” and visited 11 countries in pursuit of essential witnesses to the three young mothers’ remarkable experiences. Inevitably, she says, though she thought she had learned so many stories about the Holocaust, things still cropped up during her research which amazed her.

One such story came from the small town of Horní Briza in the Czech Republic, then Czechoslovakia. A “death train” carrying hundreds of Jews, including the three young mothers — two of whom had already given birth at that point — stopped there en route to Mauthausen on April 21, 1945.

“I was a rainy Saturday night and the stationmaster of Horní Briza’s train station, Antonín Pavlick, was appalled by the conditions of those on board. After prolonged arguments with the Nazi officer in charge of the train, Pavlick managed to organize an astonishing humanitarian effort the next day by the local townspeople, who brought food and drink — and even baby clothes when they heard the cries of newborns — to the train wagons. (There were a number of other babies on the train besides Hana and Mark, but none are believed to have survived.)

After learning about the Horní Briza response, Holden wrote to the town’s mayor asking if she could talk to him about what happened there during the war. The mayor agreed to the meeting, and to her surprise, when she arrived — expecting only to see the mayor — she was led into a room with 10 other people, including two elderly men aged 84 and 79, who had been young boys when the train stopped in Horní Briza in 1945.

“They spoke about what they saw, which no one else in Horní Briza had ever heard them discuss,” Holden recalls, “how they saw the train stop and how they watched the stationmaster arguing with the SS comman- dant in charge of the train.”

Of the three mothers, Hana’s mother Priska and Mark’s mother Rachel died several years ago. Anka, Eva’s mother, died aged 96 just six months before Holden made contact with her “baby.”

“But I felt I knew Anka — and Rachel and Priska,” says Holden. “I really felt it was such a privilege to chronicle their stories.”

WHAT IF THE HOLOCAUST HAD NEVER HAPPENED?

BY RENEE GHERTZ-ZAND, THE TIMES OF ISRAEL

“Things could have been much worse had the catalysts of the Holocaust not happened,” said Dr. Jeffrey S. Gurock recently over lunch at a Jerusalem café.

A statement like this is hard to swallow if you don’t realize that his new book, What Ifs of Jewish History, is the most important level of empowerment and agency that we associate with American Jews today.

It’s a foreboding message that lends itself to the counterfactual approach that Gurock’s book explores.

“Just as we have the Counterfactual History Review, a journal by a WWII military scholar about what did not happen, conjecturing on what did not happen,” wrote Jeremy Black and Donald M. MacRaid in their study guide, Studying History.

“T he idea for The Holocaust Averted came to Gurock when he and his wife were visiting the old Jewish quarter of Krakow, Poland, six years ago. That fact that much Jewish culture still exists all around them, but that Jews were nowhere to be seen, struck a deep chord for Gurock. He started to wonder what Jewish life would have been like in present-day Krakow had the Holocaust not taken place and the Jews of the city not been virtually wiped out.

When the author came across an article by a WWII military scholar about how the remilitarization of Germany (Continued on page 7)
(Continued from page 1)

Barbara Gut Freund ARFA Professional Development Conference on Holocaust Education

BY DR. RAFAEL MEDOFF
ISRAEL NATIONAL NEWS

A

the unveiling in Jerusalem of a bust dedication in Jerusalem.

the American Society recognized the award to the accult of the Holocaust to the public schools of New York City. This award also acknowledges that the ATSS/UEF curriculum for public schools is an effective strategy for implementing best educational prac-
tices in using documents, inquiry, and critical thinking and action for study-
ing the Holocaust.

Dr. Yahalom spoke about the “importance of empowering educators to transmit the lessons of the Holocaust to their students through education. As an institution, Yad Vashem is a symbol of both destruc-
tion and rebirth. Through education, these parallel messages are con-
voyed to the community at large. One of the ways in which we provide teachers with enrichment about this subject is to provide resources to teach about this subject, but also to ofer connections between this sub-
ject and other ﬁelds of study. In this way we hope to raise awareness and make the information more relevant to students. As educators we are aware how the events of the Holocaust include a wide array of challenges to teachers and students because of the complexity, horror, content and obli-
gation to remember that the subject presents.”

She added that “our own awareness of Holocaust survivors should include the changing image of Holocaust vic-
tims who survived and who perished. For those who perished, we need to con-
sider how they want to be remem-
bereb. For those who survived, we should realize how they have been transfromed from victims to heroes. They are our eyewitnesses to history, and their resistance efforts are sym-
ols of the strength and of the resilience of the human spirit.”

Dr. Yahalom told the participants that “as educators, by sharing the responsibility of teaching the les-
sions of this event to future genera-
tions, you make a positive and meaningful contribution to Holocaust education and remembrance, since your efforts help secure the histori-
cally valid memory of this event for the future. Documenting the Holocaust, and preserving its memo-
ry, is the driving force behind Holocaust history. As educators we are aware how the events of the Holocaust include a wide array of challenges to teachers and students because of the complexity, horror, content and obligation of remem-
brance this subject presents. To meet these challenges, we offer teachers connections between this event and contemporary issues. In this way, we hope to raise aware-
ness and make the information more meaningful and relevant to our stu-
dents.”

She also acknowledged the inspi-
rational leadership of Leonard Wilf, chairman of the American Society, and how “through programs such as the Conference we can teach partic-
ipants about the many themes to consider in this undertaking: the mul-
tiﬁcated contours of human behav-
ior, the dangers of extreme and baseless hatred, the role of the Holocaust in public memory, the lives of the heroes and the victims, and the overarching challenge to make sure neither group is forgotten.”

She concluded with a request to Conference participants — that we teach about the Holocaust, we need to urge them to consider the following: “the moral decision-making in a world deﬁned by collective inaction, the need of documentation, testimonies and pri-
mary sources as a memorial to the victims; the value of personal testi-
mony as a way in which the victims, knowingly or not, wrote themselves into history; and ﬁnally, the danger of indifference to evil.”

For more information about ASYV educational programs and events, and traveling exhibitions, contact Marlene Warshawski Yahalom, PhD, Director of Education:

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Churchill, Jesus and the Holocaust

A history that was written in blood and tears. A drama that is being repeated in our own time. A tale that reminds us of the fragility of human life and the power of love and compassion.

The story of Churchill and Jesus is not a new one. It has been told many times before, but each time it is told with new insights and perspectives.

In the summer of 1944, Winston Churchill met with an American rabbi, William Rosenau. The meeting was arranged by the American Society for the Study of the Anti-Semitic Movement, which was founded by Rabbi Morris Lichtenstein.

Rosenau was an unlikely player in this drama. He had been a lawyer, social worker and businessman in the United States before turning his attention to the study of Judaism. In 1938, he had been called to the rabbinate by the Temple Israel in New York City.

Rosenau was ahead of his time in recognizing the importance of education in imparting knowledge and values to the younger generation. He believed that education was a way to prepare the next generation to face the challenges of the modern world.

Churchill, on the other hand, was a man of action. He was a statesman who believed in the power of the pen and the sword to achieve his goals. He was a man who was prepared to risk his life for the cause of justice.

The meeting between Churchill and Rosenau was a turning point in their lives. They shared a deep sense of urgency about the fate of Europe and the need for action to prevent a repeat of the holocaust.

Churchill told Rosenau about his plans to found a Jewish university in Palestine. He wanted to provide a safe haven for Jewish refugees and to give them the opportunity to study and learn in a supportive environment.

Rosenau was impressed by Churchill’s vision and agreed to help in any way he could. He returned to the United States to establish a foundation to support the university.

The foundation, known as the American Society for the Study of the Anti-Semitic Movement, was established in 1945.

The society’s mission was to promote understanding and respect for Judaism and to fight against anti-Semitism. It was a unique organization in its time, and it continues to be a leader in the field of Jewish education.

Today, the American Society for the Study of the Anti-Semitic Movement is a respected organization that is dedicated to promoting understanding and respect for Judaism, and to fighting against anti-Semitism.

We should remember the importance of education in imparting knowledge and values to the younger generation. We should remember the courage and determination of men like Churchill and Rosenau who were willing to risk their lives for the cause of justice.

And we should remember the power of education to prepare the next generation to face the challenges of the modern world.
**BOOK REVIEWS**

**THE HOLOCAUST IN THE SOVIET UNION**


**REVIEWED BY DR. DIANE CYPKIN**

Needless to say, what with critiquing books for this paper for almost twenty-five years, this reviewer has read many volumes on the Holocaust. So how does Yitzhak Arad’s The Holocaust in the Soviet Union in particular differ? In telling the comprehensive and highly detailed story of the Holocaust in the Soviet Union (including the 1938 and the annexed territories), no other book so very clearly and fearlessly reveals how guilty so very many Ukrainians, Latvians and Estonians were in the death of their Jewish neighbors. For as we learn, they not only frequently helped or actually did the murdering — sometimes even before the Nazis arrived; they often eagerly identified who the Jews were among them, allowing the Nazis to carry out their unspeakable genocide with ease and thoroughness! Interestingly, as far as actually killing Jews was concerned, the Lithuanians and Ukrainians, especially, would prove so brutally “good” at it that they would be exported all over the Soviet Union and its annexed territories to do their bloodthirsty work!

Thus, for example, a murderous anti-Semitic pogrom perpetrated by the Lithuanians themselves took place in Kaunas (known to Jews as Kovno), Lithuania, during the very first days of the war even before the Nazis and their murderous Einsatzkommando, subunits of Einsatzgruppen — assigned specifically to kill Jews — appeared. Then, once these Nazi killing units appeared, the Lithuanians voluntarily helped them or, more mordantly “ambitious,” had the “opportunity” to join a special “Erschaffungskommando” or shooting unit, consisting of 50 to 100 Lithuanians, under the command of the Lithuanian Lieutenant [Bronius] Norkus. He and his unit were under the command of the Obersturmb–führer Joachim Hamann, together with whom they carried out shooting [operations] against the Jews.” In Kaunas, too, “there was Police Battalion no. 1, under the command of Colonel Andreas Butkumas [which] was the most Lithuanian force that carried out the exterminations” of almost 10,000 Kovner Jews on the saddest day in Kovner Jewish history.

October 28, 1941, remembered as Di groyse aṭysye [The Big Action]. Nor was this the end of the inhuman labors.” Soon we read how Lithuanian collaborators moved on to help the Nazis murder Jews in Belorussia . . .

Still, the national group most “helpful” to the Nazis was undoubtedly the Ukrainians. Indeed, they seemed to have been everywhere! Ukrainian murd- derers were active in Lutsk, Dubno and Kremenets — all in the Volhynia region “between the two worlds” of the Volhynia region “between the two worlds” of the Ukraine between the two world Wars. Ukrainians eagerly assisted the Nazis at Babyl Yar in Kiev. Ukrainians helped murder the Jews in the Crimea. Ukrainians were involved in the massacre of Jews in eastern Galicia, including Stanislav, Ternopol and Lwow. The Romanian Jews met up with the Ukrainian col- laborators, too, and a witness said of them, “More than anything else, these wanted to rob, to torture and kill.” Nor, according to Arad, could help- less and hapless Jews hope to escape these anti-Semites if they had thoughts of making their way to sur- rounding forests to hide or, later, join partisan groups. Many guards helping the Nazis were Ukrainians, known for their brutality. And Jews escaping could meet up with gangs of them. Additionally, if Jews met up with the wrong partisan group, death could result. Many partisan groups were exceptionally anti-Semitic. In a certain part of the book, a point made very clear in this volume is that most of these killings were done openly. Normally, as villagers and people knew what was going on. In fact, oftentimes they would come to watch . . . and then gingerly run off to make their own all that had to do with the evacuation of the Jews, fighting each other for each item and each home.

In sum, Arad’s book is a must-read for anyone in any way interested in Holocaust studies. The research, the use of primary sources, the organiza- tion of all the material — it is beyond admirable.

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

**THE MYSTERY OF THE MISSING JEWISH BOOKS OF ROME**

BY MICHAEL FRANK, TABLET

This book is entirely the work of my hands, for I copied it for my own use. I am Nachman, son of Rabbi Samuel Foa. I copied it in the year 5315, when I was 15 years of age, in the house of the generous Rabbi Samuel, son of Moses Kazis.

A flash of the personal tucked into a colophon; the colophon framed with casual undulating lines; these doo- lities at odds with the meticulous pages of Italian-style Hebrew calligraph- y that follow in young Nachman’s compilation of the work of Rabbi Abraham ben Meir Ibn Ezra, the great medieval Spanish grammarian and commentator on the Bible; the text, in several places, blacked out, FBL- style, by Vatican censors, as was commonplace in mid-16th-century Italy; the pages worn-eaten, almost translucent, and bound in creamy vel- lum: Here is an early Hebrew manu- script like dozens — hundreds — of other early Hebrew manuscripts.

Well, not exactly. Sprinkled through the pages of Nachman’s book is a handful of different-shaped stamps identifying it as having once belonged to the library of the Jewish communi- ty of Rome, a collection confiscated by the Nazis on October 14, 1943, loaded on a freight train headed for Germany, and not seen since.

So, what is this manuscript doing in the Jewish Theological Seminary Library in New York City, and why is there one other like it, an anthology of Kabbalistic and philosophical writ- ings, on a nearby shelf? What hap- pened between 1934, when these volumes were listed in a partial inven- tory of the Roman collection drawn up by a man called Isaa Sonne, and 1965, its date of accession to the JTS? How did it and its companion survive, these two books nearly alone, from a fabled library that dates back to the Middle Ages?

There are no definitive answers to these questions — not yet, anyway. But they do frame quite a story.

The aftermath of the Holocaust sometimes feels like a violent river whose waters have taken decades to recede. First there were the sur- vivors. Then, there was the property to be reckoned with. Then, and continually, the art. Now the books are coming into sharper view.

In his recent book on the Holocaust, A World Without Jews, Alon Confino uses the word “bibliocide” to describe the public burning of books that began with the work of banned (and far from exclus- ively Jewish) authors in May 1933. The Reich’s focus soon narrowed to Jewish texts, culminating in the wide- spread destruction of Hebrew Bibles ordered by Hitler in November 1938. In addition to setting fire to 1,400 syn- agogues and shattering Jewish shop windows — the particular act that gave Kristallnacht its name — Nazi storm troopers relieved synagogues throughout Germany of their Torah scrolls, which they took into the streets. Sometimes they trampled, kicked, drowned or burned them; sometimes they forced Jews to. Spectators dressed up in the robes of rabbis and cantors and danced around the fire while military bands provided music to muffle the shouts of distraught onlookers. “The Nazis showed panache in announcing their identity by burning books, before they burned people,” Confino observes dryly.

A parallel story was unfolding along- side all this flamboyant bibliocide, however. As early as 1937, even before Kristallnacht, officials of an agency known as the Reichssicherheitshauptamt, or RSHA (Reich Security Head Office), planned to establish a library of Jewish books and began loading volumes from rab- binical seminaries throughout Germany. A second agency, the Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg, or ERR, was active outside of the Reich’s borders and occupied itself with collecting artwork, ritual silver and musical instruments; it also had a special unit dedicated to the vacuum- ing up of Jewish books. Some of these were to supply material for the Institute for the Study of the Jewish Question, which was founded by the Nazis’ chief racial theorist, Alfred Rosenberg, who intended to tell the

(Continued on page 7)
BY DR. RAFAEL MEDOFF, JNS

"It is a fantastic commentary on the inhumanity of our times," journalist Dorothy Thompson wrote at the height of the 1930s European Jewish exodus crisis, "that for thousands and thousands of people a piece of paper with a stamp on it is the difference between life and death."

Seventy-five years ago, President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s newly appointed attorney general sent his colleagues a memo outlining a strategy to "postpone and postpone" the granting of that piece of paper to refugees. Breckinridge Long’s chilling memo, more than any other single document, has come to symbolize the abandonment of the Jews during the Holocaust.

Long, a personal friend of Roosevelt and a major donor to his first presidential campaign, was rewarded with the post of U.S. ambassador to Italy. Long’s dispatches to Washington from Rome in the early and mid-1930s praised the Mussolini regime for its "well-paved" streets, "dapper" black-shirts storm troopers and "punishment trains," Eleanor Roosevelt once remarked to the president about Long, "Franklin, you know he’s a Fascist" — to which an angry FDR replied, "I’ve told you, Eleanor, you must not say that."

In early 1940, Roosevelt promoted Long to the position of assistant secretary of state, putting him in charge of 23 of the State Department’s 42 divisions, including the visa section.

Long joined a department that was well schooled in suppressing immigration. In 1933 to 35 — the first five years the Nazis were in power — the Roosevelt administration had gone out of its way to restrict Jewish immigration. The number of Jewish immigrants was far lower than what the law allowed.

As a result of the Jewish requirements and layers of bureaucracy, the German quota of 25,957 was only 5 percent filled in 1933, and 14 percent filled in 1934. The only year that Roosevelt permitted the German quota to be filled was 1938-39, and only then because of tremendous international pressure, following the German annexation of Austria and the Kristallnacht pogrom.

By the time Long assumed his post at the State Department in early 1940, the old practice of actively suppressing immigration below the quota had returned. In addition to the administration’s general hostility toward immigration, especially Jewish immigration — there was now the added fear of Nazi spies reaching the U.S.

The quick collapse of France in the spring of 1940 triggered a wave of alarm in the U.S. about German “fifth columnists” undermining the U.S. from within. The press was filled with wild stories about Hitler planning to send “slave laborers” to America. Attorney General Robert Jackson complained to the cabinet about “the hysteria that is keeping the country agitated and filled with enormities.”

But FDR himself was fanning the flames. In a series of remarks in May and June, he publicly warned about what he called “the treacherous use of the ‘fifth column’ by persons supposed to be peaceful visitors [but] actually a part of an enemy unit of occupation.”

The notion that German spies would reach America disguised as refugees was baseless. There was only one instance in which a Nazi successfully posed as a Jewish refugee in order to reach the Western hemisphere — and he was captured in Cuba and executed.

On June 26, 1940, Assistant Secretary Long composed a memo explaining to his colleagues how to keep out the Jews.

“We can delay and effectively stop for a temporary period of indefinite length the number of immigrants into the United States,” he wrote. “We could do this by simply advising our consul to put every obstacle in the way and to require additional evidence and to resort to various administrative devices which would postpone the granting of the visas.”

Long’s plan was to use the “postpone and postpone” method as a temporary measure, until a way could be devised to make it permanent. And that’s exactly what happened.

Three days after Long’s memo, the State Department ordered U.S. consuls abroad to reject applications from anyone about whom they had “any doubt whatsoever.” The instruction specifically noted that this policy would result in “a drastic reduction in the number of quota and non-quota immigration visas issued.”

I worked as intended. In the year to follow, immigration from Germany and Austria was kept to just 47 percent of the quota, and the following year it was held to under 18 percent.

Then, in June 1941, the Roosevelt administration adopted a harsh new policy, known as the Close Relatives Edict. It barred the entry of anyone who had close relatives in German-occupied territory, on the grounds that the Nazis might hold those relatives hostage in order to force the immigrant to become a spy for Hitler. No such cases were ever discovered, but in the meantime, countless Jews with relatives in Europe were automatically declared ineligible for immigration to America. Another “piece of paper” helped trap millions of Jews in Hitler’s Europe.

FRANCE, US AGREE ON HOLOCAUST COMPENSATION

BY KAREN DEYOUNG, WASHINGTON POST

France has agreed to pay reparations to American survivors of the Holocaust who were deported to Nazi death camps in French trains, after a year of negotiations with the United States.

The agreement includes a $60 million lump sum payment that will be distributed to eligible survivors, their spouses and, if applicable, their heirs. Stuart Eizenstat, the State Department’s special advisor for Holocaust issues, who negotiated the agreement for the Obama administration, said it is unclear how many will be able to apply online and distribute awards. Those eligible, Eizenstat said, will be able to apply online and distribute awards.

Former U.S. assistant secretary of state Breckinridge Long, the author of a memo that has come to symbolize the abandonment of Jews during the Holocaust more than any other single document, has come to symbolize the abandonment of the Jews during the Holocaust.

“The settlement will deliver fair compensation to these victims and to the loved ones of those who did not live,” said Abraham Foxman, director of the Anti-Defamation League, also welcomed the agreement, which must be ratified by the French Parliament. He called it “an important recognition by the government of France of the suffering of those who have been excluded for decades from the French Holocaust victims compensation program.”

Those who apply for the new compensation program will have to sign a waiver agreeing not to pursue any lawsuit, Eizenstat said. As part of the accord, he said, the United States agrees to support French sovereignty in any lawsuits.

Under its terms, the United States government in charge of administering the program and distributing awards. Those eligible, Eizenstat said, will be able to apply online and at post offices in Israel, Canada and other countries.

Although SNCF is not a party to the agreement, he said, the company has said it will make a $4 million contribution over the next five years to Holocaust museums, memorials and education programs.

The agreement closes a loophole that allowed French survivors in this country to receive payments. Those eligible, Eizenstat said, will be able to apply online and distribute awards.

The agreement is also intended to close the door on pending state and federal legislation that would ban France’s state railway, known by its initials SNCF, or its foreign subsidiaries from obtaining contracts in the United States.

The French Embassy said in a statement that the agreement was the result of “the spirit of friendship and cooperation between our two countries,” and that “both sides will do everything possible to ensure that compensation is paid as quickly as possible and with as few formalities as possible.”

SNCF officials have formally expressed regret on a number of occasions for the railway’s role in carrying up to 76,000 people from France to the Nazi camps during the war. But the company has denied that it acted voluntarily in cooperating with the Nazis, noting SNCF was placed under German command in 1940.

Holocaust survivors in this country have pursued compensation for more than a decade in class-action law-

results. After those cases were dismissed on the basis of sovereign immunity for government-owned companies, survivors pressed for legislation banning SNCF and its subsidiaries from obtaining contracts in the United States.

In an indirect reference to any future lawsuits and legislation, the French Embassy’s statement said that “the two governments consider this agreement to be the comprehensive and exclusive mechanism for responding to requests relating to Holocaust-era deportations from France, or any actions initiated in this regard, notably in the United States.”

Eizenstat said members of Congress and Holocaust groups have been briefed on the terms of the agreement, and “we have reason to believe they are very happy.”

US Representative Carolyn Maloney, a New York Democrat who authored legislation that would allow Holocaust victims living in this country to sue SNCF, and led opposition to public rail contracts for it, called the agreement “a breakthrough in a decades-long struggle for justice waged by Holocaust survivors who were brought to death camps on SNCF trains hired by the Nazis.”

March/April 2016 - Adar/Nissan 5776
Mirjam Geismar knows what it's like to be a powerless child. She was a young Jewish girl in World War II Holland. I met Mirjam — and her daughter Daphne Geismar — in New Haven, Connecticut, where they live. About 70 years ago, Mirjam's own story of suffering ended when the war ended.

For nearly three years, though, she didn't see her parents. Didn't know where they were. And didn't know if she would ever see them again, or what the future held.

Curiously, before Mirjam was separated from her parents during the war, she was seeing into the future — in her dreams. She had one recurring nightmare that a German shepherd — a dog once associated with the Nazis — was chasing her.

On August 19, 1942, the day of her parents' anniversary, Mirjam came home from school.

"I went to my bedroom, and I saw my parents coming, and they said we have to tell you something. And then they said, it's gotten too dangerous. The Germans are somehow going to find us, we have to find hiding places. And we found one for you," she says.

At the age of 11, Mirjam got on her push scooter, and left her parents and her two sisters. The first family she stayed with, she knew.

"I had braids. And before I was sent to this first family — on my scooter — they changed the name from Mirjam to Manja, because Mirjam was so obviously Jewish. And they cut off my braids — I had long braids — because they supposedly made me look more Jewish," Mirjam says.

Later, she was transferred to another home — people she didn't know — and then a third where she stayed for the rest of the war. At the third hiding place, the full extent of the fear she and the people hiding her were feeling was undeniable.

Her number three belonged to Tante Nel, a single mother. She had a daughter of her own. And she was already harboring a Jewish boy. Tante Nel wanted to help. She also needed some income, and hiding Jewish kids would bring her some money.

But the end of the war, food was so scarce that you needed a relative fortune just to feed a small family. Tante Nel resorted to things like mashed tulip bulbs mixed with flour to keep herself and her charges from starving.

And untethered as daily life was for Mirjam, it all became kind of routine. Mirjam says they slept in a hiding place at night under the kitchen floor, only accessible through a trap door.

There were some books in Dutch that Mirjam read over and over. Winnie the Pooh, Uncle Tom's Cabin. Occasionally, a teacher would slip by the house and go over reading, writing and arithmetic with the kids. Strange knocks on the door, though, were rarely answered.

Mirjam knew her parents were still alive. But she didn't know where they were.

Her parents had sorted out hiding places for their three girls. But they struggled to find shelter for themselves.

"They went house to house like begging, where they knew somebody. Ended up at his sister's house who was married to a non-Jew. His sister was a teacher. So was her husband. They didn't have any children. They went there to beg, ask if they could stay there for a while. And his sister said 'no.'"

Before the war, Mirjam's father had held an important job as the chief pharmacist of the city of Rotterdam. He knew people. But not even his own sister would risk hiding the church, and said, 'I would like you to create a place for this Jewish couple to hide,'” Daphne says. "And the caretaker said, 'Well, I never told you this but there's another Jewish family that's been hiding in the attic for a year already.' So they made a second hiding place, so there were mirror images on either side of the organ pipes."

Two and a half years living behind a church organ. That's bound to have some consequences.

"That's why my parents hated organ music after the war," Mirjam says.

They hated organ music, but they survived. On a personal level, though, the conditions they found in that church crawl space completely reordered their lives.

"They had to lay in bed the whole daytime, because people who visit in the church could hear them walking if they would be," Mirjam says. "And they slept sometimes for 24 hours they were in that bed. Well, if you have a good marriage it goes really well maybe. If it's an in-between marriage, it's not the best, but if you have a terrible marriage it's murder."

Sheer luck. But somewhere in that luck lies some hope.

"I asked her what her parents' marriage was like," she says. "My mother was very vivacious. And my father was philosophical. He kept her happy with sleeping pills. And after the war she was addicted to them. But for a year or two after the war, she was like someone who was drunk all the time."

The pills kept Mirjam's father quiet in their hiding place. Silence was crucial. Months before the end of the war, there was one close call where noise would have given Mirjam's parents away to the Nazis.

"They were looking for weapons," Mirjam says. "Somebody had told them that there were weapons hidden in the church."

Mirjam's daughter, Daphne, picks up the story, saying that her grand-
WHAT IF THE HOLOCAUST HAD NEVER HAPPENED?

(Continued from page 2)

gained crucial strength between 1938 and 1939, he realized that had Germany gone to war a year earlier, things might have been only about 100,000 Jewish refugees, but a larger teaching library that had come into the timeline of one of the most brutal seasons in two millennia of Roman Jewish history. They were taken two weeks after SS Lt. Col. Herbert Kappler demanded that the community produce a tribute of 50 kilograms of gold within 36 hours, in exchange for which, he assured them, no harm would come to the city’s Jews; and two days before — despite the gold having been delivered — the first deportations began. Understandably, more significant matters than stolen books were on the minds of the witnesses and, after them, survivors, detectives, archivists and scholars.

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What did the library consist of, and why do people care so passionately about it almost 75 years after it vanished? One helpful thing to know is that there were actually two separate Jewish libraries, both of which were housed in the upper floors of the synagogue building in Lungotevere de’ Cenci. The first, the Rabbinical College Library, was a lending, teaching library that had come to Rome from Florence when the college transferred there in the 1930s. It consisted of prayer books, llullian texts, copies of the Talmud, and works of philosophy and literature amounting to perhaps 10,000 volumes in all, and was largely (though not entirely) recovered and then returned to Rome after the war. The second, or community, library was assembled in the early 20th century from an array of private families, confraternities and synagogues, among them Talmud Tora’, which alone contributed 4,728 of the estimated 7,000 total volumes. It contained precious early manuscripts and incunabula; volumes issued by the Soncino brothers, who printed the first Hebrew Bible; works by other early notable printers such as the Basar (Basle), Bomberg, Bragadin and Giustiniani; texts from 17th- and 18th-century Venice and Livorno; a rare 1488 Hebrew-Italian-Arabic dictionary; nearly 50 editions printed in the Levant before 1614; and, of course, the two books that are now in New York.

(Continued from page 4)

true” history of the Jews in Germany with the aim, in time, of justifying the “true” history of the Jews in Germany (Continued from page 4)

March/April 2016 - Adar/Nissan 5776 MARTYRDOM & RESISTANCE Page 7
PHOTO HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR YAD VASAR

On February 25th, 400 young professionals came out to the Metropolitan Pavilion in New York City to support the American Society for Yad Vashem.

Arielle Kane, Amy Winiker, Eillene Leistner, Rena Resnick, Ron Meier, Susie Nussbaum, BatSheva Halpern, Abbi Halpern, Kimberly Cooper, Debbie Kaplan, Shira Stein.

Harry Karten, Miritte Edery and friends.


BatSheva Halpern, Josh Stein, Murray Halpern, Jeremy Halpern, Abbi Halpern, Shira Stein.

Gonen Paradis, Kimberly Cooper, Oren Wilf, Jessica Glickman Mauk.
MERICAN SOCIETY FOR YAD VASHEM
SOCIATES WINTER GALA

Vashem. Over dinner and cocktails, they raised money for the annual Education Conference at the largest Young Leadership event of the year.

Corey Horowitz, Adam Bachner, Avi Felberbaum.


Michael Shmueli, Natasha Chadamian, Michelle Khakshoor and friend.

Young Leadership Associates’ Board.

Alexandria Levine, Danielle Chazen, Mike Becker, Nadiv Besner and friend.

Erica and Michael Distenfeld with friends.
"Don’t Forget Me"

Children’s Personal Albums from the Holocaust

BY DANA PORATH

"Here, too, you are enveloped in love and friendship. Remain loyal to your people, even when times are hard..."

These words were written in an album made for Jiri Bader by his friends on the occasion of his bar mitzvah, which he marked (albeit a year late) in the Terezin (Theresienstadt) ghetto. The album was illustrated by caricaturist Max Placek, a relative of Jiri’s, who came from Jiri’s home town of Kyjov, Czechoslovakia.

The album, bearing descriptions and drawings of Jiri’s childhood and incarceration in Terezin, is one of eight such handiworks featured in a new online exhibition, “Don’t Forget Me: Children’s Personal Albums from the Holocaust.” Beyond the images of the albums’ pages and dedications within — from friends, family members and acquaintances met during the war while in hiding, fleeing or in captivity — the exhibition tells the story of each individual child and his or her family, as well as, where possible, the fate of those who wrote them messages of love and hope. Told through photographs and crop marks, that despite cruel and relentless persecution, and often under living conditions that defy the imagination, children remain children: composing words of encouragement to their friends and embellishing them with joyful illustrations; writing of everlasting friendship, even though in many cases their lives were brutally cut short.

Jiri’s album was donated to Yad Vashem by his sister, Vera Weborova, who survived the Holocaust. Their mother Grete also survived, but Jiri and his father were deported and murdered in Auschwitz some six months after he received the album. Other albums were given to Yad Vashem for safekeeping by the owners themselves, decades after their creation.

Natan Rom (né Norbert Kurzmann, b. 1929, Katowice, Poland), immigrated to Eretz Israel in 1943 with a group that became known as the “Tehran Children.” The album, donated to Yad Vashem by Natan and his sister Ziva, contains dedications to friend. “He knows from which port he has departed, but he doesn’t know which port he is destined for. An everlasting memento.”

A nother album highlighted in the exhibition was created for Erika Hoffmann, who was born in Vienna and immigrated to the Netherlands with her family in 1939. In 1942, Erika went into hiding at the home of Corrie (Cornelia) Stolker in Doorn, Holland.

Jaap Spruyt, grandson of Righteous Among the Nations Sandor Stolker (Corrie’s brother) and a historian, recently discovered the album to Yad Vashem in 2014 after discovering it among his late mother’s belongings. The album bore heart-warming dedications, including from Corrie herself: “If life some-times brings hardship and sadness, trust in God with all your heart.” Erika and her mother, grandmother, and aunts were discovered and deport-ed to Sobibor in May 1943, where they were murdered. The fate of her father remains unknown.

The first page of the album made for Erika Hoffmann, who was discovered in hiding in Holland and sent to Sobibor, where she was murdered.

**PERUVIAN DIPLOMAT POSTHUMOUSLY HONORED BY YAD VASHEM**

Peru’s consul in Geneva during World War II, José Maria Barreto, has become the first Peruvian to be named by Yad Vashem, Israel’s Holocaust memorial institution, as Righteous Among the Nations, for helping to save Jews from the Holocaust.

By 1938, the government of Peru had given instructions to all of its consulates in Europe not to issue visas to foreign immigrants, with an emphasis on barring Jews in particular. Abraham Silberschein, the head of RELICO, a Jewish relief organization in Switzerland founded by the World Jewish Congress, originally approached Barreto, the consul general of Peru in Geneva, asking him to issue Peruvian passports for Jews under German occupation.

In the summer of 1943, the Swiss police asked for clarifications from the Peruvian embassy to explain the issuing of a Peruvian passport to a German Jew by the name of Gunther Frank. Barreto responded in a letter to the Peruvian ambassador that he had issued 27 Peruvian passports to 58 Jews (including 14 children) at the request of the Peruvian Foreign Protection Committee in order to save the lives of people in German concentration camps expected to be sent to death.

After the incident came to the attention of the Peruvian foreign minister, the ministry ordered the cancellation of the passports issued and closure of the Peruvian consulate in Geneva. In addition, Barreto was fired from his position and dismissed from Peru’s Foreign Ministry.

In a letter written on August 27, 1943, Silberschein described Barreto’s efforts: “Mr. Barreto, deeply moved by the suffering of millions of human beings in the occupied countries, wished to participate in helping to alleviate the plight of these innocent people, and decided to agree and provide us with a certain number of passports so that we could verify them to different persons in the countries under German control. Mr. Barreto was convinced that by this high-risk action he would save a number of people.”

**UNESCO RECOGNIZES YAD VASHEM’S HOLOCAUST TESTIMONIES**

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has added the Pages of Testimony collected at the Yad Vashem Holocaust memorial museum to its register of documentary heritage, which features items deemed to have “world significance and outstanding universal value.”

UNESCO established its Memory of the World Register in 1995, and it currently includes 299 collections and unique items from around the world.

Israel last year proposed to UNESCO that the Pages of Testimony, commemorating some of the six million Jews killed in the Holocaust, be recognized. The forms were filled out between 1954 and 2004 by the victims’ relatives and friends, many with accompanying photographs, and the collection currently encompasses some 2.6 million pages.

Yad Vashem launched the project of collecting and documenting testimonies in 1994, and has thus far managed to collect the names of about 4.2 million Holocaust victims.

Many of the names were independently verified through other documents, such as community registries and Nazi documentation. Even recently, Yad Vashem has also employed volunteers to go to people’s homes and collect testimonies.

“The Pages of Testimony project is a huge collective commemoration project for Holocaust victims,” Dr. Alexander Avraham, director of the Hall of Names at Yad Vashem, said. “This is an unprecedented initiative, both in its scope and in its attempt to recover names as a symbol of the humanity of man.”

“For many, these testimonies are the only remaining link to their loved ones who were murdered in the Holocaust,” added Avraham Shalev, chairman of the Yad Vashem Directorate. “The German Nazis and their accomplices tried to murder every Jewish man, woman and child and to erase any trace of their existence. Through this project of collecting names and testimonies, we can restore their names and identities. I call upon the public to commemorate their loved ones who were murdered in the Holocaust.”
March/April 2016 - Adar/Nissan 5776

THE MYSTERY OF THE MISSING JEWISH BOOKS OF ROME

(Continued from page 7)

from having a privileged and, regrettably, well-known "specialty." This elusive, dread-inducing character makes his way into the synagoge building: "While his men commence ransacking the libraries of the rabbinical college and the Jewish community, the officer, with hands as cautious and sensitive as those of the finest needlewoman, skims, touches, caresses papry and incunabula, leaves through manuscripts and rare editions, peruses parchments and palimpsests. The varying degrees of caution in his touch, the heedfulness of his gestures, are quickly adapted to the importance of each work. … In those moments, when the officials, as though subjected to the cruel and bloodless torture of an exquisite sadism, revealed everything. Later, it became known that the church librarian was a distinguished scholar of paleography and Semitic philology."

Debenedetti's account was not the first Nazi to evaluate the books, either. In the preceding days two other uniformed officers who described themselves as Orientalists had come to inspect the library (and help themselves to cash from the community's safe while they were at it). And on October 2 they visited the chief rabbi's home, where they examined and confiscated the books and papers they found.

When these scholar-plunderers apprehended the extent of the libraries and learned it would require several freight cars to move them from north to south, they engaged Otto & Rosoni, a firm of carriers, to organize the transportation of the stolen libraries, they gave the fragmented Nazi documentation, a recognition that the plunder has actual monetary value.

And now back to Nachman, son of Foa. So, how did his manuscript wash up out of this long river of time—time and space—onto Broadway and 122nd Street, a world away from where it was written and housed for 400 years?

Estelle Gilson writes that, in defiance of the German officers' orders, the president of the community and his associates did manage to salvage a few volumes of the community library. A 1485 commentary on the Bible was hidden in a garden. A handful of books remained undiscovered in the synagogue; several others were overlooked in cupboards in the rabbi's office. Nachman's manuscript were one of these stragglers, though, its arrival in New York would still be perplexing. Might it have slipped out of the original transport, having been pilfered by the sensitive aristocrat or his kind? Or is it, somehow, an escapee from the transport itself, which is lying in some German or Russian library basement or in a remote castle or a former bomb shelter or even a school? Or perhaps it was sold off from a hypothetical private collection … though of course if it were, one would want to know what sort of collector-cum-Hebrew-scholar would hold onto such a prize in secret.

October 14, 1943, was two weeks after Rosh Hashanah. Three hundred ninety years earlier, on September 9, 1553, on Rosh Hashanah itself, an early, one might even say pioneering, form of biblio-"history has made it poignantly clear," Gilson says, "that Jewish books had a far better survival rate than did Jewish human beings." Certainly this obtains for many other Nazi-seized libraries, but the community library of Rome would seem to be the exception. Even the Tedeschi Commission could only "draw up various theories," as they put it, as to its fate.

In investigating the rumor, which Gilson repeats, that the freight train of the community appealed to Italian authorities for help, they did not even respond to the request.

December 23 the officers returned to finish the job. When members of the community appealed to Italian authorities for help, they did not even respond to the request.
WHY ONE OF THE HOLOCAUST’S WORST MASSACRES IS MARKED ONLY BY A CHARRED MENORAH

BY MIHAELA RODINA, AFP

More than 70 years after the Holocaust, the suffering of survivors in Romania is often overlooked or played down, even if the country has taken some steps toward recognizing what happened, historians and survivors say.

After denying its role in the Holocaust for years, in 2003 Romania set up an international commission of historians led by survivor and Nobel peace laureate Elie Wiesel to look into the matter.

Its report said between 280,000 and 380,000 Jews died during the Holocaust in territories run by the pro-Nazi Romanian regime of Ion Antonescu from 1940 to 1944.

But historian Alexandru Climescu said understanding of this dark chapter in Romanian history was still poor, and he warned against a tendency to put the blame for massacres and deportations to the Nazi death camps on German forces.

He points to the case of two Romanian officers who died after the war for their part in a notorious pogrom in Iași, in the country’s north, in which some 13,000 Jews perished in June 1941.

The two men were cleared posthumously in 1998 after an unusual appeal to the state prosecutor, who put the blame on the Germans, saying the two men were simply obeying orders.

“Acquitting those who were nicknamed the Eichmanns of Romania... is to deny again that the deportations in the north and the Iași pogrom itself even took place,” Climescu said.

Iancu Tucarman, 92, who survived the Iași massacre — in which Jews were gunned down by guards and suffocated in overcrowded train wagons — also condemned the court’s decision.

“In my wagon, 137 Jews were put on board instead of 45, the normal capacity for a wagon transporting goods. After a nine-hour ordeal, only eight were still alive and got off the wagon,” he said.

“If war criminals can win their legal cases, that means their crimes didn’t take place,” Tucarman added. “Can the victims also ask the courts to cancel their deaths?”

Alexandru Florian, director of the Elie Wiesel National Institute for Studying the Holocaust in Romania, shares his indignation.

“Public institutions are sometimes contributing to the rewriting of history, and they are twisting it. Those two officers will now forever remain ‘innocent’ from a legal point of view,” Florian said.

There are now around 5,700 Jews living in Romania, down from some 800,000 before World War II.

And while the Holocaust survivors interviewed by AFP said they do not experience regular anti-Semitism, polls suggest more than one in 10 Romanians say they don’t want anything to do with Jews.

“For decades under the Communist regime there was an attempt to destroy the memory,” said Liviu Beris, 88, another survivor.

“The mindset people have, formed under this regime, it can’t change overnight.”

Recognizing Romania’s role in the Holocaust has been accompanied in recent years by more concrete measures, including school lessons and laws banning Holocaust denial, Climescu told AFP.

But he warned “symbolic acquittals” are still going on, giving the example of war criminals being made “citizens of honor” in some towns, streets still bearing Antonescu’s name and museums showing the wartime leader in a hero’s light.

“The biggest danger is that people who directly contributed to the persecution of Jews might be legitimized in the public view as symbols, martyrs and heroes,” he said.
When David Hershkoviz was a child, he used to wake up in the middle of the night to the sound of his mother screaming in her sleep, and he knew that she was reliving the horrors of the Holocaust.

In time, he learned of the traumatic wartime experience that haunted her most — being torn away from her own mother at the Auschwitz concentration camp's selection line, where at 21 she was forced into work and her mother dispatched to death.

“That separation never left her,” said Hershkoviz, 54, his voice quivering as he choked back tears. “She said, ‘I think my mother is angry at me because I left her. But my mother never comes to me in my dreams. I haven’t dreamed about her since we parted. How is that possible?’”

When his mother, Mindel, died two years ago, he wanted to carry on her legacy by bearing witness to the Holocaust. He found help in a first-of-its-kind course teaching the children of Holocaust survivors how to ensure their parents’ stories live on.

Hershkoviz is one of 18 graduates of the Shem Olam Institute’s inaugural four-month “second generation” course, where children of survivors study the history of the horrors their parents endured and how best to pass it on. The program aims to usher in a new era of Holocaust remembrance in a post-survivor era.

Children of Holocaust survivors study how to preserve the memory

Files detailing French collaboration in the murder of 76,000 Jews were made public for the first time after being locked away since the end of the Second World War.

BY PETER ALLEN, EXPRESS

When David Hershkoviz listen to Avraham Krieger, director of the Shem Olam Institute, at he speaks about the Torah scroll from the Warsaw ghetto in Kfar Hanoeh, Israel.

The German Nazis and their collaborators murdered six million Jews during World War II, wiping out a third of the world’s Jewish population, yet the full extent of their wartime crimes is only now being understood.

“My mother lived in a free zone in southern France, which was at first unoccupied and where she was able to live in a Jewish seminary. She was a child of a child and was able to live in a Jewish community,” said Hershkoviz.

Many victims came from major cities, including Paris, where occupying German forces worked closely with local officials. Others came from the so-called “free zone” in southern France, which was at first unoccupied and where Pétain ran his puppet government in the spa town of Vichy.

A new decree says the newly opened archives can be “freely consulted” by civil servants and historical researchers — “subject to the declassification of documents covered by national defense secrecy rules”.

Among the files will be disturbing evidence that French Jews were pinpointed and betrayed.

“Names of those responsible will be listed. It comes six years after the French Council of State, the country’s highest judicial body, said the Vichy government “held responsibility” for deportations and they could not solely be blamed on the Germans.

It ruled that Nazi officials did not force the French to betray their fellow citizens, but anti-Semitic persecution was carried out willingly — by organizations that included the Paris police and SNCF, the national railway.

Postwar French governments had previously refused to acknowledge any Vichy role in the Holocaust.

The Council of State ruling in 2009 called for a “sombre recognition of the state’s responsibility and of collective prejudice suffered” by the deportees. But it said there would be no payments for survivors or for the families of victims.

Lawyers around the world, especially in the US and Israel, are working to change that. During his term of office, which ended in 2007, President Jacques Chirac made the most outspoken reference so far by a French head of state to involvement in the Holocaust. He said: “These dark hours forever sully our history and are an insult to our past and our traditions.

“Yes, the criminal folly of the occupiers requires us to look at the French — by the French state.”

Today France has western Europe’s largest Jewish community, with around 700,000 people. Many of them are still discriminated and persecuted, and anti-Semitism remains prevalent in the country.
A BRITISH WAR HERO WAS ACTUALLY A GERMAN-BORN JEW

By COREY CHARLTON, MAILONLINE

A man who decided to research his late British father’s RAF wartime past was stunned to discover that he was actually a German Jew whose battles against the Nazis inspired the film The Great Escape.

Marc Stevens was just 22 when his hero dad Peter passed away in 1979, having emigrated to Canada in the 1950s. All Mr. Stevens knew of his father, who spoke with a perfect English accent, was that he had been born Geog Franz Hein, in Hanover, Germany, to Christian parents.

He also knew his dad had gone to England at the outbreak of war to join the RAF as a bomber pilot to fight the Nazis and that later he had served in MI6.

Before joining the RAF and piloting a Hampden twin-engine bomber with a crew of four, Peter had stopped using his German name and adopted that of a friend in England who had passed away.

Peter had married Mr. Stevens’ mother — a French-Canadian Catholic — and passed himself off in later life as an Englishman once he moved to Canada in 1952.

But after his death Mr. Stevens was fascinated to discover why his dad was one of just 69 members of the RAF to be awarded Britain’s Military Cross for valor in the Second World War.

His father also later worked for MI6 — a fact kept within the family until after his death, when it was corroborated by his former colleagues.

Like his determined father, Mr. Stevens stopped at nothing, getting secret files opened early, testimonies and debriefs from his dad’s own war record to find out more.

The ripples of that light shone on Peter’s past have even changed his ethnicity and inspired him to publish the book Escape, Evasion and Revenge.

Mr. Stevens, from Toronto, Canada, said: “Dad spoke with a highly cultured British accent, and passed himself off as an Englishman.

“The fact that he had served as an RAF bomber pilot only helped to reinforce that cover story. What I didn’t know, and only discovered in 1996, was that my father had been born Jewish.

“At first with a lot of letter writing — initially to an author of POW escape books in England.

“He was the first to tell me that my father was Jewish, but I thought he was dead wrong about that.

“More letters were written to the RAF Personnel Department in England, hoping to be put in contact with any surviving members of Dad’s bomb crew.

“IN事实，我是能够gro手uao each of Dad’s 22 combat missions.

“In 1996, I finally tracked down and contacted my late father’s little sister, who finally confirmed the rumors that my father was actually a Jew.”

As Mr. Stevens’ research continued, the more he unearthed about his dad’s wartime exploits, including a stint at the infamous Stalag Luft 3 prisoner-of-war camp.

He said: “Dad became one of only two Allied prisoners authorized by the Escape Committee to trade with the Germans at the massive Stalag Luft 3, home of The Great Escape.

“Fans of the movie will recognize the James Garner character as ‘The Scrounger,’ a job partly filled by my father.

“In fact, Dad is named on the official history of Stalag Luft 3 as the Head of Contacts for the ‘X’ Organization in East compound of that massive POW camp.

“Peter had ended up in the camp after being captured after an attack on Berlin on September 7, 1941.

“Mr. Stevens’ father and his new crew were ordered to bomb Berlin, the capital of Nazi Germany and the target with the best defenses in Europe.

“They made it to Berlin and dropped their bombs, but the aircraft was damaged by anti-aircraft artillery over the target, and Dad ordered his crew to bail out. Both gunners did, and it was later determined that one’s parachute had failed to open. Sadly, his body was never found. That man, Sgt. Ivor Roderick Fraser, was just 19 years old.

“After his crew bailed out, Dad realized that his plane was marginally flyable, and the navigator stayed with him as he turned back to England. But there was a hole in each of the main fuel tanks, and they ran out of fuel and crash-landed near Amsterdam.

“Captured a day later, Dad and his navigator were eventually sent to separate prisoner-of-war camps. Of course, it was critical that the Germans never realize his true identity, as they would have legally been able to execute him as a traitor to Germany.

“For the next three years and eight months, he was without any protection whatsoever under the Geneva Convention.

“Dad made escape his first priority, and he had a massive advantage. He became a very active participant in great demand for most escape schemes.

“When he wasn’t directly involved in escapes, he was always consulted by other prisoners who needed false documents prepared in the German language. On two separate occasions in December 1941, Dad got dressed up as a German guard, and escorted a group of ten British prisoners out the camp gate. Both times they had to turn back, but after the war in 1946, an English newspaper called it: The Boldest Escape Attempt of the War.”

This daring escape attempt later earned him the Military Cross.

His Jewish heritage was something that gradually became more clear to Mr. Stevens as he researched his dad’s history — after a poignant meeting in London in 1996 he learned his family had lost some 10 to 15 members to the Holocaust.

Mr. Stevens said: “Since I only discovered Dad was Jewish 17 years after his death, I can only guess as to his motives for not sharing it.

“Firstly, Dad never practiced the faith of his family after the age of six, when his father died and he was sent away to boarding school. According to his sister, he was never bar mitzvahed. So I don’t know if he really even felt any affinity to his religion.

“Secondly, he emigrated from the UK to a very Catholic Quebec in 1952, and he was likely worried about later discrimination, which was still very much in evidence in that society.

“After 1996, I asked my mother if she would have married him, knowing he was Jewish.

“She had close Jewish friends and was never anti-Semitic in any way, but she said honestly that she probably would not have done so in that place and time.

“That was no reflection on her, but rather on the societal norms of the day, in a place where even the gov- ernment bowed to the Church.

“Today, I am very proud to be the son of one of the bravest men I ever knew.”
A story of Austria's role in World War II, from the perspective of one family that lived and died in it, is told in the documentary Shadows From My Past.

Co-director of the documentary Gita Kaufman was a 4-year-old when she and her family escaped Austria on the eve of being deported to the Dachau concentration camp 75 years ago, in March 1940. Prior to that, their lives had become unbearable. "I remember being 3 and suddenly hearing the rumble of the train," Kaufman said. "The Nazis came and disrupted our lives altogether.

They banged on the door and pulled her father out of bed, saying, 'We're arresting you because you're a Jew.' They didn't arrest him, though. Instead they took him out to the Darunau, threatened to throw him off the bridge, then made him wade into the river up to his waist and sing Jewish songs. Then they brought him onshore and beat him on the head with a lead pipe. In the dark, he held his hands over his head. "The Austrians were more vicious than the Germans," Kaufman said. Because of the beating, her father went for a long time to stay in the hospital, and this probably saved his life, she said. The Nazis would come to their building, bang on the door, and say, "Where's the Jew?" and go away without finding him.

And, "by some miracle, when he got back, the papers came to get us the hell out of there," Kaufman said. Thanks to Paula Forman's grandfather and his brother, Isadore and Samuel Sobel, they had the papers and tickets on a luxury liner to the U.S. Due to his beating, her father was nearly dead for the rest of his life.

"Her parents were refugees from Austria about to be sent to concentra- tion camps," Forman said. "My grandfather and his brother, although they didn't know them, sent money by whatever means they could. They traveled through Austria, threatened to throw them off the bridge, then made them wade into the river up to their waist and sing Jewish songs. Then they brought them onshore and beat them on the head with a lead pipe. In the dark, they held their hands over their head. "The Austrians were more vicious than the Germans," Kaufman said. Because of the beating, her father went for a long time to stay in the hospital, and this probably saved his life, she said. The Nazis would come to their building, bang on the door, and say, "Where's the Jew?" and go away without finding him.

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BY ANNE JOSEPH, THE TIMES OF ISRAEL

T o mark the 70th anniversary of their parents’ and grandparents’ liberation from the Nazi concentration camps at the end of World War II, a group of families have stitched together — literally — their memories of the Holocaust through a vibrant patchwork of quilts.

The four “memory quilts,” currently on display at London’s Jewish Museum, each depict stories of survival, panel by panel, of “The Boys” — a group of 732 child survivors (which actually included 80 girls) from Eastern Europe.

According to the ‘45 Aid Society, an organization formed by the survivors after the war, the UK government offered at the time to allow 1,000 Jewish orphans from the camps to settle in Great Britain, but sadly only the 732 could be found. Many stayed to rebuild their lives, but others went on to Israel, North America and Australia.

“From terrible destruction comes these amazing lives,” said Abigail Morris, the museum’s director. “The beauty of these magnificent quilts speaks for themselves.”

The quilt project was conceived several years ago by Julia Burton — whose father is one of the “The Boys” — while working as an art volunteer in the Beth Shalom Holocaust Centre in London. Burton recalled this commemoration the 70th anniversary of “The Boys” liberation, Burton said, “They are a fitting tribute to the lives that ‘The Boys’ created.

“were asked to produce something of importance in our lives that represented our story,” explained 73-year-old Joanna Millan (née Bella Rosenthal), one of the 80 female “Boys.”

Born in Berlin, Millan was deported in June 1943 to the German concentration camp Theresienstadt (located in what is now the Czech Republic), where she remained until liberation in May 1945. At just age three, she arrived in England where she was eventually adopted.

For the quilt project, Millan’s teenage granddaughter helped design her square, which is embroidered with purple flowers that weave in and around a large yellow Star of David. Her birth name, Berta, floats at its apex, and a girl’s head, covered by a mass of wavy brown and red hair, tilts slightly, her gaze focused on a few colorful butterflies with tiny birds hovering above her.

“[It] represents myself as a young girl alone, arriving in a strange country,” Millan explained. “The first thing I remember seeing when I came to England in spring were carpets of bluebells.”

Each of the four quilts is just over 6 feet high, with 156 individual squares in total. Exhibited together across one wall, they are a mesmerizing, colorful collection of images that have been painstakingly stitched, painted, photographed, penned or glued. Each square is a reminder not only of lost families and communities, but also of the group’s strength, survival and continuity.

Born in Poland in 1930, Solly Irving was the sole survivor of his family. His square depicts a tree of life, with the green, regenerative leaves representing the subsequent generations of his family. Their names are written in Hebrew in distinguished gold lettering, with the brown leaves depicting the names of those for whom the only information they had was a place of birth. The prewar map of Poland is in itself a remarkable piece of art: its shape has been created out of the 350 names of the Polish “Boys” in calligraphy.

At the same time, they tried to reach as many of “The Boys” and their families around the world as possible. This too proved challenging, as the databases of both the Second Generation and the ‘45 Aid Society were out of date.

Despite the considerable obstacles, all 732 “Boys” have been represented on these quilts. Maps of Germany, Austria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland were made to include the names of those for whom the only information they had was a place of birth. The prewar map of Poland is in itself a remarkable piece of art; its shape has been created out of the 350 names of the Polish “Boys” in calligraphy. Yet there were also names about which they knew nothing, not even a date of birth. Their names have been stitched into the borders of the quilts.

The quilts exude joy and energy, Burton said, “They are a fitting tribute to the lives that “The Boys” created. They are a celebration of life.”

A bequest to the American Society for Yad Vashem helps keep the memory of the Six Million alive...

Please remember us in your trust, will, estate plan or with the planned gift. It’s your legacy... to your family, and your people. For more information, or for help with proper wording for the bequest to ASYV, please contact Jonathan Gudema at

212-220-4304