

MARTYRDOM & RESISTANCE



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PRESIDENT BUSH VISITS ISRAEL'S YAD VASHEM HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL

President Bush had tears in his eyes during an hour-long tour of Israel's Holocaust memorial and told Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice that the U.S. should have bombed Auschwitz to halt the killing, the memorial's chairman said.

Bush emerged from a tour of the Yad Vashem memorial calling it a "sobering reminder" that evil must be resisted, and praising victims for not losing their faith. Wearing a *yarmulke*, Bush placed a red-white-and-blue wreath on a stone slab that covers ashes of Holocaust victims taken from six extermination camps. He also lit a torch memorializing the victims. Bush was visibly moved as he toured the site, said Yad Vashem's chairman, Avner Shalev.

"Twice, I saw tears well up in his eyes," Shalev said. At one point, Bush viewed aerial photos of the Auschwitz camp taken during the war by U.S. forces and called Rice over to discuss why the American government had decided against bombing the site, Shalev said.

The U.S. had intelligence reports about the death camps during the war but chose to focus resources on the broader military effort, a decision that drew criticism years later.

"We should have bombed it," Bush said, according to Shalev.

In the memorial's visitors' book, the president wrote simply, "God bless Israel, George Bush."

"I was most impressed that people in the face of horror and evil would not forsake their God. In the face of unspeakable crimes against humanity, brave souls – young and old – stood strong for what they believe," Bush said.

"I wish as many people as possible would come to this place. It is a sobering reminder that evil exists, and a call that when evil exists we must resist it," he said.

It was Bush's second visit to the Holocaust memorial, a regular stop on the visits of foreign dignitaries. His first



President George W. Bush, Yehudit Shendar, Deputy Director & Senior Art Curator, Museums Division, Yad Vashem Jerusalem, Eli Zborowski, Chairman of the American & International Societies for Yad Vashem, and Dr. Elizabeth Mundlak-Zborowski, Cultural Director at the American & International Societies for Yad Vashem during the recent visit of President Bush to Yad Vashem, Jerusalem on January 11, 2008.

was in 1998, as governor of Texas. The last U.S. president to visit was Bill Clinton in 1994.

Bush, during his most extensive Mideast trip of his presidency, was accompanied on his tour by a small party that included Rice and Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert.

At the compound, overlooking a forest on Jerusalem's outskirts, Bush visited a memorial to the 1.5 million Jewish children killed in the Holocaust, featuring six

candles reflected 1.5 million times in a hall of mirrors. At the site's Hall of Remembrance, he heard a cantor sing a Jewish prayer for the dead.

Eli Zborowski, Chairman of the American Society for Yad Vashem was excited to meet President Bush in Yad Vashem. "I could see that he really cares about it."

Eli was a member of the Jewish underground. His job was to transfer underground confidential documents to the ghettos. He was hidden, together with his mother and siblings, for 18 months by two Catholic families in the town of *Zarki*, Poland. "We lived knowing that any minute someone could come and kill us but I had hope. I also had hope that the world would recognize what was done to us and that is really the case."

Chairman of Yad Vashem Avner Shalev presented Bush with illustrations of the Bible drawn by the Jewish artist Carol Deutsch, who perished in the Holocaust. Deutsch created the works

while in hiding from the Nazis in Belgium. He was informed upon, and died in 1944 in the Buchenwald camp. After the war, his daughter Ingrid discovered that the Nazis had confiscated their furniture and valuables but had left behind a single item: a meticulously crafted wooden box adorned with a Star of David and a seven-branched menorah, containing a collection of 99 of the artist's illustrations of biblical scenes.

The originals are on display at Yad Vashem. The memorial recently decided to produce a special series of 500 replicas, the first of which was to be presented to Bush.

Debbie Deutsch-Berman, a Yad Vashem employee whose grandfather was Deutsch's brother, said she was proud that Bush would be given her relative's artwork.

"These are not just his paintings, they are his legacy, and the fact that they survived shows that as much as our enemies tried to destroy the ideas that these paintings embody, they failed," she said.

IN THIS ISSUE

Nazi archive allows online requests.....	3
The Nazi connection to Islamic terrorism.....	4
Children of the Holocaust train.....	5
A love triangle in... Bergen Belsen.....	6
The French Anne Frank.....	7
World remembers victims of Holocaust.....	8
Studying the Holocaust in a time of Holocaust denial and anti-semitism.....	9
Yad Vashem launches Arabic website.....	10
Secret diary details Holocaust and Nazi crimes.....	12
Joy in <i>Dachau</i>	15
Memory of Holocaust victims honored through series of UN events.....	16

AJC PRAISES RESTITUTION DEAL

Macedonia's plan to resolve outstanding Holocaust property claims was praised by American Jewish Committee.

Under the agreement with Macedonia's Jewish community, Macedonia will allocate \$25 million for the construction and initial operational expenses of a Holocaust Memorial Center under construction in the capital city of *Skopje*.

The center, located on returned Jewish property, will recount the story of the Holocaust in Macedonia and will also provide facilities for cultural and communal

programs. Macedonia's tiny Jewish community, now a few hundred people, numbered more than 7,000 before World War II.

AJC says it frequently raised the issue of restitution with Macedonia's leaders, most recently with Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski in October, and with Foreign Minister Antonio Milososki in December.

In 2002, the Macedonian government resolved outstanding Jewish communal property claims. With this new agreement, Macedonia is one of only a few countries that has settled claims against private Jewish properties with no apparent heirs.

HOLOCAUST AUCTION STIRS IRE

An Israeli auction house drew censure for selling off Holocaust memorabilia.

Among hundreds of items sold by the Ben-Ami Andres auction house in Tel Aviv were two yellow Star of David badges, which Jews were forced to wear under the Nazis. They were sold for \$240 and \$160.

The buyers were not identified, but auction organizers said there had been interest in the items from children of Holocaust survivors who voiced desire to commemo-



A yellow star of David, a patch that Jews were forced to wear by the Nazis is displayed before being put up for auction in *Ben Am*.

rate their parents' suffering.

Yet other Holocaust survivors were far from sanguine about the sale, describing it as profiteering.

"I think it's despicable," said Yosef Lapid, a former Israeli justice minister who is now chairman of Yad Vashem's board of governors. Speaking on Israel Radio, he added sarcastically: "When I was a child in the Budapest ghetto, I had no idea that the badges I was forced to wear could prove so valuable."

AUSTRIA TO REOPEN CASE AGAINST NAZI CONCENTRATION CAMP GUARD

In a dramatic about-face, Austrian authorities have agreed to reopen the case of a long-sought suspected Nazi criminal who served as a guard at the *Majdanek* concentration camp.

Erna Wallisch, 85, who ranks fourth on the Wiesenthal Center's list of most-wanted Nazi war criminals, has been living in a small apartment on the bank of the Danube in Vienna, with her name printed on the door.

Austrian authorities had previously refused to prosecute her due to the statute of limitations, the organization's chief Nazi hunter and Israel Director Dr. Efraim Zuroff said.

The Austrians agreed to reopen the case after the Polish Institute of National Remembrance uncovered five new witnesses, following lobbying efforts by the Wiesenthal Center to have the case reopened, he said.

"This is a typical example of the lack of political will up until now to prosecute someone who was actively involved in the crimes of the Holocaust," Zuroff said. "It is high time that the case be taken seriously, as we are dealing with someone whose hands are full of [the] blood of innocent victims." About 360,000 people perished at *Majdanek*, which is located in a suburb of *Lublin*, Poland.

JEWISH LEADERS SEEK INFO ON BOSNIANS WHO AIDED JEWS IN HOLOCAUST

Leaders of Bosnia's Jewish community appealed recently for help locating Bosnians who aided Jews during World War II and have not been recognized. The search is aimed at locating people who offered help and documenting their stories, said the Bosnian Jewish Community. The effort is part of a broader project to record the lives of Bosnia's Muslim and Jewish communities over the past centuries.

Project leader Eli Tauber invited people to contact the Jewish Community or Bosnia's Institute for the Research of Crimes Against Humanity.

This project is extremely important nowadays when Bosnia is full of negative examples of who hates whom. It sends a message of coexistence, and we want to show to all peoples in Bosnia that the life of one nation with another is sacred and has to be preserved, said Muhamed Mesic, of the institute.

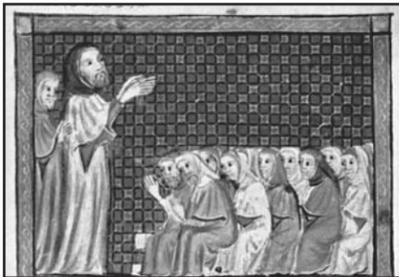
One of the best-known stories of Bosnian involvement in preserving Jewish tradition during World War II involves efforts to safeguard a 600-year-old

Jewish manuscript known as the *Sarajevo Haggadah*.

In 1492, when Spain expelled the country's Jews, a refugee brought the book to Italy. A rabbi later brought the *Haggadah* from Italy to Bosnia and passed it down through his family until a descendant, Joseph Kohen, sold it to the National Museum in 1894. The museum kept the treasure in a safe until World War II, when a Catholic museum director and his Muslim colleague saved the book from a Nazi officer who came to pick it up.

The two men spirited the book through Nazi checkpoints and carried it to a village in the mountains above *Sarajevo*, where a Muslim cleric kept it hidden beneath the floor of a mosque until the war ended. It was then returned to the museum.

During Bosnia's 1992-95 war, a Muslim museum director and a Serb policeman risked sniper fire to reach the museum, take the book and hide it in a National Bank safe, where it remained until the end of the war. Bosnia regards the *Haggadah* as its most important national treasure.



HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS SAY GERMANY UNWILLING TO IMPROVE REPARATIONS DEAL

Israeli Holocaust survivors asked Germany's finance minister to improve a reparations arrangement, but Peer Steinbrueck said no additional money would be paid, they said.

Survivors reasoned that the original 1952 accord with Israel did not account for their unexpected longevity or apply to tens of thousands of Holocaust victims who came to Israel following the Soviet Union's collapse.

But Steinbrueck rejected the appeal, said Zeev Factor, a Holocaust survivor who took part in the meeting.

"He said Germany reached an agreement with Israel on this matter ... and isn't willing to touch the agreement," Factor said, referring to the 1952 accord.

Steinbrueck told them that if German officials conclude that problems can be resolved within the framework of the existing agreement, then "they will be willing to discuss it," Factor said.

The German government has said it would be willing to discuss requests for additional payments if Israel submits a formal petition, but that so far, no such request has been made.

Israeli Finance Minister Roni Bar-On met with Steinbrueck, but did not submit a formal request for additional aid, a Bar-On spokeswoman said.

Six million Jews were killed in the Nazi Holocaust of World War II, and hundreds of thousands of Jewish survivors emigrated to Israel after its creation in 1948.

Germany has paid an estimated \$25 billion in reparations to Israeli Holocaust survivors, who, according to Factor, numbered 350,000 to 400,000 at their peak. It also transferred more than \$700 million in goods and services to the Israeli government.

Today, some 250,000 Holocaust survivors live in Israel. They are living longer than was foreseen under the reparation agreement with Germany, with all the added expenses and high medical costs that implies, they say. Also, about one-third of them are not covered by the agreement at all, because they escaped to Russia but did not technically live under Nazi rule, arriving in Israel after the fall of the Soviet Union.

Critics inside Israel have said the country should be able to take care of its own elderly survivors without going to Germany for more money.

After a storm of protest by Holocaust survivors who charged the government with abandoning them, the state agreed earlier this year to give the 160,000 Israelis who survived Nazi ghettos and concentration camps a monthly stipend of nearly \$300, in addition to tax discounts and other breaks.

It also approved monthly payments ranging from \$40 to \$125 for 80,000 Israelis, most from the former Soviet Union, who became refugees as the Nazis conquered Europe but never lived under Nazi occupation.

SWASTIKAS REAWAKEN NIGHTMARES IN AREAS WITH MANY HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS

Brooklyn Has Highest Number Of Jewish Survivors in Nation. Yet another hate graffiti incident shocked a Brooklyn community January 2, when a swastika and an anti-Semitic message were found scrawled on the side door of a Jewish senior center in Midwood. The markings were found Wednesday morning on the Brookdale Senior Citizen Center of Agudath Israel at 817 Avenue H. This latest hate tag is the second anti-Semitic graffiti incident in Brooklyn since the new year began. On Jan. 1, similar graffiti was found on a home on 40th Street in Borough Park. Both neighborhoods have some of the highest populations of Holocaust survivors in New York City.

"I actually met a Holocaust survivor outside the center when this was all going on," said Assemblyman Dov Hikind, himself the son of two Holocaust survivors. "When things like this happen, in particular with survivors, they look at it and say, 'This is how it all started in Germany.' It didn't start with violence. It started with this type of graffiti."

That, he said, is why last year's rise in hate crimes, up some 25 percent from 2006 according to police estimates, is of particular concern to Brooklyn's, and the city's, high population of survivors.

Brooklyn is home to close to 20,000 Holocaust survivors, the largest grouping of anywhere in the country, said Max Liebmann, a senior vice president of the American Gathering of Jewish Holocaust Survivors and their Descendants, a group that registers survivors. The group's registry shows 18,350 survivors living in Brooklyn, more than three times as many as Queens, which, at 5,100, is the second-highest population in the city. It's also about 25 percent of the roughly 73,000 registered survivors in the United States.

"A lot of this community, it's either sur-

vivors or their children," Hikind said. "It's almost everybody." The largest populations are in the Brooklyn neighborhoods of Borough Park and Williamsburg, staff members for Liebmann and Hikind said, corresponding to large Jewish populations.

"But you probably have to add about 10 percent to those numbers," Liebmann said. "These numbers are dependent on



Brooklyn's Assemblyman Dov Hikind stands in front of graffiti that combines swastikas and an obscene hate message (not shown).

voluntary registration. Some people choose not to register. Orthodox Jews generally do not register."

Liebmann is himself a Holocaust survivor. At 19, he was deported from Germany to a concentration camp in Vichy France, where he met his future wife, Hanne. The Liebmanns now live in Queens. He has been with the AGJHS since 1991.

Rabbi Aron Heineman, whose parents fled Germany during the Holocaust, and who now runs the Brookdale Senior Center, said that neighbors are angry about the graffiti, but confident that their neighborhood is still safe.

"This is a multiracial block," said Heineman, who added that this type of incident is very rare in the area.

NAZI ARCHIVE ALLOWS ONLINE REQUESTS

A vast archive of Nazi-era documents started accepting online requests for information from victims of Nazi crimes and people tracing relatives — a move meant to speed up an often-slow process.

The move by the archive, based in the central German town of *Bad Arolsen*, should make it easier for people to get information from the 50 million files of the International Tracing Service. The site, <http://www.its-arolsen.org>, will not, however, allow victims or researchers direct access to the files over the Internet.

Until now, people hoping for data from the files had to submit a written request either directly, or through their local Red Cross chapter. The International Committee of the Red Cross administers the International Tracing Service.

"We wanted to make it easier for people to reach us and the overhaul of our Web site was geared to that," said Reto Meister, director of the service. "We thought it was our duty and obligation to put out readable information and understandable news, and especially to create easier access for people who can now reach us from all corners of the world."

For decades, processing of the inquiries

was painfully slow, leading to frustration among victims and their families, who often had to wait several years before receiving a response.

The International Tracing Service says on its new site that it aims to process requests within eight weeks, and have the backlog whittled down by mid-2008. But it warns that some more complex cases may take longer.

Meister said it remained to be seen whether allowing online applications would result in a jump in requests. He noted that, in the future, victims and their families also will be able to access files through Yad Vashem or the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, both of which have received digital copies of many of the documents.

Earlier this year, digital copies of some of the records were handed to the archives in Israel, the United States and Poland, in an effort to make the data more accessible to more people.

The fully revamped Web site also offers an online application for information for researchers and details on the archive's various divisions and the documents they hold.

MAKE YOUR OWN HOLOCAUST MUSEUM

In the center of the Projects Room at P. Ross Berry Middle School in Youngstown, OH rests a table, set as though awaiting the arrival of a small group of diners.

But no one will ever eat at that table.

It was set up a solemn reminder of the effort of a World War II-era Jewish family trying to retain some of its religious traditions in a world seemingly gone mad.

The table replicates one used to celebrate Hanukkah by the family of Anne Frank, which spent nearly three years in hiding in an unsuccessful effort to avoid capture and incarceration by German Nazis.

It's part of a temporary Holocaust Museum created by about 90 eighth-graders at P. Ross Berry, said teacher Lisa Perry.

Above the room's doorway hangs a sign written in German — "Arbeit Macht Frei" — which in English means "work makes one free." That's also a replica of the sign that hung over the entrance to the concentration camp at Auschwitz.

Hanging from the ceiling are dozens of handmade butterflies, a representation of the artwork created by Jewish children in the *Terezin* concentration camp.

When the temporary museum closes, the butterflies will be sent to the Houston Holocaust Museum in Texas, which seeks to collect 1.5 million of them, one for each child killed in the Holocaust.

Perry said it was student teacher Abby Aebischer who suggested the eighth-graders spend time studying the Holocaust, which claimed the lives of an estimated 6 million European Jews.

The Youngstown State University secondary education major said the teaching staff was looking for a unit to study, and when the Holocaust was brought up, she learned that many of the pupils knew nothing about it.

The students were given a two-week study on the Holocaust, did some reading related to the subject, wrote essays and then read and performed in a play based on "The Diary of Anne Frank," which detailed the Frank family's years of hiding in an office building in Amsterdam before they were betrayed and arrested.

"The kids loved it. They got to play the parts," Aebischer said.

The creation of their own Holocaust Museum was an offshoot of their studies, she said.

"We did the museum so the kids could see that they could be teachers themselves," she said, explaining that many of them served as tour guides for other classes and parents who visited the museum.

The pupils, alone or in teams, researched various aspects of the Holocaust, and their work is on display in the form of posters and photos that line the room.

HITLER AS DOORMAT

Millions have wanted to wipe their feet on Adolf Hitler, modern Israeli artist Boaz Arad made it possible. His work Hitler-doormat is on display at the Tel Aviv's Modern Art Centre.

The work of art, estimated at \$ 35,000, was set in a room dubbed "*Nazi Hunters Room*" and contains images of the swastika on the walls and the former Nazi leader, skinned and strewn on the floor, reminiscent of a captured bear from which a carpet was made.

Arad explained that the carpet symbolized what Nazi hunters would have done had they captured Hitler, their ulti-



mate goal. The carpet symbolizes the feelings of the Israelis about the Holocaust.

BILDNER CENTER AT RUTGERS PRESENTS TALK BY OMER BARTOV

Professor Omer Bartov (Brown University), one of the world's leading authorities on German history, the Holocaust, and genocide, discussed his most recent book, *Erased: Vanishing Traces of Jewish Galicia in Present-Day Ukraine* (Princeton University Press, 2007), at a public lecture in October 2007 sponsored by the Allen and Joan Bildner Center for the Study of Jewish Life, Rutgers the State University of New Jersey. An audience of approximately 200 people from both the local and Rutgers communities gathered for the Raoul Wallenberg Annual Program supported by the Leon and Toby Cooperman Fund.

Bartov described how what began as a deeply personal chronicle of the Holocaust in his mother's hometown of *Buchach* in former *Eastern Galicia*, became a journey across the region and back through history to explore the complex interethnic relationships and conflicts that have existed in the area for centuries. Bartov uncovered the rapidly disappearing vestiges of the Jews of western Ukraine who were murdered by the Nazis

during World War II with help from the local populace. Ultimately, he revealed the complete erasure of the Jews from public memory, a blatant act of forgetting done in the service of a fiercely aggressive Ukrainian nationalism.



Professors Ziva Galili, Acting Executive Dean of Rutgers School of Arts and Sciences; Omer Bartov; and Yael Zerubavel, Director of the Bildner Center at Rutgers.

The Allen and Joan Bildner Center for the Study of Jewish Life at Rutgers through its Herbert and Leonard Littman Families Holocaust Resource Center, fulfills its commitment to Holocaust education and to reducing prejudice and promoting tolerance and inter-group understanding.

HUNT FOR JEWISH LIBRARY STOLEN BY THE NAZIS TURNS TO RUSSIA

A priceless collection of antique manuscripts and books that has been missing since Nazi troops looted it from the synagogue in Rome may be languishing in an abandoned Soviet military archive.

After leads from Italy to Germany, Poland, France, Ukraine and the US, researchers have secured an agreement with Russia to help to find the 7,000-volume library, which that dates back to the 16th century.

There is good reason to believe that the collection could be in a warehouse or other undocumented location, Dario Tedeschi, a lawyer who has been leading efforts on behalf of the Italian Government, said. He described the decades-long hunt as trying to unravel a historical mystery.

Enrico Letta, an Italian undersecretary, signed an agreement with Ekaterina Genova, director of the Library of Foreign Literature in Moscow, to pursue the Soviet trail in an effort to bring the collection home. Ms Genova, an expert in tracing documents, was responsible for the return of the Vienna Jewish communities collection.

The collection, known as the Library of

the Jewish Communities, includes illuminated manuscripts, books and Torahs and Bibles printed in the 16th and 17th century. There are works of philosophy, mathematics and astronomy, as well as religious works. A 1324 copy of a treatise on medicine by the Arabic scholar and philosopher Avicenna was one of the library's gems.

Two collections were housed in the synagogue complex in Rome's ancient ghetto. One group of books was taken in October 1943, around the time that more than 1,000 Jews were rounded up to be sent to Nazi camps, such as Auschwitz. The other was taken that December.

Most of the volumes originally from the rabbinical college collection were later returned from Frankfurt, said Mr Tedeschi. But the Jewish Communities collection may have been taken to *Raciborz*, near Auschwitz, or to *Hungen* in the *Rhineland*. As Soviet troops pushed back the German forces, they may have taken possession of the collection.

Mr Tedeschi said that all the earlier searching had hinted at an eventual destination in Russia. Its a job of looking through archives, he said.

HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS HONORED IN BUCHAREST

On October 9, Romanian President Traian Basescu bestowed state honors on 11 Holocaust survivors in ceremonies in Bucharest. In ceremonies marking the Holocaust, Basescu said the suffering of the Jews in Romania was a result of the racist and anti-democratic laws, xenophobia and a lack of civil courage.

October 9 became Romania's official day to commemorate the country's own 400,000 Holocaust victims just four years ago. Before then, authorities had denied there had been a Holocaust in Romania. But in 2004, Romania accepted the findings of a report issued by an international commission chaired by 1986 Nobel Peace Prize laureate and novelist Eli Wiesel, a

Romanian-born Jew who survived the Holocaust.

The report concluded that former Romanian civilian and military authorities were responsible for the deaths of between 280,000 and 380,000 Romanian Jews. In addition, 25,000 members of the Roma ethnic group were deported during the Holocaust, about half of whom died. Romania was an ally of Nazi Germany between 1940 and 1944. Before WWII, about 800,000 Jews lived in Romania. About half of them were killed by Romanian, Hungarian and German Nazis. Many survivors emigrated to Israel, so today the Jewish community in Romania counts only 11,000 members, it was reported.



BOOK REVIEWS

MUSIC IN THE HOLOCAUST: CONFRONTING LIFE IN THE NAZI GHETTOS AND CAMPS

Music in the Holocaust: Confronting Life in the Nazi Ghettos and Camps. By Shirli Gilbert. Clarendon and Oxford University Press: Oxford & New York, 2005. 243 pp. \$35.00.

REVIEWED BY DR. DIANE CYPKIN

Shirli Gilbert in her conscientiously and well-written book, *Music in the Holocaust: Confronting Life in the Nazi Ghettos and Camps*, gives us a "wide-angle" view of the role music played during those infamous years. She accomplishes this specifically in four chapters of this work, each zeroing in on a different ghetto or camp, each chock-full of information.

For example, in Gilbert's chapter on the Warsaw ghetto, we learn about the many musical activities and of the music "created, circulated, and performed there." Indeed, the ghetto was teeming – certainly in the early years – with many varied types of musical entertainments for those who could afford them. There were cafés, a symphony orchestra, theatres, chamber groups, choirs. Of course, the "elite" of the ghetto – the *Judenrat*, the Jewish Police and big-time smugglers could enjoy all of this easily. For most, though, their music came from the beggars singing on the streets and by way of free concerts arranged by soup kitchens. While much

music was simply diversionary, there were songs, heartfelt songs, written and popularized in the ghetto, including,

"*Kh'shem zikh*" (I am ashamed) and "*Shlof, mayn kind*" (Sleep, my child)," both by M. Shenker. They communicated Shenker's anguish over the death of "his wife and child." And then there were still other songs that offered encouragement like, "*Oyb nit keyn emune*" (If I do not have faith)."

With the Vilna ghetto we find "powerful political currents" – most especially the Jewish Council vs. the Underground – affecting music made there. On the one hand, the Jewish leadership promoted "communal calm" as musical institutions – diversions – were quickly opened in the ghetto. A small choir and a small orchestra were established. With many Zionists in the population, there was a Hebrew choir. There was a Hebrew theatre. With

much controversy, a ghetto theatre was established. But, there was also the Youth Club, where the music of such as Hirsh Glik and Shmerke Kaczerginski – both songwriters – held sway. And their songs, more often than not, promoted the partisan "cause, encouraging active resistance and rousing a spirit of defiance and communal strength."

Meanwhile, in *Sachsenhausen*, a camp in Germany, the conditions were much worse than in the ghettos. Still, as Gilbert points out, varied groups in the camp "enjoyed" varied privileges *vis-à-vis* music. German political prisoners – communists – were most privileged.

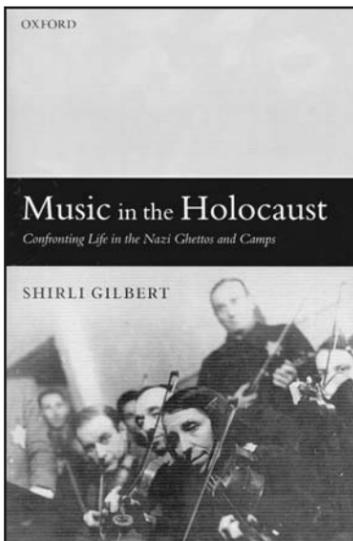
Interestingly, among other things, they organized optimistic communal "sing-songs" "to boost . . . morale" amongst them. Polish prisoners, when and if they sang clandestinely, sang of "death," "suffering," and "Nazi defeat." And Jews . . . perhaps they might hear someone quietly sing "*Ma'oz Tsur*" at *Hannukkah*. Sadly, more often than not,

music for Jews was music they had to sing while being punished . . . or as punishment for hours on end at the *Appellplatz*.

This brings us to Gilbert's chapter on Auschwitz – where music usually meant prisoner orchestras that played "each morning and evening as the labor contingents marched to and from work, and regularly accompanied executions." There was also "forced singing sessions, and torture sessions in which music was used in inventive and sadistic ways." Oddly enough, all this music seems to have made the Nazi perpetrators feel more "civilized" about what they were doing . . . Voluntary music making was highly limited. Though there was that "famous account" of Jewish communal singing of Czech Jews "from the family camp about to be gassed in Birkenau in July 1944." Knowing their deaths were imminent, they all began to sing – first "the Czechoslovak national anthem, and then the Hebrew song "*Haikvah*."

Needless to say, Gilbert's work is a major addition to Holocaust study and should be of interest to all readers of *Martyrdom and Resistance*.

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



HOLOCAUST ODYSSEYS

Wartime Odysseys: The Jews of Saint-Martin-Vesubie and Their Flight through France and Italy. By Susan Zuccotti. Yale University Press. 2007. 320pp. \$28.00.

REVIEWED BY RABBI ISRAEL ZOBERMAN

Distinguished historian, academic and author Susan Zuccotti combines all her impressive skills and experience to open yet another revealing and enriching window into the vastness of the Holocaust's

tragedy by focusing on the remarkable saga of a small French village close to the Maritime Alps.

The village of *Saint-Martin-Vesubie*, under Italian occupation from November 1942 to September 8, 1943, became a vibrant home and safe refuge to over a thousand non-French Jewish refugees from throughout Europe and of all ages in the midst of 1,650 French Catholics, till the German takeover. A

flight ensued of the Jews from the village for their very lives, again, into neighboring Italy with the withdrawing Italian troops following the September 8, 1942, armistice between Italy and the Allies. It took three days over trying mountainous terrain, ending up in the capture within a week of arrival of more than a third of the shocked refugees, who did not expect to encounter German forces. Followed was deportation and death in Auschwitz only after two

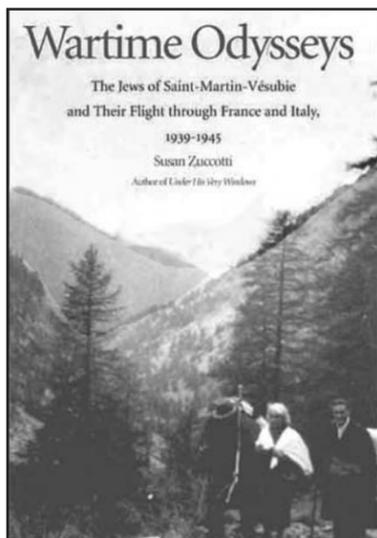
and a half months. Those who survived hid in the Alps, in Catholic shelters in Florence, and in Rome, as well. The drama-filled account of the fortunate survivors is expertly transmitted through the prism of nine families, with information provided on others as well, all attesting to the extraordinary life and fate of those who resided, if only for a while, in that hospitable French village under such unique and harrowing circumstances.

I'm indebted to Reinhold Beuer-Tajovsky, a fellow member of the Holocaust Commission of the United Jewish Federation of Tidewater, for presenting me this book. Reinhold is a Christian survivor of the Holocaust, who was saved by Jews. He has had a special relationship with one of the book's interviewees, Charles Roman. Both are from Vienna, Austria, and they met in Paris when rescued as children.

The provided photos in the book are illuminating.

Author Zuccotti, speaking of the survivors she highlights, shares: "They illustrate the amazing resiliency and optimism of young people, often in distinction to their more burdened and devastated parents. They show the independence and capacity of women to take charge, make decisions, and lead their families to safety."

Rabbi Israel Zoberman, spiritual leader of Congregation Beth Chaverim in Virginia Beach, is son of Polish Holocaust survivors.



THE NAZI CONNECTION TO ISLAMIC TERRORISM

The Nazi Connection to Islamic Terrorism: Adolf Hitler and Haj Amin al-Husseini. By Chuck Morse. iUniverse, Inc. 2003. 186pp. \$ 25.95

REVIEWED BY GARY SELIKOW

For those, like myself, who are sick and tired of the hate-filled international campaign to destroy Israel, and

annihilate her people, this informative and fascinating book provides an exploration of the roots of Palestinianism and anti-Israel hatred. It outlines how the ongoing genocide against the Jews of Israel is in fact a continuation of the Nazi Holocaust against the Jews of Europe.

Chuck Morse traces the story of Haj amin al-Husseini, the founder of The Palestinian Movement, ally and friend of Adolf Hitler, and a key player in the Holocaust Against the Jews. Al-Husseini, the Mufti of Jerusalem, was a vicious enemy of the Jewish people, in the tradition of Amalek, Haman, Torquemada, Chmielniki and, of course, Hitler. His legacy continues today in the PLO, Al Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, PFLP, Hamas, Islamic Jihad, Hizbullah, al Qaida, and the regimes of Syria, Libya and Iran, as well as the supporters of the genocidal hate campaign against Israel on the International Left, and some on the Far Right (like Pat Buchanan and David Duke).



Sixty years after the Nazi Holocaust, anti-Jewish hatred reached another climax at the hideous anti-Israel hate fest – the United Nations Conference on Racism in Durban, South Africa. There the Left demonstrated their common cause with Radical Islam by embracing hateful anti-Zionist propaganda, and feverishly supporting the genocidal program against

Israel. This evil festival of terror and hate in Durban 2001 was the lowest point in human history since the Nazi Holocaust.

Haj Amin al-Husseini was born in Jerusalem in 1895, and fought in the Ottoman Turkish Army against the British during the First World War. In 1919, he established a secret Muslim Youth Group, al-Nadi al-Arabi, which organized violence against the British, the Jews of Palestine, and moderate Muslims. In March 1920, he instigated

attacks against innocent Jews praying at the Western Wall in Jerusalem followed by anti-Jewish pogroms by armed Arab gangs in Jaffa, Rehovot, Petach Tikva and other Jewish towns.

In 1922, the British appointed al-Husseini Grand Mufti of Jerusalem. He organized a reign of terror against moderate Muslims who showed any sign of accepting the Jews, and in 1929 organized further pogroms against Jews in Jerusalem, Motza, Hebron, Safed, Haifa, (Continued on page 14)

HOTEL AUSCHWITZ

An unrepentant old Nazi officer who served in some of the worst concentration camps gives the Hitler salute in Spain where he has hidden from justice for over 60 years.

Now Paul Maria Hafner is the subject of a TV documentary called "*Hafner's Paradise*" which chronicles his life in exile – and how he manages to draw pensions from three countries.

Operation *Last Chance*, the campaign to round up the last Nazis in Europe organized by the Simon Wiesenthal Centre in Israel, has him on their wanted list.

Yet although Hafner, 84, continues to make outrageous statements that would put him behind bars in Germany or Austria, no government has sought to prosecute him.

He calls the death camp of Auschwitz, where 1.1 million Jews were murdered, "a ten star hotel" where "Jews were sent for their own protection. All that stuff about murder is Allied propaganda crap."

Of Hitler he says: "I regard him as the greatest man who ever lived, the most important person in the history of the world."

He said he gets out of bed every day to

give the raised arm salute to his *Fuehrer*.

He agreed to a documentary being made on him "because I want to set the record straight about our ideals and our cause during the *Third Reich*."

He admits he dreams of seeing a "Fourth Reich" in Germany, adding: "I am only sorry I will not be around to see it."

After WWII, Hafner found asylum in Franco's Spain, protected from allegations of war crimes and surrounded by old comrades.

This is why Spain is "paradise on earth" for him – a place that allows him to continue to nurture his fanaticism, and yet protects him from the scrutiny of international justice.

"No Jew was ever killed under Hitler for being a Jew," he said, refusing to elaborate on what he did when posted to the concentration camps of *Buchenwald* and *Dachau* in Germany.

Hafner is not being pursued actively by governments, although Nazi war crime sleuths in Israel believe him guilty of atrocities in the two concentrations camps where he worked, and on the Eastern Front, where he served as a fighting SS man.

He draws three pensions because he

qualifies for a war pension from Germany, an old age pension in Spain, where he worked for many years as a pig farmer and one from Italy, because it is the land of his birth.

Being a former concentration camp guard is not a barrier to receiving a German pension.

In the documentary, Hafner is brought face-to-face with a survivor from *Dachau*.

"You survived quite well," Hafner responds matter-of-factly after the Jewish victim recounts his painful memories.

According to Hafner, there are hundreds like him in Spain.

Gunter Schwaiger, who filmed "*Hafner's Paradise*," said: "He is in close contact with people who are indeed wanted or have been convicted in other countries because of their anti-Semitic actions and declarations, or because they have denied the existence of the Holocaust."

"Paul Maria Hafner is neither a Martian nor a diabolical being, but an

apparently respectable gentleman living in a smart Madrid neighborhood who, aged 84, might be taken for a congenial grandfather, filled with goodness and affection.

"The defeat of the *Third Reich* was an enormous trauma for Hafner, from which he has not yet recovered. His convictions have simply become firmer. He is not troubled by the accounts of the victims, or that National Socialism led the world to disas-



"Setting the record straight": Hafner in his younger days.



"You survived well": Hafner's opinion to survivors of the concentration camps.

ter. His fanaticism remains just as intact today as 60 years ago."

The film is due for release in the UK in the spring.

First published in *Daily Mail*

CHILDREN OF THE HOLOCAUST TRAIN

BY HANNAH CLEAVER, MIRROR

It is a train journey of terrible sadness, criss-crossing Germany, wakening memories of the relentless, orderly cruelty of Hitler's *Third Reich*.

This is a journey of commemoration and of reconciliation, a poignant voyage that will end, as it did those 60 years ago, at Auschwitz.

Then the train, and thousands of trains like it, carried millions of European Jews to their deaths in the Nazi extermination camps.

Today it carries the heart-rending memorabilia of those dreadful days, the photos and last letters of the desperate people transported like cattle across Germany to the gas chambers.

It seems astonishing now that, 60 years ago, these death trains could have passed through ordinary German towns and hamlets, through suburban stations packed with commuters.

Yet, despite the horrific slaughter waiting at the end of the line, only one man involved in the *Reichsbahn*, the German rail system, was ever prosecuted for shipping Hitler's victims to the concentration camps.

Now, at last, they are being remembered, their stories told on the Train of Commemoration currently touring Germany.

It will arrive at Auschwitz in May, the anniversary of VE Day, when Germany formally surrendered to the Allies.

Pulled by a 1929 steam engine, the traveling exhibition will follow many of the deportation routes along which Jews and others marked for extermination by the Nazis were transported to the death camps.

The *Reichsbahn* transportation of Nazi victims, including 1.5 million children, has

long been a sensitive subject in Germany.

The question remains, how could an entire nation deny that it at least suspected a policy of extermination when they saw its victims packed like animals onto trains at the stations they used every day?

Victims such as Hanni Steinbock, whose photograph is among those displayed on the Train of Commemoration.

She and her older sister Sylvie grew up in *Cologne*, but in 1939 when Hanni was five, they were sent to Holland where their mother believed, as Jews, they would be safe from the Nazis.

In a desperate attempt to hide, they were housed in an orphanage where a poignant photograph of Hanni sitting at a table was taken for posterity. The sign in Dutch read "from my childhood."

But the safety of Holland evaporated when the Germans invaded in 1940 and set up collection and deportation camps for Jewish refugees who had sought safety there.

Hanni and Sylvie were put on a deportation train to Sobibor extermination camp and its gas chambers.

They and 1,103 other people spent three days on the train in horrific conditions before reaching the Polish camp – where they were killed.

On the way, they would have passed through hundreds of town and village railway stations in Germany.

Many didn't even make it to journey's end, trampled to death or unable to survive the extreme heat or cold with little food or water.

Desperate notes were often pushed through cracks in the cattle trucks when they stopped, with the hope the people who had until recently been their fellow citizens would help.

One such note came from Hertha Aussen, a Dutch-Jewish girl who was 17

when she was transported out of Westerbork camp, probably to Auschwitz.

She managed to push a letter out of the truck in which she was being held – and someone delivered it to her friend to whom it was addressed.

"My dearest little Netty," wrote the teenager. "You will get this last goodbye card from the train."

"We are sitting here with 40 people and luggage and it is very stuffy in the cattle truck. We are full of good hopes for a reunification in our lovely little Holland soon. Farewell, a kiss. Hertha and family."

The only man ever prosecuted for running the death trains was Albert Ganzenmuller, state secretary in Hitler's transport ministry and head of the *Reichsbahn*. His involvement was clearly demonstrated in a letter he wrote to Heinrich Himmler, the architect of the holocaust, proudly listing the regular transports to death camps.

He wrote: "Since the 22 of July, each day a train carrying 5,000 Jews is traveling from Warsaw via Malkinia to Treblinka, and twice a week a train with 5,000 Jews is going from *Przemysl* to *Belzek*."

Ganzenmuller fled to Argentina after the war, but returned to Germany in 1955.

In 1970, he was finally charged for his role in the transport of millions of Jews to the death camps, but the case was dropped in 1972 after only three days in court when Ganzenmuller suffered a heart attack and was declared medically incapable of facing trial. He died in 1996 in Munich.

Thousands of other rail employees kept their jobs after the war, helping to build the new German rail system and denying any part in the Holocaust.

But the whole controversial subject blew up again last year when *Deutsche Bahn* – the successor of the *Reichsbahn* – initial-

ly refused to host an exhibition about the mass transportation at its railway stations in Germany.

But the transport minister stepped in and a deal was struck.

The Train of Commemoration has been on the move since November and will have covered 2,000 miles when in May it will deliver to Auschwitz all the letters, photos and other evidence of the transportees collected along the way.

But even this current, acclaimed exhibition has not managed to escape controversy. Organizers have accused the *Deutsche Bahn* of endangering the whole project by charging fees to use the tracks. The rail company says: "We are not legally able to waive the track use charges for the Train of Commemoration."

"We are investing money in the exhibition at the stations."

As a result, volunteers working on the Train of Commemoration have called for a European-wide protest against *Deutsche Bahn*.

"They are charging us around 50,000 euros for use of the tracks," says Hans-Ruediger Minow, spokesman for the train organizing committee.

"They have rejected all our appeals to waive the charges and are treating the Train of Commemoration like a commercial operation, as if it is taking a shipment of scrap metal or cement from one place to another. *Deutsche Bahn* has a historical responsibility, if not a legal one. It is an international company which operates in a number of European countries, and as such should be aware of its historical responsibility."

"It is now more than 60 years since the end of the war and the horrors of the concentration camps. Only a very few survived at all, and of them, only a tiny number are still alive."

"These things are in danger of being forgotten."

SURVIVORS' CORNER

A LOVE TRIANGLE IN... BERGEN BELSEN

BY TOM TUGEND, THE JERUSALEM POST

"I'm a very special Holocaust survivor," says Jack Polak. "I was in the camps with my wife and my girlfriend; and believe me, it wasn't easy."

This may sound like a line from the new genre of Holocaust films with humor, but Polak (who is Jacob on his birth certificate, Jack in America, Jaap to his Dutch friends, and Jab to his wife) is just stating the facts in the documentary feature *Steal a Pencil for Me*.

Another shorthand way of summarizing the storyline: Jack, an accountant in Amsterdam in the early 1940s, is married to Manja, but falls in love with Ina. All three are deported to Bergen-Belsen, where Jack and Ina carry on an intensive romantic correspondence.

The three survive, Jack divorces Manja, marries Ina, and they move to the United States.

The story doesn't end there. The film catches up with Jack, who will be 95 on December 31, and Ina, 80, at their home in Eastchester, a New York suburb, shortly after they celebrated their 62nd wedding anniversary.

Not slowed down by some hearing problems, Jack recalled his odd experiences with gusto, though, as with most old married couples, Ina had to correct him occasionally on a few historic points.

Fame has come late to the Polaks, but both obviously enjoy starring in their own life story. "I'm the oldest working actor in America," Jack remarks proudly.

Their story, and the film, begins during the Nazi occupation of Holland in 1940. While many Jews were deported and, like Jack's parents, subsequently murdered, the young accountant manages to keep going, though locked in an incompatible marriage.

At a birthday party in 1943, he meets Ina, a 20-year old beauty raised in a wealthy diamond manufacturing family, and it's love at first sight.

The looming love affair appears aborted when a couple of weeks later, he and his wife are deported to the Dutch transit camp of Westerbork.

As fate would have it, two months later,



Jack and Ina in Westerbork.

Ina is deported to the same place, where the rules allow Jack to spend some time with both wife and girlfriend until the 8 p.m. curfew.

Soon, the trains started rolling from Westerbork to the concentration camps and in February 1944, Jack and Manja are sent to Bergen-Belsen. Jack says goodbye to Ina with the words, "I hope you will soon follow me."

Three months later, it's Ina's turn, and she is put in a boxcar headed for Auschwitz. At the last minute, orders are changed, and the train is routed to Bergen-Belsen in northwest Germany.

Though the regime there is much stricter and more brutal than in

Westerbork, Jack and Ina manage to see each other occasionally, and, under the circumstances, they are fortunate.

Jack is assigned to work in the camp kitchen and Ina, who knows German shorthand, to office work at a diamond plant set up by the Nazis.

At every opportunity, the two write long impassioned letters to each other, to the point that Jack's one pencil stub is soon worn down to the nub. Since Ina works in an office, Jack begs her in one letter, "steal a pencil for me."

Manja becomes increasingly suspicious and annoyed with Jack's liaison, but is generous enough to share some of her scarce bread with Ina when her rival falls ill.

Most concentration camp recollections speak of unbearable filth, degradation, and foremost the constant hunger that obliterated all other thoughts.

But for Jack and Ina, their love was even stronger. "It was this love that kept us alive," they say.

As the British army neared the camp in early April 1945, the lovers' luck seemed to run out. The Nazis put Jack on a train going east, and Ina on a train going in the opposite direction.

Ina's train was liberated within a week by American troops and she remembers marveling at the great teeth of the GIs, wondering "whether they all went to the same dentist."

Russian soldiers freed Jack's train a week later, and by summer, husband, wife and girlfriend were back in Amsterdam.

In August 1945, Jack divorced Manja, he and Ina became engaged two months

later, and married in January 1946. "Like any good Dutch Jewish girl, Ina came to her wedding night as a virgin," said Jack.

They moved to the United States in 1951, and have three children, five grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

The family maintained friendly relations with Manja, who never remarried and died two years ago in Holland.

A fellow prisoner in Bergen-Belsen was Anne Frank, and although the Polaks never met her, Jack headed the American support group for the Anne Frank Center for many decades. He was knighted for his services by the Dutch government.

Eventually, the Polaks decided to write down their experiences and their book, *Steal a Pencil for Me*, was published in the United States in 2000. Manja had asked that the original Dutch version of the book not be published in Holland in her lifetime, and Jack and Ina honored her request.

"I never thought our story would be made into a movie," said Ina, but when veteran filmmaker Michele Ohayon heard the story she put everything aside for the next five years to shoot the movie.

Born in Casablanca and raised in Israel, Ohayon is a noted director, writer and producer of offbeat documentaries. Her 1997 film, *Colors Straight Up*, received an Oscar nomination.

In directing the film, Ohayon lets her two lively and expressive narrators, Jack and Ina, carry the action, while never stooping to sly winks or cheap humor. Historical footage of the concentration camps and 1940s Holland complement the narration.

The Polaks are among the film's most ardent fans. "We have seen the picture six times, and we always have our handkerchiefs ready when we go," said Ina. Added Jack, "I like it better each time I see it."

HOLOCAUST SURVIVOR REUNITED WITH HER RESCUER

BY ETGAR LEFKOVITS, THE JERUSALEM POST

In a symbolic closing of a circle, a 94-year-old Holocaust survivor was reunited last November with the elderly Polish woman who sheltered her during the Holocaust, more than six decades after the two parted ways.

The special Thanksgiving weekend reunion, which took place at New York's John F. Kennedy International Airport, brought together Golda Bushkanietz, 94, of Tel Aviv with her Polish rescuer, Irena Walulewicz, 82, of *Olsztyn*, Poland.

Walulewicz and her late mother Zofia, who have been recognized as Righteous Among the Nations by Yad Vashem for their selfless heroism, hid Bushkanietz in their home for several months during the summer of 1943, as the Nazi killing machine marched on, even after a neighbor denounced them to the Germans.

The two women, who had not seen each other for 62 years, were reunited by the New York-based Jewish Foundation for the Righteous, a group formed two decades ago that provides financial assistance to 1,200 non-Jews in 26 countries around the world who risked their lives to rescue Jews from the Holocaust.

"Don't cry, don't cry," Bushkanietz said

in Polish, as she hugged Walulewicz in a tearful reunion.

This story of heroism and bravery in the face of evil began in September 1941, after all the Jews from *Swieciany*, Poland, which is today in Lithuania, and the neighboring villages were rounded up by the Germans, and divided into two groups: some, like Bushkanietz and her husband Szymon, were sent to a slave labor camp after being deemed "useful," while others were immediately murdered by the Nazis and buried in a mass grave.

In early 1943, when the Germans decided to liquidate the camp, the young Jewish couple managed to flee, with Szymon Bushkanietz heading for the woods to join the partisans and his wife fleeing to her home town to search for a hiding place.

It was 2:00 in the morning when Bushkanietz knocked on the window of the home of the daughter of the town's pre-war mayor, whom her father had known slightly, in the hopes of finding refuge inside.

"I really wanted to live," Bushkanietz recalled in an interview before leaving Israel for the reunion.

Zofia Walulewicz, the daughter of the mayor, who was home alone with her 17-year-old daughter Irena, who was deaf and mute, opened the window.

"Who are you?" the Polish woman asked.

"I am Fiegel's daughter," she answered. "Come in," she responded.

For the next several months, Bushkanietz found refuge in their house, hiding in the mice-infested attic, or even in the pigsty, to avoid capture.

On cold winter nights, she was sometimes allowed to sleep in the kitchen when



Irena Walulewicz reunited with Golda Bushkanietz.

no neighbors were around, and once quickly hid under a bed in the house for hours when neighbors came by unannounced during the day.

Every Sunday, when the devout Catholic family went to church, she was able to sneak out and head to the woods to meet up with her husband, she recounted.

The Polish mother and daughter who

were hiding the young Jewish woman were facing their own difficulties.

Irena Walulewicz's older brother had himself been killed by the Nazis while her father, the one-time mayor of the town, was among 50 Polish intelligentsia killed by the Germans in revenge for the killing of a German officer by the partisans.

Then one day, a Polish neighbor denounced the Walulewicz for hiding a Jew, but Bushkanietz, who was alerted by Zofia Walulewicz, managed to escape through a window, returning only after the Germans had left empty-handed.

She remained in the Polish home until November 1943, when she joined her husband with the partisans in the forest.

After the war, the couple moved to Israel and went on to have two children, seven grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren.

Before they left Poland, Bushkanietz parted ways with the Walulewicz, though for years she would receive letters and birthday and holiday cards from the daughter of the Polish lady who had saved her life.

"In the many years we have worked with survivors and their rescuers, I remain awestruck by the heroism of the thousands of rescuers who risked their lives to save others," said Stanlee Stahl, executive vice president of the Jewish Foundation for the Righteous.

THE FRENCH ANNE FRANK

BY LIOR ZILBERSTEIN,
YNETNEWS.COM

The French press has already deemed it the "literary sensation of 2008," but all lofty press superlatives aside, the Helene Berr Journal is undoubtedly a harrowing, captivating read.

This Journal is the diary of Helene Berr, a Jewish student in the Sorbonne who, like Anne Frank, perished in the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp. She left behind this harrowing account of her life between April 1942 and March 1944, now published 60 years later.

This text was diligently guarded by Helene's brother, Jacques, and was intended for her fiancée, Jean Morawiecki, who fought alongside the Free French Forces in Africa. As the years wore on, Jean became a renowned French diplomat, and received the journal written by "the grey-eyed Helene from the Latin quarter."

Jean ultimately returned the diary to Helene's family, who saved it for years before donating it to the French Holocaust museum in 2002.

This compelling text, written in rich, eloquent French, captivated many over the years, but it is only now that French publishers, *Tallandier*, decided to bring it to light.

Helene's story began in occupied Paris,

which was initially replete with romantic walks along the Latin Quarter, tales of first love, conversations in the Sorbonne gardens, and quiet afternoons spent lazing at the Luxembourg gardens.

By June 1942, however, the first fissures begin to appear in Helene's formerly picturesque life. She was forced to sew a yellow star onto her clothing, and was relegated to the rear car in a train she caught at the *École Militaire Metro Station*, a car reserved for those wearing the yellow star alone.

As June drew to a close, Helene's father, Raymond, was arrested, questioned by the Gestapo and ultimately shipped to the Drancy transit camp. Her father's detainment crushed Helene, who was inspired to join a French-Jewish organization that acted as a liaison between detainees and their families.

As time wore on, Helene's hitherto neat and orderly handwriting turned into a worn, addled scrawl, and her musings became increasingly more frustrated and jaded with "things that cannot be told" and "peoples' lack of understanding and sympathy."

Helene was deported from Paris in 1944, and was shipped to the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp, where she died in April, 1944, two weeks alone before Allied liberation.

Ironically, Helene died in the very camp her celebrated predecessor, Anne Frank, had perished a month earlier.



Helene Berr

"WITNESS" IS A CHILLING REMINDER OF THE UNIMAGINABLE

BY TY BURR, BOSTON.COM

"The place from which you remember an event shapes the nature of what you remember," says historian Michael Berenbaum, one of the wiser talking heads in the documentary clip-show

"Imaginary Witnesses: Hollywood and the Holocaust."

The event under discussion is the central cataclysm of the 20th century, the systematic extermination of millions of Jews by the Nazi war machine. The place from which it's remembered in popular culture is Los Angeles, home

of a film industry as neurotic as it is powerful. On one hand has been denial, on the other hand, kitsch. It's remarkable that good movies on the subject come out at all.

Daniel Anker's film, made in 2004 for the American Movie Classics channel, and belatedly turning up now at the MFA under the co-aegis of the Boston Jewish Film Festival, faults Hollywood both for ignoring the Holocaust during the war years and for trivializing it later. It's a mixed message that coheres largely thanks to Anker's archival spadework and his luck in securing interviews.



After World War II, one of the few filmmakers that showed the full horror of the death camps was the Army.

The argument that US movie studios downplayed the Nazi threat in the years leading up to World War II is made not just clear but understandable. For every *"Confessions of a Nazi Spy"*, (1939) or *"The Mortal Storm"*, (1940), there were rantings from isolationist anti-Semites in

Washington about Hollywood Jewish propaganda. The studio heads, assimilators to a man (Harry Warner excepted, perhaps), were loath to call attention to themselves, especially with Joseph Kennedy warning them, "This will be seen as your war."

It was everyone's war, of course, and when it was over, US Army Signal Corps filmmakers returned with horrifying evidence of the death camps — footage the made-for-TV *"Imaginary Witness"* can't bring itself to show. One of the surprises Anker delivers, though, is that the Hollywood studio chiefs themselves toured Auschwitz, on orders from General Eisenhower, in hopes that they would in turn bear witness to the world.

In this they failed. The Holocaust was rarely treated directly on American screens until the late 1950s

(Continued on page 15)

HOW TOP NAZIS WERE BROUGHT TO A SECRET SCOTTISH PRISON CAMP FOR BRAINWASHING

They helped bring death, destruction and terror on an industrial scale to an entire continent. And as Europe rebuilt itself following the Second World War, they were imprisoned on a desolate Scottish moor.

Newly uncovered documents have revealed that a *Caithness* prisoner-of-war camp had an extraordinary secret role as a place where some of the most notorious figures in Hitler's *Third Reich* were locked up, interrogated and — where possible — subjected to "de-Nazification".

While the existence of Camp 165 at Watten, near Wick, is known, local historian Valerie Campbell has obtained recently declassified Government files which reveal the existence of an inner compound with the grim nickname "*Little Belsen*."

Inmates included Paul Werner Hoppe, the commandant of *Stutthof* concentration camp, Poland, Dr Paul Schroder, the man behind the Nazi's V2 flying bomb project, Hitler's personal aide and SS commander Max Wunsche, Nazi propagandist Gunter d'Alquen, and U-boat captain Otto Kretschmer, known as the Wolf of the Atlantic.

Even today, many locals who worked behind the barbed wire fences of the clandestine compound are reluctant to speak about it.

The compound — which operated between 1943 and 1948 — was divided into two areas, A and B. Area A held pris-

oners who were assessed as low threat and were eventually allowed to carry out unpaid work on surrounding farms. The high-security, top-secret area B, overseen by armed guards in watch towers, housed "black" prisoners regarded as hard-line and dangerous Nazis.

The B prisoners were subjected to "de-Nazification programmes" where they were repeatedly shown newsreels and films outlining the horrors committed under the name of the *Third Reich* and highlighting their defeat by Allied forces.

Those deemed to be reformed could be repatriated with the most unrepentant being transferred to stand trial, or face further interrogation elsewhere.

A third 'C' category was later created for those deemed to be the greatest threat.

Little exists of the compound today, but at its height it was a mini community of more than 70 Nissen huts. Most of its infamous inmates slept in the freezing rusty shacks, which often shook in the violent northerly winds.

As well as detention and interrogation rooms, there was a makeshift church, a barber's, workshops, classrooms and — for the low security inmates — a theatre. Prisoners were given outfits with a distinctive diamond on the back — which it was claimed would act as a target if they tried to escape.

Campbell said: "Most people associate the village of *Watten* with Alexander

Bain, the inventor of the electric clock. They would know nothing of its significance as a PoW camp that held some of the most infamous men in the Nazi regime.

"South of *Watten*, it was doubtful that anyone, with the exception of the military hierarchy, would have even known the camp existed."

The remote location of the camp was key to its creation. "The landscape in *Caithness* was invaluable for training and subsequently holding captives," said Campbell.

"It could go on in secret. The farmland surrounding the camp was flat with few hiding places."

Between 1942 and 1945, Hoppe was in charge of *Stutthof* concentration camp and personally oversaw the deaths of thousands of men, women and children who the Nazi regime deemed to be "sub-human." When British forces liberated the camp, many soldiers were physically sick at the horrors they discovered.

Hoppe was held at *Camp Watten* between August 1947 and January 1948 and it was expected that he would be executed on his return to Germany. Yet, extraordinarily, the commandant escaped from a British base in Saxony and was able to work unhindered as a landscape gardener. He was finally re-arrested in 1953 and sentenced to just nine years imprisonment, insisting he had been too young to understand what happened at his camp.

Nazi rocket scientist Schroder, who invented the V2 pilotless bomb which killed thousands of residents in London alone, was treated even more mercifully during his incarceration in *Caithness* in 1947.

Schroder co-operated with intelligence officials on sharing his knowledge on "the technicalities of rocket projectiles" and as such was awarded special status, despite being deemed to be a Nazi zealot and a "public enemy." He was eventually handed over to the Americans, and became a respected adviser to the US Air Force.

Nazi journalist d'Alquen, who was hand-picked by Himmler to pen the official history of the SS and helped popularize the idea of Jews as "vermin," was sent to *Watten* in 1945. He was allowed to publish a monthly magazine for detainees called *Der Wattener*.

After the camp closed he was sent to the US, where he became a key member of the CIA, and helped devise its anti-communist propaganda strategy during the early Cold War.

Viscountess Margaret Thurso, who lived near the camp, was fascinated by the revelations.

She said: "Little did we know that the nearby *Watten* was Britain's most secretive PoW camp. Nor did we know that senior Nazi officers, some close to Hitler, were imprisoned there."

First published in Scotland on Sunday.

WORLD REMEMBERS VICTIMS OF HOLOCAUST

POLAND – Ceremonies marking International Holocaust Memorial Day were held at Warsaw's Ghetto Monument.

In a letter to participants in the ceremony, Poland's President Lech Kaczynski wrote that Holocaust was the crime incomparable with any other in history, according to Polish news agency PAP.

"It took millions of human lives, members of the Jewish nation, dwellers of many European countries, suffering and murdered in death camps created by the regime of the Nazi Germany. All those people were killed because they were Jews," Kaczynski said.

"We want to jointly pay tribute to those

tortured and murdered. To do everything for such tragedy never to happen again. For the good to win out over the evil, understanding over distrust, openness over aversion, empathy over indifference," the president wrote.

USA – President Bush commemorated the Holocaust by condemning "the resurgence of anti-Semitism."

Bush marked the International Day of Commemoration in memory of Victims of the Holocaust set by the United Nations three years ago and timed for the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz in 1945.

"I was deeply moved by my recent visit to Yad Vashem, Israel's Holocaust museum," Bush said in his statement, referring to the culmination of his visit to Israel. "Sixty-three years after the liberation of Auschwitz, we must continue to educate ourselves about the lessons of the Holocaust and honor those whose lives were taken as a result of a totalitarian ideology that embraced a national policy of violent hatred, bigotry and extermination."

He added, "We must continue to condemn the resurgence of anti-Semitism, that same virulent intolerance that led to the Holocaust, and we must combat bigotry and hatred in all forms, in America and abroad. Today provides a sobering reminder that evil exists and a call that when we find evil, we must resist it."

GERMANY – Germany's parliament acknowledged the country's special responsibility in the battle against anti-Semitism and racism.

"We remember an unthinkable crime against humanity and a systematic mass murder," lower house president Norbert Lammert said during a commemorative parliamentary session. "After the bitter experiences of the last century, we do not tolerate any kind of extremism, racism and anti-Semitism — nowhere in the world, and especially not in Germany."

"We Germans want to do justice to our special responsibility," he said.

Six million Jews were killed in the Nazi

Holocaust of World War II.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel and President Horst Koehler attended the session, held in advance of international day of remembrance of the Holocaust.

Later Merkel said it was a "miracle" that Jewish life had returned to Germany 63 years after the Nazi genocide.

Still, during a speech at a conference in Berlin, she voiced concern that anti-Semitism and anti-foreigner sentiment survive today, and that even educated people were susceptible to "crude thoughts and disguised anti-Semitism."

UN/ISRAEL – The United Nations and

Israel, for the first time together, issued stamps to remember the victims of the Holocaust, as an Israeli official admitted his country and the UN have grown closer after more than 60 years of hostility.

The stamp was designed by the UN Department of Public Information and shows a piece of barbed wire growing into a flower. The design is used by both the Israel Post and by the UN, which has its own postal administration and issues its own stamps.

Israeli Ambassador Dan Gillerman said Israel has come out of isolation caused by the rejection of the once Arab-dominated UN General Assembly. Gillerman was elected a vice president of the 192-nation body for the current session that began in September.

"It's not the case any longer," said Gillerman, of the Israel's isolation in the UN, which had once left it seen as a "permanent non-member."

He said there have been "improved feelings" between the UN and Israel, and several symbolic steps have been taken to integrate the Jewish state into the international community. The assembly has adopted fewer anti-Israel resolutions in recent years, and last year elected Gillerman as one of 21 vice presidents to preside over its lengthy meetings.

The UN marked the International Day in Memory of Holocaust Victims, the third such commemoration since 2005, when the body for the first time recognized the massacre of an estimated 6 million Jews and minorities by Nazi Germany.

The day-long commemorative program included the issuance of the stamps; addresses by survivors of Nazi death camps, including US Congressman Tom Lantos; and an evening concert by the Tel Aviv University Symphony conducted by Zubin Mehta.

ENGLAND – Multi-faith ceremonies, talks, dramatic performances, concerts, guided walks and film screenings were tak-

ing place in many of the London's boroughs.

Commemorative multi-faith services were held in Barnet, Haringey, Lewisham, Tower Hamlets and Romford.

Chris Shaw, chief executive of the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust, said: "It is quite established within schools to learn about the Holocaust, but we're beginning to think it is the slightly older people who know less."

She said people aged between 18 and 40 may not have learnt about the holocaust in school, but older people had a "more immediate link" with the experiences during World War II.

The trust, which runs the national commemoration event, has made this year's theme Imagine – Remember, Reflect, React, to challenge people to imagine the unimaginable.

Its website states: "It [the theme] asks us to focus on the lives and experience of victims and survivors of the Holocaust; of Nazi persecution and of other genocides."

"It marvels at the resilience of enterprise, culture and of life itself in the face of destruction."

A guided walk from Aldgate to the Nelson Street Synagogue featured stories on the lives of prominent East End Holocaust survivors.

An exhibition of paintings and stained glass by Moshe Gallili, a Holocaust survivor, was held in *Enfield* and a documentary on the *Mauthausen* concentration camp in Austria was screened in Norfolk Place.

CZECH REPUBLIC – The extermination of European

Jews by the Nazi regime should not be forgotten and should remain an everlasting memento, Czech President Vaclav Klaus said at a meeting in the Czech Senate commemorating Holocaust Remembrance Day.

Today it may be more necessary to recall the crimes against humanity committed against the Jewish population than decades ago because of the efforts to rewrite the past and use its false picture for political purposes, Klaus said.

The Holocaust, an international word that is not quite understandable in the Czech language, is used by Czechs to describe what "may be the most awful and shameful crime in human history," Klaus said.

"However, I fear whether this one foreign word could complicate our possibility to sufficiently realize and feel the whole depth of monstrosity of what had happened then, the monstrosity of the extermination of European Jews by the German Nazi regime," Klaus said.

Klaus pointed to the significance of the

passing of a law by the Czech parliament five years ago that made Holocaust Remembrance Day a memorial day in the Czech Republic.

This day became an opportunity for all to remember the common lesson from the tragedy of the Nazi "Final Solution of the Jewish Question," Klaus said.

ALBANIA – Albania held a ceremony in parliament to commemorate resistance efforts during World War II that helped the country's tiny Jewish minority escape the Holocaust.

Some 1,200 Jews, residents and refugees from other Balkan countries, were hidden

by Albanian families during the war, according to official records.

The ambassadors of Israel and the United States attended the ceremony in parliament.

"The Holocaust was the defining moment of the 20th century. ... Most nations and their people failed to meet the challenge. But that did not happen in Albania," said Warren Miller, head of the U.S. Commission for the Preservation of American Heritage Abroad.

Parliament Speaker Jozefina Topalli said the success of saving the country's Jews was a source of national pride.

"But we have convened [a special session] not only out of pride in our past but also in respect of the innocent victims of one of the darkest time of humanity," Topalli said.

Albania was occupied from 1939 to 1943 by fascist Italy, and then by Nazi Germany until 1944. Partisan groups who helped liberate the country formed the communist party that ruled Albania until 1990.

About 300 Jews lived in Albania until the collapse of communism, but most have since emigrated to the United States and Israel.

ARGENTINA – Politicians, Jewish leaders and survivors marked International Holocaust Remembrance Day in Buenos Aires.

David Galante, a Holocaust survivor, told the crowded event at the Buenos Aires National Bank that he still recalls dying people saying to him: Do not give up, David. At least live to tell the world what happened here."

Aldo Donzis, the president of the DAIA Jewish political umbrella organization, was among the speakers along with the Argentine ministers of education and justice.

Graciela Jinich, the director of the Buenos Aires Holocaust museum, stressed that the commemoration is a message for the future generations.

Estela Carlotto, the president of a human rights organization that tries to find children abducted during the dictatorial government of Jorge Rafael Videla from 1976 to 1981, said she was moved by the survivors' persistence and unwavering determination.



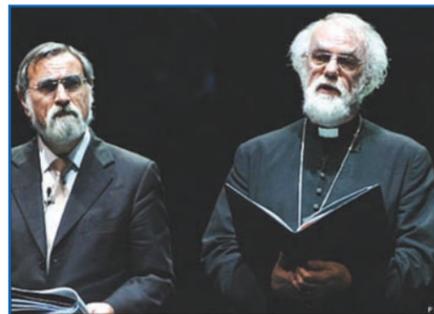
A former prisoner lays a candle during a ceremony at Auschwitz-Birkenau to pay tribute to the people killed by the Nazis.



Young people from 62 countries gathered at Jerusalem's Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial for a three-day youth congress to mark the anniversary.



German President Horst Koehler, Chancellor Angela Merkel and Harald Ringstorff, President of the German Bundesrat, from left, attend a commemoration in the German parliament Bundestag to remember the victims of the Nazi era in Berlin.



In the UK, survivors of the Holocaust and other genocides attended Liverpool's Philharmonic Hall for a service, which included an address by the Archbishop of Canterbury.



Nearly 90% of Greece's 80,000 Jews were killed during the Holocaust. Children were among those who attended a memorial service in the port city of Thessaloniki.

STUDYING THE HOLOCAUST IN A TIME OF HOLOCAUST DENIAL AND ANTI-SEMITISM

On January 27th, educators from the tri-state area gathered at the Pratt Mansions in NYC for the American Society for Yad Vashem's Tenth Annual Professional Development Conference. Once again, this year's conference was co-sponsored by the Association of Teachers of Social Studies of the United Federation of Teachers.

This year we were once again highlighting the Echoes and Reflections curriculum. This is a valuable education resource developed by Yad Vashem the Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Authority, the Anti-Defamation League, and the USC Shoah Foundation Institute for Visual History and Education. We were pleased to welcome representative from all three institutions to participate in this year's conference.

Remarks were also given by Caroline Massel, co-chair of the Young Leadership Associates of the American Society for Yad Vashem; as well as Dr. Romana Primus, the Education Chair of the Board of Directors for the American Society for Yad Vashem. Mr. Eli Zborowski, Chairman of The American Society for Yad Vashem, also welcomed the day's participants. Mr. Zborowski remarked that the American Society for Yad Vashem's Educational Department "works to put a face on individual Holocaust victims in order to introduce a human element to the story. Transmitting these messages is our hope for the future."

The first workshop was held in the morning for all teachers to become introduced to the Echoes and Reflections curriculum. This was led by Deborah Batiste of the Anti-Defamation League and one of the writers of Echoes and Reflections. This introduction gave the educators a chance to get an overview of the curriculum and the different ways it can be incorporated into their classrooms.

The Echoes and Reflections curriculum is a comprehensive ten-lesson program that focuses on the history of the Holocaust while using a multimedia approach to education. This is one of the first multi-media curriculums to be

used in classrooms. Educators can have the voice of those people who lived through the atrocities right in their classrooms by using the DVD or VHS provided with the curriculum.

Workshops in the afternoon were lead by Ephraim Kaye, Director of the Department for International Seminars for Educators and the Jewish World at Yad Vashem Jerusalem, Deborah Batiste, Echoes and Reflections Project Director for the Anti-Defamation League, Dan Tarplin Project Director of the A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE® Institute for the Anti-Defamation League, and Chaim Singer-Franks Training Specialist USC Shoah Foundation Institute for Visual History and Education.

They led the following workshops, 1) Jewish Resistance 2) Survivors and Liberators 3) Perpetrators, Collaborators, and Bystanders, and 4) The Children. This year there was also a special workshop for those educators who had previously attended an Echoes and Reflections workshop. This workshop, titled "Revisiting Echoes and Reflections," gave these educators the opportunity to discuss classroom techniques that have worked for them since getting this curriculum in their classrooms.

Studying the Holocaust is important to students today in a world of growing Holocaust denial and anti-Semitism. A curriculum like *Echoes and Reflections* will enable students to think about the responsibilities they have as individuals when confronted with prejudice and intolerance. The holocaust provides a context for looking at the dangers of remaining silent in the face of the oppression of others. The aim of the American Society for Yad Vashem hosting these education conferences is to transmit the lessons of this historical event to present and future generations. Teaching about the Holocaust in an age-appropriate and historically accurate manner will promote greater sensitivity and understanding to reduce hatred, intolerance and prejudice, prevalent in today's society.



Ephraim Kaye, Director of the Department for International Seminars, Yad Vashem; Ilana Apelker, Education Programmer, American Society for Yad Vashem; Caroline Massel, Young Leadership Associates Co-Chair, American Society for Yad Vashem; Dr. Elizabeth Zborowski, Cultural Director, American Society for Yad Vashem; Eli Zborowski, Chairman, American Society for Yad Vashem.



Discussion continues during lunch break.



Teachers participating in discussion.



Caroline Massel, Young Leadership Associates Co-Chair, American Society for Yad Vashem; Ephraim Kaye, Yad Vashem Jerusalem; Dan Tarplin, Anti-Defamation League, Chaim Singer-Franks, USC Shoah Foundation; Deborah Batiste, Anti-Defamation League; Carolyn Herbst, ATSS/United Federation of Teachers; Eli Zborowski, Chairman, American Society for Yad Vashem.



REPORT FROM YAD VASHEM

FOR DUTCH EDUCATORS, ISLAMOPHOBIA CAN BE A TEACHING AID FOR HOLOCAUST STUDIES

BY CNAAN LIPSHIZ, HAARETZ

When teaching Holocaust studies to Dutch Muslim teenagers in Amsterdam, Mustafa Daher says he first has to defuse his pupils' own hostility toward Jews and Israel.

"If I don't capture their interest, then I have done nothing. So I use the rising Islamophobia to help them connect to the persecution of the Jews," the seasoned educator says.

"For example, I tell them that when the Nazis suspected someone was Jewish, they would pull down his pants to see if he was circumcised. Then I remind my Muslim students they are also 'snipped.' So they, too, would've ended up in a concentration camp," says Daher.

Judith Whitlau, who teaches groups about the Holocaust at the Dutch Theater in Amsterdam, says she has to contend with another analogy.

"Some point to media reports from the occupied territories, and they want to know what exactly Israel itself is doing to internalize the Holocaust's lessons as it preaches others should do."

Daher and Whitlau are taking part in a week-long seminar for 21 teachers at the Yad Vashem Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Authority, the first run by Yad Vashem for Dutch educators, with one day devoted to discussions about teaching Holland's Muslim minority about the *Shoah*.

But not all the teachers in the group have Muslim students. Franca Verheijen teaches at an affluent school in Leiden, some 35 minutes by train from Amsterdam. There, drawing parallels between Islamophobia and anti-Semitism can be counterproductive.

"If I make this connection, some students usually reject the analogy, saying that unlike the Muslims, the Jews never engaged in terrorism," she says.

Another charged issue for the teachers is the question of complicity. Some 100,000 Dutch men and women belonged to the country's Nazi party during the war, openly collaborating with German authorities.

Despite this, Meir Villegas Henriquez, from the Hague-based Jewish non-profit Center for Information and Documentation on Israel (CIDI), said he wouldn't want to see a whole chapter in the school curriculum on Dutch Nazis.

"We're here to educate, not blame," the delegation organizer said. One advantage Dutch teachers have over colleagues abroad, they all agreed, was the diary of Anne Frank.

Her story, which is mandatory reading in Dutch elementary schools, is still very useful in helping young pupils connect, the teachers said. According to Henriquez, Frank's image is so indelibly etched into Dutch psyche, that it can sometimes overshadow current problems. "When our organization, CIDI, released its annual report last month on a 64-percent hike in anti-Semitic incidents, the study received less exposure than the decision to fell the tree outside Anne Frank's hiding place," he complained.

"Her story is a big frame of reference, but the Netherlands still has a Jewish population which is facing some challenges."

GERMAN ARCHIVES' OPENING HELPS ISRAELI MAN TRACK HIS FATHER'S DEATH IN HOLOCAUST

BY ANSHEL PFEFFER, HAARETZ

The last time 74-year-old Moshe Bar-Yoda saw his father, Avraham Kastner was about to be sent to a Nazi labor camp in Slovakia along with other residents of his Czech village.

The Yad Vashem Holocaust museum archives have a record of Kastner being sent to the camp on March 27, 1942, but there the documentary trail ended. Although a witness testified before the rabbinic in 1948 that Kastner had been killed in a concentration camp during the Holocaust, Bar-Yoda, a journalist and Jewish Agency emissary, did not know any of the details and had no record of his father's death – until now.

Last month, Bar-Yoda became the first Israeli to receive information about the fate of family members via Yad Vashem since Germany's International Tracing Service at Bad Arolsen opened its World War II archives to the public at the end of November.

The tracing service says it serves victims of Nazi persecutions and their families by documenting their fate through the archives it manages. The archives include more than 50 million references that contain information about more than 17 million people.

Although relatives of Nazi victims had previously been allowed to examine the archives, the records are now open to researchers around the world, and have been digitally transferred to the Yad Vashem archives, making it easier for family members to conduct more precise searches and find out exactly what happened to their loved ones.

After searching the International Tracing Service records, Bar-Yoda discovered that his father's name appears on the list of the dead whose bodies were incinerated at the *Majdanek* death camp in Poland on September 7, 1942, six months after the two last saw each other.

Now, Bar-Yoda said, he can finally commemorate his father's passing on his *yahrtzeit* the day of his death, instead of on the day designated for those who do not know the day of their loved one's death.

"After having said *kaddish* for him for 60 years on the general *kaddish* day on the fast of *Asara B'Tevet*, now I have a specific *yahrtzeit*," said Bar-Yoda. "And while it doesn't comfort me or make me happy, there is a kind of satisfaction here, that I can move forward."

Yad Vashem chairman Avner Shalev said Bar-Yoda's tale shows how the newly expanded collection of records can help the families of Holocaust victims.

(Continued on page 14)

YAD VASHEM LAUNCHES ARABIC WEBSITE

On January 24, 2008, Yad Vashem launched a new website about the Holocaust in Arabic.

The Arabic website follows the successful launch of a website in Farsi last year. Both sites are accessible at www.yad-vashem.org.

The website includes the historical narrative of the Holocaust, concepts from the Holocaust, academic articles, artifacts, maps, photos, archival documents and an online video testimony resource center all translated into Arabic, as well as a special multimedia presentation of the Auschwitz Album, with Arabic narration, stories of Righteous Among the Nations – including Muslims from Turkey and Albania – and the movie *We Were There*, which documents a joint visit of Arabs and Jews to Auschwitz. The site also contains information on the study of Arabic in *Theresienstadt*, and the Yad Vashem exhibit, *BESA: A Code of Honor: Muslim Albanians who Rescued Jews during the Holocaust*.

"The Arabic-speaking public is substantial, and providing an easily accessible and comprehensive website about the Holocaust in Arabic is crucial. In light of the Holocaust denial and antisemitism that we are witness to in Arabic countries, we want to offer an alternative source of information to moderates in these countries, to provide them with reliable information about the *Shoah*," said Yad Vashem Chairman Avner Shalev.

FROM FATHER TO DAUGHTER THE ILLUSTRATED BIBLE OF CAROL DEUTSCH

BY YEHUDIT SHENDAR AND ELIAD MOREH-ROSENBERG

Under assumed identities, two-year-old Ingrid Deutsch and her grandmother, Regina Braunstein, had spent 18 months in hiding with a Catholic family in *Florenville*, a town in the Belgian province of Luxembourg. The two had had no word of Ingrid's parents, Fela and Carol Deutsch, for over a year.

In the last postcard he sent, for Ingrid's fourth birthday in the winter of 1943, Carol had written, "Father is very proud that his Ingrid is being such a good, sweet little girl. Love and kisses, Daddy." Carol and Fela were detained by the Gestapo and sent to the *Mechelen* transit camp.

Ingrid and Regina returned home to Antwerp in early 1945, after Belgium had been completely liberated from German occupation. A long time passed before they obtained information about Ingrid's parents. The tidings were bitter: Fela and Carol Deutsch had been deported on Transport B22 in September 1943 from *Mechelen* to Auschwitz, where Fela was murdered. Carol had been transferred to *Sachsenhausen* and from there to *Buchenwald*, where he had died of exhaustion in December 1944.

When Regina and her granddaughter arrived at their apartment on *Consciencestraat*, they discovered that the Nazis had confiscated their furniture and valuables as part of the *Möbelaktion*, a campaign of systematic looting designed to transfer stolen Jewish proper-

ty to German hands. However, miraculously one item was left untouched: a large, meticulously crafted, wooden box adorned with a Star of David and a seven-branched menorah. The box's Hebrew and English inscription testified to its contents: a collection of biblical illustrations labored over by the artist Carol Deutsch during a period of 12 months between 1941 and 1942.

Under the stressful conditions of curfew and persecution, the artist had produced an oeuvre that proudly affirmed his Jewish identity – a patrimony he devoted to his young daughter.

The 99 strikingly painted gouaches depict the biblical scenes with a unique iconography and palette, reflecting the artist's boldness and originality. The illustrations combine *Art Nouveau* ornamentation with stylistic influences of the *Bezalel School*, echoes of Deutsch's 1936 visit to the Land of Israel. In contrast to many other European artists, Deutsch places his biblical figures in their native settings, illuminated by the special light of the Holy Land.

Carol Deutsch was a disciple of the well-known Belgian painter James Ensor, and was particularly noted for his portraiture

and townscapes executed in a naïve style. In his youth, Deutsch had received an Orthodox Jewish education. Before the German occupation, he had served as president of the Jewish community in the seaside resort of *Oostende*, on Belgium's

northern coast. Recently tracked-down letters suggest that Deutsch, in the framework of his official duties, doggedly strove to preserve Jewish tradition and strengthen Jewish education.

The biblical series found in the Antwerp apartment was Deutsch's most significant work on Jewish themes. The paintings abound in subjects, symbols and motifs drawn from Jewish sources, and reflect a deep commitment to the tradition of Torah study at the literal, exegetic and mystical levels.

The biblical illustrations Deutsch bequeathed to his daughter exhibit exceptional vitality and constitute a stalwart expression of defiance to everything for which the Nazis stood. This father's intimate and intellectual bequest to his daughter, donated to and displayed at Yad Vashem's Museum of Holocaust Art is thus instilled in the collective legacy. Here, visitors can appreciate the illustrations' artistic quality first-hand and grasp the power of the Jewish spirit and tradition that inspired them.



Ornamented wooden box for storing Bible illustrations, Antwerp, 1941-1942.

HAREDI HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE

BY MATTHEW WAGNER,
THE JERUSALEM POST

A compilation of rabbinic literature written immediately after World War II that was recently released in CD-ROM form is breaking misconceptions about the *haredi* approach to the Holocaust.

Called "History of the Shoah in Rabbinic Literature's Introductions," the CD-ROM contains prefaces and introductions to about 100 books written by rabbis who survived the Holocaust. The Conference on Jewish Claims Against Germany funded the project.

"The common perception among researchers of the Holocaust has been that the *haredi* community as a whole, and rabbis in particular, remained silent about the Holocaust," said Esther Farbstein, an educator who teaches Holocaust studies and trains teachers at Jerusalem College (*Michlala Yerushalayim*) and is the author of *Hidden in Thunder: Perspectives on Faith, Halachah and Leadership during the Holocaust*.

"At first it was thought that rabbis who had gone through the Holocaust simply refrained from relating their experiences," she said. "They did not consider it appropriate for a rabbi, who is a public figure, to write a personal memoir."

"But we soon began to discover a hidden treasure of memoirs that were not written as separate books," she added. "Rather, they were written as a preface or an introduction to legal treatises, exegesis or homiletics."

Farbstein said some of the memoirs were surprising. For instance, Rabbi Ya'acov Avigdor, who eventually ended up in the US, reprinted his *halachic* treatise *Helek Ya'acov*, in 1950 with a long introduction. A good portion of it is devoted to



Haredi visitors look at a display in the Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial museum.

rebuffing claims of Jewish passivity during the Holocaust. He goes to great lengths to explain why physical resistance was impossible.

"This was at a time when even secular Israelis were just beginning to talk about it," Farbstein said.

Secular Zionists have made efforts to emphasize the isolated incidents of physical rebellion during the Holocaust, even setting Holocaust Remembrance Day on the anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising. In contrast, *haredim* have tended to emphasize the spiritual courage of Holocaust victims.

Avigdor also recounted the long discussions that took place in a rabbinic court in *Drovitz*, a town located in modern-day

Ukraine, over whether it was permitted to pose as a Christian to save one's life. The rabbis debated whether Christianity was a form of idol worship, and therefore posing as a Christian was forbidden, even at the price of giving up one's life. The court ruled that not only was it permitted to pose as a Christian, it was also an act of bravery, since the reason for doing so was to preserve the Jewish people.

In another introduction, Rabbi Moshe Natan Lemberger of Hungary recounts how he risked his life to obtain oil to light a hanukkah. He later debated whether it was permitted to endanger his life for the oil.

Dr. Havi Dreifuss (formerly Ben-Sasson), a Mandel scholar at The Hebrew University of Jerusalem's Scholion Institute, said study of the Holocaust in the *haredi* community had developed in recent years.

"Yad Vashem has created a special department for the *haredi* community and textbooks dealing with the *Shoah* are being learned in *haredi* schools," he said. However, Dreifuss said, the *haredi* approach to history was fundamentally different from the secular approach.

"In *haredi* society, history is used as an educational tool," he said. "As a result, historical truths that have negative messages are not taught. But unfounded or false stories that have positive pedagogical or religious meaning will be."

Dreifuss said the introductions included in the compilation were written by rabbis immediately after the war, which gave them particular importance.

POLAND INVESTIGATES COMMUNIST-ERA ANTI-SEMITISM

Poland wants to prosecute the Communist officials who used anti-Semitic propaganda in the late 1960s, driving some 20,000 Jews into exile. Prosecutors from the state-run Institute of National Remembrance, charged with investigating the country's communist past, announced Thursday that it had documented evidence of anti-Semitic articles and speeches of former government leaders.

The maximum sentence for those found guilty of propagating anti-Semitism crime is two years.

The institute plans also to conduct interviews with Jews who fled Poland in 1968-69, when some Communist leaders used the 1967 Arab-Israeli War as a pretext to solidify power in an anti-Zionist campaign to purge the party of its perceived critics. Most of the Jews who fled applied for exit papers and fled the country at that time were Holocaust survivors and their children.

As part of the government anti-Zionist campaign, Jews were frequently fired from their jobs and accused of pro-Israeli views, often pushed to publicly denounce Israel.

Nearly all countries in the former communist bloc broke off ties with Israel after the 1967 war and adopted anti-Israel and sometimes anti-Jewish policies.

Former Polish Communist Party general secretary Wladyslaw Gomulka, who died in 1982, had openly referred to Jews an "imperialistically Zionist fifth column," which became a part of the party rhetoric following the war.

CHILD HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS MEET IN ISRAEL

BY ARON HELLER, AP

In 1939, 5-year-old Erna Blitzer left France with her parents and older sister for a vacation to visit relatives in Poland. They never made it home.

She was on the run from the Nazis for the next five years. During that time, she watched her mother die. Her father was forced to witness the execution of his wife's entire extended family and then bury them.

Erna and her older sister survived by hiding in a barn in Ukraine, where they could not bathe for nearly two years.

"When I was 10, I couldn't speak, I couldn't walk," she said. "I was a shell filled with lice and vermin."

Early November in Jerusalem, Blitzer, now Erna Gorman, joined dozens of other child Holocaust survivors to share stories and keep the memories alive. Participants at the conference also included the children of survivors, many of whom grappled with their parents' pain as they grew up.

About 800 survivors, along with their children and grandchildren, attended the annual gathering of the World Federation of Jewish Child Survivors of the Holocaust.

A cacophony of languages — English, Hebrew, French, Yiddish — filled the lobby of the Jerusalem hotel where participants attended lectures, workshops and discussions aimed at reuniting long-lost friends and guaranteeing their dramatic tales outlive them.

"Most of the children did not survive," said Gorman, 73. "Those of us who did were all helped by a Christian, by someone. Otherwise we wouldn't be here. At Auschwitz, the children were taken directly to the gas chambers."

For Gorman, the memories were so painful she could not speak about her childhood for 50 years. She said she kept them even from her husband and two sons until a news report about German skinheads pushed her to break her silence in the early 1990s.

Six million Jews were killed by the Nazis during World War II, including 1.5 million children.



A group of Holocaust survivors, and relatives of Holocaust survivors visit the Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial in Jerusalem.

"We call ourselves the last living witnesses," said Stefanie Seltzer, 69, president of the umbrella organization, which includes 64 groups of child survivors from more than 20 countries. "It seems so unreal that we lived through this. It's amazing that we are here at all."

Seltzer, who was hidden by a Polish prostitute during World War II, established the organization in 1985 as a support network for survivors. Today, it includes thousands of members.

"We used to focus on our trauma, on our experiences. Now it's on projects of education, memorialization and social jus-

tice," she explained, citing their recent initiative to speak out on the Darfur genocide as an example.

As Holocaust survivors grow older and their numbers diminish each year, the organization has begun including their children and grandchildren in the gatherings.

Seltzer said Holocaust survivors and their children often did not discuss the

His father died 11 years ago.

"The torch has been passed from my father to myself. It's my job that his story, and others' stories, are not forgotten," he said.

For Gorman, whose father and sister died years ago, the conference is an opportunity to connect with those who can relate to her childhood.

"I needed someone to understand me. I



past as a means of mutual protection: The parents didn't want to tarnish their children's youth, and the children didn't want to hurt their parents by pressing the painful memories. Now, the lines of communications have improved.

The annual conference now bears the all-inclusive title of "Holocaust survivors, second and third generations, spouses and families."

Isaac Kot, 52, from Boston, said he felt a responsibility to take part. His Lithuanian father survived the ghettos and the camps and then fought in the resistance before emigrating to the U.S., where he remained mostly mum.

needed someone to fill in the gaps. I needed to mesh my life together," she said.

Gorman, who lives in the Detroit area, started the Michigan chapter of the child survivors organization and now shares her stories with her family and others.

But for years, she longed to reunite with a long-lost childhood friend with whom she hid in Ukraine, and whose picture she still carries in her purse.

Before her visit, Gorman tracked down the woman in Israel and they got together for the first time in more than 60 years.

"We looked at the picture and we looked at each other and we just knew," she said, tears welling in her eyes.

SECRET DIARY DETAILS HOLOCAUST AND NAZI CRIMES

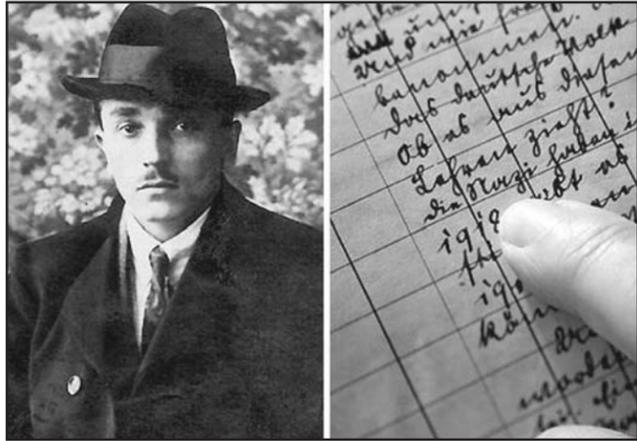
BY HELEN KENNEDY, DAILY NEWS

Forty years ago, Scott Kellner's German grandfather gave him a sacred trust: the secret diary he had kept throughout World War II, detailing Nazi atrocities.

Kellner is on a crusade to put a copy in the hands of Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, who has dismissed the Holocaust as a "Zionist myth."

"I see in him a would-be Hitler," said Kellner, 67, who spent 40 years translating the diary.

"My grandfather saw it as his duty to write the diary against the terrorists of his time, and I see it as my duty to use that



Anti-Nazi Friedrich Kellner and part of the diary he kept.

diary in the fight against today's terrorists. The truth is a weapon," Kellner said.

Kellner's grandfather, Friedrich Kellner, was an evangelical Lutheran and member of the anti-Nazi Social Democratic Party who risked much by denouncing Hitler at political rallies.

When the war began in 1939, he began

keeping a secret diary, including eyewitness accounts of atrocities and numerous newspaper clippings of events of the day.

"A soldier on vacation here said he ... watched as naked Jewish men and women were placed in front of a long, deep ditch and upon the order of the SS were shot by Ukrainians in the back of their heads and they fell into the ditch. Then the ditch was filled with dirt even as he could still hear screams coming from people still alive in the ditch," he wrote on Oct. 28, 1940.

By 1945, 676 entries filled 10 notebooks.

To Friedrich Kellner's distress, his son, Fred, became an ardent Nazi, so he shipped the teenager to New York to keep him out of Hitler's army. In New York, Fred Kellner married a Jewish woman, but soon abandoned her and their three kids. He eventually killed himself.

Unable to deal with three kids alone, Scott Kellner's mom left them at a children's home and became a carnival dancer.

In 1960, Scott Kellner went AWOL from the Navy to go find the German grandparents

he never knew. When he located them, his grandfather showed him the diary he still kept hidden.

"When my grandfather stood against Adolf Hitler, not enough people stood with him," he said. "I hope more people will take a stand against Ahmadinejad."

LOST HOLOCAUST SCORES GIVEN NEW LIFE

Like a detective, Albrecht Dumling scours basements and dusty attics digging up the past. He travels the world hunting for music hidden during the Holocaust.

For nearly twenty years, this Berlin-based music director has spent his days finding works that died along with their creators, and bringing them back to life.

During World War II, Germany's *Third Reich* enforced a prohibition of all music from Jewish composers. As musicians were sent to concentration camps, their scores were buried for safekeeping.

"We try to do some sort of justice to people who have suffered so much injustice under the Nazis," says Dumling. He founded his organization, *Musica Reanimata*, after seeing an opera, "Kaiser of Atlantis," written and staged by Victor Ullman while he was a prisoner in the *Terezin* concentration camp.

Dumling decided he wanted to give other musicians a second chance. He admits that not all the works are masterpieces, but many carry compelling stories.

He shares the story of composer Siegfried Borris, a Jew given shelter by a prominent Nazi official's wife in Germany. Borris gave the couple's daughter music lessons throughout the war, concealing his Jewish identity.

Decades later, Dumling united Borris' daughter with the Nazi's daughter for a public performance of his work. It was a tearful meeting for them both.

MASS MURDER AS PARTY ENTERTAINMENT?

Historians dispute the claim by a British journalist that Nazi fanatics attending a party near the Austro-Hungarian border in March 1945 killed 200 Hungarian Jews as an "additional entertainment" laid on by the hosts. The massacre did happen, though, and the circumstances surrounding it remain unclear.

A row has broken out among historians about one of the most spectacular Nazi crimes committed in Austria. On the night of March 24 to March 25, 1945, some 200 Hungarian Jews were murdered in the Austrian town of *Rechnitz* near the Austro-Hungarian border. The bodies of the victims still haven't been found.

The *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* newspaper last week published an essay by British journalist David Litchfield, in which he claims that several guests at a party held by Countess Margit von Batthyany, born Thyssen-Bornemisza, in *Schloss Rechnitz* castle were offered the chance to murder the Jews as an "additional entertainment" laid on by local Nazi party chief Franz Podezin. The guests accepted the offer, Litchfield wrote.

But several historians are now disputing Litchfield's version of events. Berlin-based anti-Semitism researcher Wolfgang Benz says Litchfield is spreading "murmurs and hearsay."

Winfried Garscha of the respected Documentation Centre of Austrian Resistance: "It was indisputably a mass murder, but it didn't arise from a party whim. People incapable of marching were

murdered everywhere at the time."

The murdered Hungarian Jews were forced laborers en route from Hungary to Austria to build fortifications against the advancing Red Army. But they were too sick and weak to carry on.

Garscha said that according to documents from an official investigation into the case after the war, the victims were among thousands of Hungarian Jews who were forced to work on the "Southeast Wall" fortifications along the Austro-Hungarian border from autumn 1944 onwards.

On March 24 a train brought 600 of these forced laborers from the town of *Köszeg* in neighboring Hungary to the town of *Burg* in the Burgenland region of Austria. Some 30 percent of them were sick and weak and were transported to *Rechnitz* where they arrived in the early evening.

Meanwhile the countess was making the final arrangements for her "followers' festival" which started at 9 p.m. The advancing Soviet Red Army was close to *Rechnitz*. It wasn't unusual for Nazi officials to hold raucous parties before the impending defeat.

The killing of the Hungarian Jews in *Rechnitz* had already been decided before the party began, according to the investigation by public prosecutors after 1945 which cited testimony from one of the accused men.

In addition, the driver who was to take the victims to their execution had been ordered for 9 p.m. At 10 p.m. other forced laborers were taken to dig mass graves.

WIESENTHAL CENTER LAUNCHES "OPERATION: LAST CHANCE" IN SOUTH AMERICA

BY HAVIV RETTIG, THE JERUSALEM POST

Thousands of Nazis estimated to still be hiding in South America some 62 years after the fall of the Nazi regime may soon be brought to light as they become the next target of the Simon Wiesenthal Center's "Operation: Last Chance."

According to the center, which announced the launch of the operation this week, the South American phase will probably be the final major effort to locate and bring to justice Nazis in hiding scattered around the world.

"Operation: Last Chance" offers money in exchange for information that helps find and prosecute former Nazis. It was first launched in Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia in July 2002, and spread to countries throughout Europe, including Germany, Poland, Hungary and Croatia. It has brought forth some 488 suspected Nazi war criminals, of which 99 names were submitted to local law enforcement in the countries where the suspects resided. The result so far has been three arrest warrants, two extradition requests and dozens of continuing investigations.

The final number may not sound like

much, "but it's actually a lot [considering] the late date and bureaucratic obstacles," says the center's chief Nazi hunter, Efraim Zuroff. "The problem is not finding these people, but getting them into a courtroom. Political will is turning out to be more difficult than finding information and catching the [suspects]."



Most wanted Nazis: Upper row, from left: Alois Brunner, Aribert Heim, Ivan Demjanjuk, Milivoj Asner Bottom row, from left: Sandor Kepiro, Karoly Zentai, Algimantas Dalide, Harry Mannil.

While "the atmosphere is different now, and there is less willingness [than in the past] to give shelter to exposed Nazi war criminals" on the part of South America's center-left governments, "most have not been willing to undertake comprehensive investigations to find Nazis," Zuroff complains. Even so, "if we find the Nazis, today, they will extradite them."

Though it will probably be the last stage of the operation, it is an important one, "given the large number of Nazi war criminals and collaborators who escaped to South America," says Zuroff, who believes the operation "has the potential to yield important results."

Across the *German Reich*, Jewish prisoners were being driven westwards by their captors, who were fleeing Soviet forces. Those incapable of carrying on were killed. The killings at *Rechnitz* fit in with that pattern.

When the preparations for the executions had been made, at around 11 p.m., local Nazi party chief Podezin gathered a group of loyal Nazis who were at the party and ordered them to drive with him to a barn and kill the Jewish prisoners, according to the investigators. His orders were carried out.

Litchfield's version can only be explained by speculation that those accused of the massacre were lying when they said Podezin had ordered them to commit the atrocity – by way of covering up the alleged connection to the party. Podezin disappeared in 1945 – presumably with the help of the countess. The bodies of the victims were apparently buried by 18 other Jewish prisoners who were themselves murdered the following evening.

The case has been a political issue in Austria for decades because many *Rechnitz* residents boycotted the investigation. One witness was even murdered in 1946, and other witnesses died in mysterious accidents. In the meantime, a commemorative society called *Refugius* has been established in *Rechnitz*. Its head, Paul Gulda, suspects that Litchfield wanted to attract attention with his sensational version of events.

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FOOTPRINTS OF HOLOCAUST IN A BATTLE FOR LOST ART

BY PETER APPLEBOME,
THE NEW YORK TIMES

Something wonderful happened to Martha Nierenberg in October 2000, when a trial court in Hungary said something very obvious. A fortune in artwork had been stolen from her family at the time of the German invasion of Hungary in 1944, which also ushered in one of the most horrific chapters of the Holocaust. Much of the art was hanging in plain view in the country's two most prominent museums. It should be given back to her, the court said. The ruling was the second in her favor, and it seemed definitive.

She went to Hungary to see the magnificent paintings by El Greco, Courbet, Van Dyck and others. There were celebrations and grand plans. After decades without hope of recovering the art, after frustrating years of negotiations toward an amicable settlement after the fall of the Soviet Union, it seemed a reminder that justice could be slow, but when it arrived it was a blessed thing.

But, alas, it never arrived. The Hungarian government, eager to keep the art, appealed the ruling. That led to new trials and new arguments, each more legalistic and narrow than the one before.

So when she got more news recently it was not wonderful, but it was not unexpected. Another Hungarian appellate court in Budapest, ruled in favor of the government. It found that the government had acquired the art through "prescription," the principle that by possessing the property for long enough, it had gained ownership of it. It was the fifth ruling in the case. It left Mrs. Nierenberg and her allies convinced that if she were ever to find justice, it would not come through the

Hungarian courts.

And it added another chapter to a dark story that reminds us that sometimes history plays out like "Schindler's List," and sometimes, well, Mrs. Nierenberg hopes she's around to see how it finally plays out.

"I'm 83; I guess they're hoping they can wait me out," said Mrs. Nierenberg, whose family, one of the richest and most powerful in Hungary before the war, fled the Holocaust in 1944. With her husband, Ted, she went on to found

furniture, tapestries, sculpture, maybe 2,500 pieces at its peak.

In 1944, the Hungarian government began systematically cataloguing and seizing the valuables of Hungarian Jews. The Herzog collection was mostly hidden in the cellar of one of the family's factories, then found and taken directly to Adolf Eichmann's headquarters at the Majestic Hotel in Budapest for his inspection. Many pieces were shipped off to Germany, with a few left in Hungarian museums. Most of



Nierenberg at her home in Armonk, N.Y. Artwork that belonged to her family was stolen when Germany invaded Hungary in 1944.

the Dansk housewares company, which was later sold. "Part of me is frustrated. Part is angry at the government there. It's been a long time, but you keep on."

The collection dates to her grandfather Baron Mor Lipot Herzog, a banker in pre-war Budapest. He assembled one of Europe's great private collections of art and the greatest in Hungary — works by Renoir, Monet and other Impressionists,

the family escaped from Hungary, but the world they knew was obliterated.

From April 16 to July 19, 1944, half the Jews of Hungary, some 427,000 people, were sent to Auschwitz. The slaughter moved Winston Churchill to write to his foreign secretary, Anthony Eden: "There is no doubt that this is probably the greatest and most horrible crime ever committed in the whole history of the world." Maybe it's been topped since. Who knows?

Mrs. Nierenberg's quest, narrowed to 11 paintings she inherited, now valued at \$15 million to \$20 million, of course, is a tiny whisper compared to the horrific roar that was Auschwitz. She is a rich woman in a gorgeous modern home, full of other kinds of art — her husband's photographs, taken around the world, African masks, an eclectic assortment of paintings.

But, along with other claims large and small, it's one of the most important remaining claims asking for simple justice in the face of one of history's most dreadful injustices. As always, there are legal issues as precise as pinpricks. What is the effect of a 1959 payment of \$169,827 by the Foreign Claims Settlement Commission of the United States for artwork and real property to Mrs. Nierenberg's mother? Exactly what futile but symbolic efforts should the family have made during Soviet rule to have voided any statute of limitation issues for filing claims?

Still, the United States Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, which has advocated on her behalf, managed to cut to the chase in a letter last week. "Why would the Hungarian government insist on retaining custody of artwork stolen by the Nazis when it could return it to its rightful owner?" the commission asked in a letter to Hungary's foreign affairs minister, Dr. Kinga Goncz.

"Whether a court actually orders the return of these paintings or not, we urge your government to return to Mrs. Nierenberg without further delay the paintings that were stolen from her family," the letter said.

In the face of a nightmare of history, where justice can never be done, it doesn't seem like so much to ask. But maybe it is.

FIGHT FOR "HONOR" REVEALS A NAZI'S PAST

MIKE LEIDIG, THE OBSERVER

A former member of Hitler's SS has gone to court, claiming his reputation has been ruined by a book — not because it exposed his part in the Holocaust, but because it accused him of abandoning a woman he had an affair with when she became pregnant.

Erich Steidtmann, 92, was furious to be portrayed as a philanderer. He launched a lawsuit in Leipzig saying his "honor had been besmirched" in the book *An Ordinary Life*.

In the resulting legal battle, he has revealed himself as the last known survivor of the SS squads to wipe out the Jews in the Warsaw ghetto. As the publisher of the memoir and its author prepared their defense, they found pictures of him at the center of one of the worst crimes in history.

Steidtmann's story surfaced because he happened to read the book by Lisl Urban. A Sudeten German, she was a secretary for the Gestapo in Prague, described by her as a "hotbed of frivolous sexual encounters," one of which she had with an SS man she nicknamed Eick, a police officer who, he claimed, was drafted into the fighting arm of the SS. He was sent to Prague from the Eastern Front for recuperation, and to

document his experiences in tracking down partisans.

The couple spent 1942 rowing, dining out and staying in — and Urban fell pregnant. But Eick was posted to Warsaw to guard the Jewish ghetto, the Nazi way station for their extermination camps. Urban had hoped they would marry, but Eick spurned her for a Polish woman. For his illicit liaison, he says he was court-martialed, and ordered to serve on the Eastern Front. Nowhere does former art teacher Urban refer to Eick as Steidtmann, but he recognized himself.

He alleges Urban's baby was not his but "a cuckoo's egg." He added: "To claim this of a captain of the uniformed police is such a reprehensible act that even at 92 I have a right to protect my reputation."

In trying to preserve his reputation as an "honorable serviceman" 'Eick' outed himself as the bodyguard of Juergen Stroop, tasked by Hitler with destroying the ghetto after the Jews rose up in January 1943. Over four months, 13,000 people were shot or burned to death and the remaining 50,000 sent to death camps.

Steidtmann was exonerated in a post-war trial as having "minimal involvement" in crushing the uprising, but the Simon Wiesenthal Centre in Israel is now pressing for him to be retried, claiming the trial did not know of his closeness to Stroop.

HUNGARY REFUSES TO PROSECUTE NAZI WAR CRIMINAL

BY ETGAR LEFKOVITS,
THE JERUSALEM POST

The Los Angeles-based Simon Wiesenthal Center has renewed its call for Hungary to immediately prosecute a top Hungarian war criminal who was never punished for his role in the mass murder of thousands of people during World War II, despite being convicted of war crimes more than six decades ago.

The organization's chief Nazi hunter, Dr. Efraim Zuroff, has lambasted as "a travesty of justice" the Hungarian authorities' delay in prosecuting Sandor Kepiro, 94, despite his past conviction in a Hungarian court for war crimes committed in World War II.

"The problem, is they are acting as if they have all the time in the world, but we really don't have time," Zuroff said.

Kepiro was convicted in 1944 for his role in the murder of 1,246 civilians in the city of *Novi Sad* in January 1942, when he served as a gendarme with an Hungarian army unit, the Wiesenthal Center said.

After details of the massacres in the region — which Hungary had annexed as a prize for its collaboration with Nazi Germany — were revealed, Kepiro was sentenced in 1944 to 10 years in jail for his role in the killings.

But after the Nazi invasion of Hungary

that same year, Kepiro was cleared by a Nazi-dominated military tribunal, which acquitted him and restored his rank. He went on to become the highest-ranking gendarmerie officer in the city and participated in the deportation of Jews to Auschwitz, the Wiesenthal Center said. After the war, Kepiro escaped to Austria where he lived for three years. Kepiro then moved to Argentina, where he lived for nearly half a century before returning to Budapest, where he was tracked down by the Wiesenthal Center.

Last year, in a controversial ruling, a Hungarian court decided not to enforce Kepiro's six-decade-old conviction.

The Hungarian government subsequently opened a new murder investigation in the case last year.

"What has to happen for justice to be achieved?" Zuroff asked at a memorial service in Serbia for the victims of the 1942 mass murder.

"How is it possible that someone as obviously guilty as Kepiro, someone who was convicted for his role in 1944 by a Hungarian court, is still a free man, walking the streets of Budapest?" Zuroff said. Kepiro has denied the allegations against him, asserting that while he was present at the *Novi Sad* massacres, it was Hungarian soldiers — and not gendarmes like him — who did the shooting.

YOKO ONO'S GLASSES GO TO HOLOCAUST SHOW

Yoko Ono has donated a pair of her own glasses to a Liverpool exhibition to raise awareness of the Holocaust.

The artist and widow of murdered Beatle John Lennon has also given a £10,000 gift towards the staging of a number of events surrounding National Holocaust Memorial Day.

Yoko Ono said: "It is an honor to be part of such a symbolic piece of artwork which will help people to learn how important it is never to forget the horrors of the Holocaust and to challenge hatred and prejudice wherever it arises."



"That is why I am supporting this project and I'm very pleased and very proud that Liverpool is the focal point for National Holocaust Memorial Day."

Yoko's glasses will form part of the RESPECTacles display at the Town Hall.

Organizers hope thousands of people will join Yoko Ono and other celebrity donors and hand over unwanted spectacles to the display. It will mirror one of the poignant collections of personal belongings on show at the Nazi death camp Auschwitz.

The project's message is that everyone, particularly young people, can play their part in genocide prevention simply by having, showing and insisting on respect for other human beings and for their differences.

Organizers have already collected 1,000 pairs of glasses to start off the collection.

Following the exhibition, the collected glasses will be donated through Vision Aid Overseas to those with poor eyesight in the developing world.

GERMAN ARCHIVES' OPENING HELPS ISRAELI MAN TRACK HIS FATHER'S DEATH

(Continued from page 10)

"This story demonstrates how the tens of millions of documents collected by the Yad Vashem archives, in conjunction with the millions of new documents that have recently arrived, and will arrive from the International Tracing Service archive in Germany over the next two years, will be able to help individuals fill in the picture about the fate of their loved ones in the Holocaust."

Yad Vashem had previously received many documents from the International Tracing Service, but will be bolstering its collection over the next two years. Bar-Yoda had looked through the Yad Vashem archives, which include microfilm of some 20 million documents received from the tracing service at the end of the 1950s. However, the Majdanek document did not reach the Bad Arolsen archives until the mid-1960s.

Family members of Holocaust victims can request information on the fate of their loved ones at www.yadvashem.org.

"JEW" HAS BECOME CURSE WORD AMONG GERMANS

German schools are failing in educating students about the Holocaust, a new study by a political education center has found, as German youth, who one historian said use the word "Jew" as a common curse in daily discourse, are increasingly distant from the suffering of the victims of Nazism.

According to a study commissioned by the Federal Agency for Civic Education, a political education center known by its German acronym BPP, history courses no longer manage to teach Germany's younger generation of the horrors of the Nazis.

In the report, which appeared in the German educational magazine Focus-Shula, teachers are quoted as saying that they are having trouble impressing upon school children the horrors of the Holocaust, and have stated that their tools for teaching about the *Shoah* are not effective.

"The entire time we stood before the

crematoriums of Auschwitz, the students took more interest in the types of pipes used to pump in the lethal Zyklon B gas, and not the fate of the Nazis victims," a teacher was quoted as saying. In their words, this generation's students are less sensitive to the horrors of the Holocaust than any before.

The research also examines the role that immigrants have played in the changing attitudes towards the Shoah. Experts are quoted in the study as saying that there is a marked rise in the number of Muslims in Germany, many of whom see the teaching of the Holocaust as a veiled endorsement of the policies of the state of Israel.

"Out of fear of the students' reactions, many of the teachers avoid teaching this chapter of history in order to not be viewed by some students as supporters of Israel."

"The word 'Jew' has turned into one of the most common curse words among

students in both east and west Germany," said Gottfried Cosler, a Frankfurt-based Holocaust scholar.

Robert Sigel, a historian who contributed to the study, is of the opinion that students are taking a great interest in the Holocaust, but that the methods in which the subject is taught today are in need of improvement.

Susan Orban, a historian at Yad Vashem, says that the Holocaust should be taught using methods that have proved successful in the past.

"Today's kids live in different times than that of Anne Frank," Orban said. In order to bridge the generational gap, she submits a different approach, "for example, asking them to imagine that they have to abruptly leave their homes and start a new life elsewhere." Such a method, according to Orban, would speak more directly to the children's hearts and minds than descriptions of the horrors of the concentration camp.

NAZI VICTIMS' FUND PAYS MILLIONS

BY ANGUS CRAWFORD, BBC NEWS

A British scheme to return money belonging to victims of the Nazis has paid out more than £21m, or 10 times its budget.

The Enemy Property Claims Assessment panel (EPCAP) was set up to help people who lived in enemy countries and whose British bank accounts were frozen.

It was meant to end three years ago, but is still receiving applications.

The monies include a "six-figure sum" paid to a woman whose Jewish grandfather had his savings seized.

"When my mother died, we cleaned the house [and] I found some papers [that] looked very funny," said Yvonne, who does not want her real name used.

The mysterious-looking documents, found by chance, could only be read when held up against a mirror.

"They were photographed in a mirror, black paper and white letters," Yvonne said of the papers.

They dated back to the 1940s and had details of money held in British bank accounts belonging to her grandfather.

Yvonne said they explained stories she heard as a child growing up in Israel.

"My parents didn't get any money when they were getting married. It was all abroad," she said of talk of missing family monies.

Yvonne's grandfather was a successful Jewish businessman living in Eastern Europe and before war broke out, he had stowed much of his money in British banks.

While he survived the war and later emigrated, he, like many Holocaust survivors, never recovered his savings.

War-time trading-with-the-enemy laws meant the property belonging to anyone living in an enemy country was confiscated and would not be given back.

After the war, assets confiscated from affected countries were shared out among British people whose own assets had been confiscated by the enemy countries.

In 1999 the British government set up

EPCAP to return the funds to victims of the war and Yvonne made an application for compensation.

In 2007, after years of letter writing she received what she described as "a six figure sum."

She said the money corrects a mistake of history.

Lord Archer of Sandwell, chairman of the Epcap, said the panel went out of its way to compensate the families of Holocaust victims and even extended its own mandate from 1999 to 2004, when it officially ended.

"We bent over backwards to allow claims," he said. "The government set aside £2m... but we've now compensated people to the extent of just under £22m."

The panel is still receiving about 20 new claims a year and continues to consider them on an ad hoc basis. In total, 400 claims were successful.

Greville Janner, Lord Janner of Braunstone who campaigned for the scheme to be set up in the first place, said the reparations paid by UK taxpayers are a matter of justice.

THE NAZI CONNECTION TO ISLAMIC TERRORISM

(Continued from page 4)

Tel Aviv and Jaffa, as well as Jews living in the countryside. The ancient Jewish community of Hebron was destroyed.

After the massacre of the Hebron Jews, al-Husseini disseminated photos of the slaughtered Jewish corpses with the claim that the dead were actually Arabs killed by Jews! This type of blood-libel is today frequently used against Israel by the Palestinian Authority by the Axis of Islamists and the International Left, and is widely disseminated in the media and universities worldwide. As Morse points out, "The preposterous and quite bizarre proposition presented today is that the State of Israel and its armed forces are deliberately and knowingly killing innocent Palestinian Arabs." Such propaganda serves the same purpose today as it did in the time of al-Husseini, not to mention mediaeval times, namely as a means of fanning the flames and hatred, and stoking the fires of genocide, against the Jews.

After Adolf Hitler came to power in 1933, al-Husseini proceeded to set up a Palestinian Arab Youth Group, known as the Nazi Scouts. Other Arab organizations mod-

elled on the Nazi Party were set up in Egypt, Algeria, Tunisia, Syria, Lebanon and Iraq.

In August 1995, a graduating class of Palestinian Authority cadets, who would later engage in the mass slaughter of Jewish men, women and children, marked the occasion with a Nazi-style straight *Sieg Heil* salute. Fawzi Salim al-Mahdi, a commander of Fatah's Force 17, Arafat's elite Praetorian Guard, which would play a key role in suicide bombings, was known as Abu Hitler, because he named his two sons Eichmann and Hitler.

In 1936, al-Husseini made contact with the German Nazis, and with their backing launched the Arab revolt, in which thousands of Jews were butchered to the chilling cry of '*Itbach al Yahud*' ('Kill the Jews').

In 1937, al Husseini met with Adolf Eichmann in a cordial meeting that would cement the al-Husseini-Hitler alliance. Eichmann reported glowingly of the "national and racial conscience" among the Arabs of Palestine, who hung swastikas and portraits of Hitler in their homes.

That year, the mufti fled from the British to Lebanon, and thence to Iraq. After organizing a failed pro-Nazi coup in Iraq, al-Husseini fled to Nazi Germany, where

he was installed as a guest of honor who frequently met with Hitler, and was present at the 1942 Wannsee Conference where the "Final Solution" to the Jewish question was adopted. Al-Husseini organized SS Brigades of Muslims from the Caucasus, the Middle East and Bosnia, including the infamous Hansar Brigades of Bosnian Muslims, which killed thousands of Serbs, Roma and Jews. He is reported to have visited Auschwitz and urged the SS guards there to be more diligent in their work of extermination. In 1943, he interceded with Hungarian authorities to prevent 900 Jewish children from being shipped to Palestine. The children were instead sent to Auschwitz, where they perished. After World War II, al-Husseini escaped to Egypt and organized the Arab war effort to destroy the tiny fledgling State of Israel. He formed a band of Arab terrorists, called the Jihad Muqqadas, who launched attacks on Jewish civilians. Until his death in 1974, and his succession by his nephew Yasser Arafat, al-Husseini continued to devote his life to the destruction of Israel.

The evil of al-Husseini and Hitler lives on in the terror and Propaganda war against Israel.

JOY IN DACHAU

BY SHIRA LEIBOWITZ SCHMIDT,
THE JERUSALEM POST

There I sat in the Holocaust archives of Yeshiva University. I started to cry as I picked up one page from the box labeled "1945" from the section on the Orthodox *Va'ad Hatzolah* Rescue Committee's activities in the Displaced Persons (DP) Camps. The librarian thought I must have come across a description of starvation, or the death of a child, and came to see what was on the page that I was holding.

"What is so emotional about that?" she asked incredulously.

"That" was an order form for books for the DP camps in Germany. But it represented a whole world lost – and the struggle to regain it. I recollected this episode as January 27, World Holocaust Memorial Day commemorating the liberation of Auschwitz, approached.

Not all Jews were liberated that day. After the liberation of Auschwitz, the war and the killing of Jews continued. *Dachau* was liberated only on April 29, 1945. Hitler died a day later, and the Axis surrendered on May 8. Auschwitz was liberated early, since it was in Poland; *Dachau*, in Germany, much later.

That archived list of books reflected the tragedy and hope of those survivors.

I had embarked on my own archival research on survivors after reading the magnum opus of Esther Farbstein, *Hidden in Thunder: Perspectives on Faith, Halachah and Leadership during the Holocaust*. In the final chapters, which deal with liberation and life in the DP camps, she analyzes a short letter written in the summer of 1945 by a survivor in *Dachau* two months after his liberation.

Rabbi Mordechai Slapobersky had written to his brother in Jerusalem, describing his plight. "Thank God, I am alive. God has rescued me from the lion's mouth. But what am I when I am the only one left of my entire family? I haven't heard from my wife and eldest daughter. My other two

daughters were burned in the Amalekites' furnace. Of all the rabbis of Lithuania, not one remains."

His youngest daughter had been born in the *Kovno ghetto* "with a birthmark on her back, a yellow Star of David." He had hidden in a bunker with her, his middle daughter, and others. Tragically the infant died in his arms when she cried and was smothered for fear of giving away everyone else, and the middle daughter was brutally taken away. His wife and eldest child were murdered elsewhere. While in slave labor, he was forced to make *tefillin* straps into shoe straps.

"All that has happened to me is not fit to write on a paper," he said.

The letter from *Dachau* continues. "For now the Americans are supporting us, and flesh and skin have formed on the dry bones with which we were left."

A sad letter, but not remarkable. At least so I thought until I read Esther Farbstein's analysis, which mines this short epistle to plumb the critical role of books for this lonely scholar, and, by extension, for his lonely people.

With a historian's keen eye, Farbstein zeroes in on key sentences that unlock the past and future of Rabbi Slapobersky: "We have no religious books here. Just the other day an American rabbi brought us some tractates of *Talmud*, and I felt great joy."

If one volume was the occasion for great joy in the *Dachau* DP camp, I could imagine the ecstasy that the order form I was holding was able to bring: it meant whole shelves of religious books had been requisitioned for the survivors.

Farbstein uses Slapobersky's phrase – "I felt great joy" – as a springboard for an

erudite analysis of Jewish books before, during, and after the Holocaust.

Before the Holocaust, the bookcase formed the heart of Jewish homes. The study, and even care, of religious books was given priority. You don't place anything on top of a book, do not sit on it, and you kiss it if it falls. A person carrying books in a narrow passage has the right of way. Rescuing books from fire and water takes precedence over other valuables.

Before the war, the Nazis bragged about destroying Jewish books. Those volumes they did not burn, beginning in 1935, they collected in "Operation Rosenberg," in which they confiscated over a million books, storing them in a five-storey concrete structure in *Offenbach* for what was to be proof of the urgency to extirpate not just the Jews, but Judaism, as represented by its books.

During the worst moments in the death camps, Jews took risks to obtain books, or even pages of books. David Weiss Halivni, a scholarly 16-year-old, saw an Auschwitz guard lurching on a sandwich wrapped in a page of the *Shulhan Aruch* (Code of Jewish Law).

"I fell at the feet of the guard; the mere letters propelled me. With tears in my eyes, I implored him to give me this page from a book I had studied at home. The page became a rallying point. We looked forward to studying it whenever we had free time."

"Liberation found the Jews cut off from their entire previous world – and bereft of the Hebrew book," observes Farbstein. Ironically, the first books to arrive were from the *Offenbach* collection. There were even Torah scrolls in *Offenbach*, still open to the Torah portion that had been read the week the scrolls were confiscated.

When we view photographs of famished

figures who survived *Dachau*, their hunger for food is blatant. More difficult to discern is their hunger for books. As I sat in those archives I held in one hand an order for victuals: sardines – 4,000 cans; chocolate – 5,000 bars; rice – 2,000 lbs.; prunes – 1,000 lbs.; farina – 2,000 lbs.

In the other hand, I held the order for books: *Pessah hagadot* – 1,000; daily prayer books – 3,000; Bibles – 800; *mishnayot* – 800, and smaller numbers of more esoteric works.

I could envision Slapobersky, who established a yeshiva and rabbinical court in the DP camp, lobbying for books because the scarce monetary resources had to be divided among competing needs: medicine, food, clothing – and books.

"How great was the yearning and thirst for books. The books from overseas did not arrive quickly, and if a book did come, hundreds of hands reached out for it," wrote another *Dachau* rabbi, Shmuel Rose.

The survivors prevailed upon the American authorities, with the assistance of the Joint Distribution Committee, to publish several Talmud tractates for use in the DP camps. The title page was illustrated by an image of a wagon loaded with bodies for the crematoria, along with a rising sun over Jerusalem, and the phrase: "They almost wiped me out, but I did not abandon your commandments."

In that modest letter postmarked from *Dachau*, Rabbi Slapobersky left us a record of how much joy – "great joy" – one book brought him after liberation. In addition, re-instilling the love of learning in the camp yeshiva, he served as a religious court judge and was especially involved in freeing agunot (women whose husbands had been lost in the inferno), enabling them to remarry.

He moved to Israel in 1946, where he married a survivor and served as rabbi in a *moshav* near *Rehovot*. He and his second wife did not have children. Rabbi Slapobersky died 1967.



Dachau was liberated on April 29, 1945.

"WITNESS" IS A CHILLING REMINDER OF THE UNIMAGINABLE

(Continued from page 7)

and early '60s, with the release of "The Diary of Anne Frank" and "Judgment at Nuremberg." (Sadly, the film doesn't mention Sam Fuller's 1959 B movie "Verboten!," one of the first to incorporate newsreel footage of Nazi atrocities). In the studios' defense, even death-camp survivors didn't want to talk about what they'd experienced.

It was the upstart TV networks that first broke ground. "Judgment," was originally a "Playhouse 90" presentation (with the words "gas chambers" bleeped out so as not to offend the sponsor, a utilities company) and Anker unearths a mind-blowing 1953 "This Is Your Life" episode featuring Holocaust survivor Hannah Bloch Kohner – reality TV to singe your eyeballs.

As "Imaginary Witness" tracks the gradual emergence of the Holocaust in pop culture through the '60s, '70s, all the way to the inevitable apotheosis of 1993's "Schindler's List," Anker switches gears. Can the unknowable be put on film? Should it be? Elie Wiesel blasted the 1978 NBC miniseries "Holocaust," as a trivialization, but the clips of a later miniseries, 1988's "War and Remembrance," are shocking in their explicitness. Not

everyone approved. "The idea that we can re-create the event . . . is in many ways a desecration," says writer-professor Thane Rosenbaum.

Counters historian Neal Gabler, "Hollywood is the means by which most people, for better or worse, come to terms with the Holocaust." In the post-"Schindler" universe, the question isn't whether to tell the story, but which story to tell, and how to tell it. "Imaginary Witness" touches on some of the films that have since come out, including Roman Polanski's 2002 "The Pianist" but not Tim Blake Nelson's "The Grey Zone," made the same year and perhaps the most unblinking stare into the machinery of state murder put on film.

That's an omission, as is the failure to confront "Holocaust fatigue" – the dilution of impact that comes when a profound subject surges in commercial popularity. "It's not that it was bad; it just wasn't good enough," says Gabler, recounting some critics' response to the NBC miniseries. That challenge matters more than ever. By far the worst thing that could happen to Holocaust movies is for them to become familiar. One could argue they already have, even if this documentary doesn't.

AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR YAD VASHEM MOURNS THE DEATH OF MILES LERMAN

Miles Lerman, who helped found the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum and for three decades was a vital contributor to its success, died on January 22 in Philadelphia at the age of 88.



A Holocaust survivor and partisan fighter during World War II, Lerman was involved with the Holocaust museum almost from its inception.

President Carter appointed him to an advisory board

of the president's Commission on the Holocaust, which recommended creating the museum in Washington. Lerman was subsequently appointed to the governing council by three American presidents, and served for a total of 23 years.

Lerman is credited with leading the early fund-raising efforts and negotiating international agreements that helped the museum acquire artifacts for its permanent exhibition.

His initiative also led to the creation of the Miles Lerman Center for the Study of Jewish Resistance, a part of the museum's Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies.

Lerman was born in *Tomashov*, Poland, in 1920. In 1942 he escaped from a slave labor camp after killing his guards with a shovel. Lerman went on to join a resistance group formed by other escapees, and for the next two years waged a guerrilla campaign against the Nazis.

In June 1944, Lerman was liberated by the Soviet army and returned to Poland. He and his wife, Chris, also a survivor, immigrated to the United States in 1947 and settled in Vineland, N.J., where Lerman became successful in the home heating oil business.

By the time Lerman stepped down as chairman of the Holocaust museum, it had grown into a major Washington tourist stop, having attracted some 14 million visitors in its first six years of operations. The overwhelming majority were non-Jews.

Besides the museum, Lerman was involved in the construction of a memorial in *Belzec*, Poland, where some half-million Jews were murdered, including members of Lerman's family.

MEMORY OF HOLOCAUST VICTIMS HONORED THROUGH SERIES OF UN EVENTS

Yad Vashem, The Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Authority, Jerusalem; American and International Societies for Yad Vashem, New York; Carl Lutz Foundation, Budapest; The Permanent Mission of Albania, Hungary and Switzerland to the United Nations come together to organize an exhibit opening

highest ethical code in the country. The other segment, "Carl Lutz and the *Legendary Glass House in Budapest*," highlights the work of the Swiss diplomat who issued certificates of emigration to tens of thousands of Jews, thus saving many of them from near-certain extinction.

International Day has become an ongoing process in an outreach program, whereby people worldwide were taught the lessons and horrors of the Holocaust and made to become part of the army of goodwill, committed to the words "never again."

As part of the activities to mark the Day, General Assembly President Srgjan Kerim took part in an event at the Consulate General of Italy in New York at

In Vienna, UN staff marked the Day at a solemn ceremony which brought together representatives of the Jewish community, the Romanis and other affected groups, as well as politicians, the diplomatic community, students and civil society.

A key feature of the event was the unveiling of a reproduction of a series of postcards depicting life in a labor camp,



Kiyotaka Akasaka, United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information, Eli Zborowski, Chairman of the American & International Societies for Yad Vashem, Inc, and Dr. Elizabeth Mundlak Zborowski, Cultural Director at the American Society for Yad Vashem, at the opening of BESA – A CODE OF HONOR: Muslim Albanians who Saved Jews During the Holocaust exhibit at the United Nations. New York City, January 29, 2008.



Norman Gershman, Photographer who documented the Albanian Muslims featured in the BESA exhibit along with Eli Zborowski, Chairman of the American & International Societies for Yad Vashem, Inc and Dr. Elizabeth Mundlak Zborowski, Cultural Director at the American Society for Yad Vashem at the opening of BESA – A CODE OF HONOR: Muslim Albanians who Saved Jews.

and reception in observance of the International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the *Shoa*.

The Holocaust demonstrated that human beings are capable of great cruelty, but also of great courage and strength in the face of evil, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon declared today at the opening of a new United Nations exhibit focusing on the courageous men and women who helped rescue Jews during World War II.

"Today, we honor the victims and survivors of the Holocaust and those who protected and saved lives," Mr. Ban said in a message, delivered by Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information Kiyotaka Akasaka.

The two-part exhibit, entitled "The Holocaust – Stories of Rescue," tells the story of individuals who stood up to rescue Jews "when so many others turned a blind eye, or collaborated in the murder of Jews and other minorities," stated Mr. Ban.

One segment, "BESA – A Code of Honor," features an account of Muslim Albanians who rescued Jews during the Holocaust. Their courageous actions were grounded in BESA, a code of honor, which still today serves as the

Ambassador Dan Gillerman of Israel voiced appreciation for the fact that the Assembly's resolution designating the

which he read the names of the Jews deported from Italy and the former Italian territories.

originally created by Holocaust victim Karl Schafranek in *Eisenerz, Styria* in 1940. They are now on display for the first time since being smuggled out of the camp. The exhibition also included paintings by Holocaust survivor of Auschwitz-Birkenau, Adolf Frankl, as well as by Dvora Barzilai from the Exhibition "Shalom Peace Pace."

In Brazil, an observance was held with President Jose Inacio Lula da Silva and the Mayor of Rio de Janeiro, César Maia.

In Madagascar, a permanent exhibit on the Holocaust will be unveiled at the UN Information Centre.

The Holocaust and the United Nations Outreach Program also coordinated a video conference for students with the UN information centers in *Antananarivo, Madagascar, and Lomé, Togo*, and educators at the "Memorial de la Shoah" in Paris. In Tokyo on 29 January, an educational workshop targeting young students focused on the links between the Holocaust and human rights issues.

This year's observance focuses on the need to ensure the protection of human rights for all, and coincides with the 60th anniversary year of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.



Eli Zborowski, Chairman of the American & International Societies for Yad Vashem, Inc and Dr. Elizabeth Mundlak Zborowski, Cultural Director at the American Society for Yad Vashem seated among the dignitaries and over 400 guests who attended the opening of BESA – A CODE OF HONOR: Muslim Albanians who Saved Jews During the Holocaust Exhibit at the United Nations.

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