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“THEIR HOPES AND GOOD DEEDS REACH TO HEAVEN”

UN HONORS MEMORY OF CHILDREN WHO PERISHED IN THE HOLOCAUST

On January 27 the United Nations honored the memory of the more than 1.5 million boys and girls who perished in the Holocaust, with top officials stressing the need to speak out against intolerance and to protect the lives and human rights of children around the world.

“One and a half million Jewish children perished in the Holocaust — victims of persecution by the Nazis and their supporters.

“Tens of thousands of other children were also murdered. They included people with disabilities as well as Roma and Sinti. All were victims of a hate-filled ideology that labeled them ‘inferior.’

“This year’s International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust is dedicated to the children — girls and boys who faced sheer terror and evil. Many were orphaned by the war, or ripped away from their families. Many died of starvation, disease or at the hands of their abusers. We will never know what these children might have contributed to our world. And among the survivors, many were too shattered to tell their stories.

“Today, we seek to give voice to those accounts. That is why the United Nations continues to teach the universal lessons of the Holocaust. It is why we strive to promote children’s rights and aspirations — every day and everywhere. And it is why we will continue to be inspired by the shining example of great humanitarians such as Raoul Wallenberg in this, the centennial year of his birth.”

The UN held a ceremony at its New York headquarters January 27 to mark the International Day, which is observed annually, the anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz death camp. The event marked the culmination of a series of events held this week, focusing on the theme “Children and the Holocaust,” that included film screenings, exhibits, and talks, sharing children’s stories during that era and spreading awareness of their experiences.

“One-and-a-half million Jewish children perished in the Holocaust, together with thousands of Roma and Sinti and other young people,” Kiyoko Akasaka, Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information, said at the ceremony. “Those who managed to survive were

separated from their families, suffered from hunger and cold, and lived in fear and uncertainty.

“Yet, somehow, many of these children found ways to cope with the horror and

formation’s Holocaust and the UN Outreach Program, which organized this week’s events.

“Today, the United Nations remembers these children and pledges to continue to

and can understand the impact of their words and attitudes towards those who are different from them.

“Hateful words can translate into hateful actions and the consequences can be dire. Children and young people must be taught their history, including the terrible mistakes of the past, so that they can be vigilant against all manifestations of hatred from the outset,” she said in a statement.

Eli Zborowski, Chairman of the American Society for Yad Vashem, speaking at the opening of the exhibition “A Monument of Good Deeds – Dreams and Hopes of Children During the Holocaust” on January 26 in the UN headquarters in New York, said:

“On this day of remembrance, I think back of those unspeakable atrocities and recall my friends, full of hope, youngsters, members of the underground Zionist Youth Organization, our meetings, the discussions about Zionism and hope to reach Eretz Israel to build a Jewish State. Looking back I think about the courage and daily struggle to survive under these conditions.

“The years of my work in the Jewish underground, and later in hiding, were of hope and not of despair.

“My father was killed by Polish murderers, and if I felt bitterness it was offset by the fact that part of my family and I were saved by two Polish families who hid us for two years.

“After liberation I remained with my deep belief that a human being is basically ‘good.’ I felt, and continue to feel, an obligation to work for the cause of remembrance through research and studies and through the teaching of the history of that tragic period.

“Today we especially recall the children of the Holocaust, the victims, including a small number of survivors, and speak about their dreams and hopes of which I am a witness.

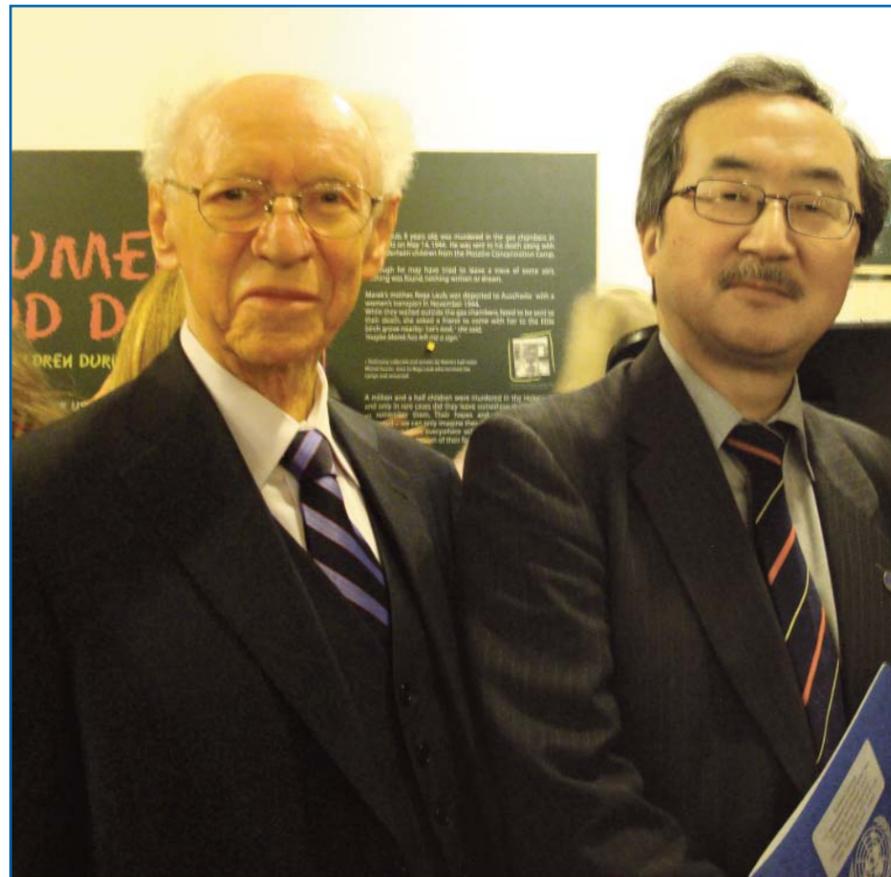
“When we speak of teaching the history of the Holocaust we also remember the rescuers. Their courage and heroism has been given a place of honor at Yad Vashem in Jerusalem, in the Garden and Boulevard of the Righteous Among the Nations.

“This Exhibition, ‘A Monument of Good Deeds...’ tells the story of a small girl, in the forest, a lone survivor, who believed she was indeed the last surviving Jew in the world. Her wish was to be remembered through good deeds — by ‘A Monument of Good Deeds that would reach the heavens...’

“We pledge to remember the millions who perished, among them the one and a half million innocent children. Their hopes and good deeds indeed reach to heaven and remain their living monument in our hearts.

“On behalf of Yad Vashem and the American Society for Yad Vashem, we thank the United Nations and its staff for hosting this exhibit in these hallowed halls. To the diplomats, our special guests and friends, thank you for joining us.

(Continued on page 2)



Eli Zborowski, Chairman of the American Society for Yad Vashem, and UN Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information Kiyoko Akasaka at the opening of the exhibition “A Monument of Good Deeds – Dreams and Hopes of Children During the Holocaust” in the UN headquarters in New York, January 26, 2012.

tragedy around them, as this exhibition so eloquently shows.

“While the story of Ann Frank is universally known, many children, whose names are forever lost, also recorded their experiences each in their own way.

“Without doubt, the best tribute to the memory of the children who perished in the Holocaust — and to those who survived — is to keep teaching its universal lessons.”

This, he added, is the most important objective of the UN Department of Public In-

formation to ensure the protection of the lives and human rights of children around the world,” said Mr. Akasaka.

Noting the presence of survivors and their families at the ceremony, General Assembly President Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser said, “The presence of each of you here today tells us that every human being has a sacred duty to speak out in the face of injustice and intolerance, regardless of any color, religion or ethnicity.”

He called for honoring all the victims by taking preventive action so that hatred, injustice, discrimination, inhumanity, ethnic cleansing, and mass killings have no chance to occur anywhere to anyone.

The Holocaust, said UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay, serves as a reminder of the perils of discrimination and intolerance, of how powerful the incitement to racial hatred can be, and of the importance of intervening early to prevent such a tragedy from occurring again.

She also stressed the importance of ‘learning from the past’ so that young people today are aware of historical events

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“THEIR HOPES AND GOOD DEEDS REACH TO HEAVEN”

(Continued from page 1)

“We want to acknowledge with thanks the extraordinary work done by Yad Vashem’s Museum Curator, Ms. Yehudit Inbar, and her team in conceiving and producing this exhibit. Thanks to the American Society for Yad Vashem and its staff for helping organize this event.

“If ‘Never Again’ is to become a reality – it will come about through our efforts in education and remembrance.”

Ms. Irina Bokova, Director-General of UNESCO, said in her message on the occasion of the International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust:

“The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) was founded on the idea that lasting peace can only be built on mutual understanding. Transmitting the memory of the Holocaust is a vital part of the struggle to combat ignorance and prejudice through education in humanist values, the sharing of cultures and knowledge of history.

“In our troubled times, we must remember that unprecedented disaster that took the lives of six million men, women, and children, simply because they were Jewish.

“The murderous folly of the Nazis and their collaborators, the outcome of racist and anti-Semitic ideology, also cost the lives of millions of other people...”

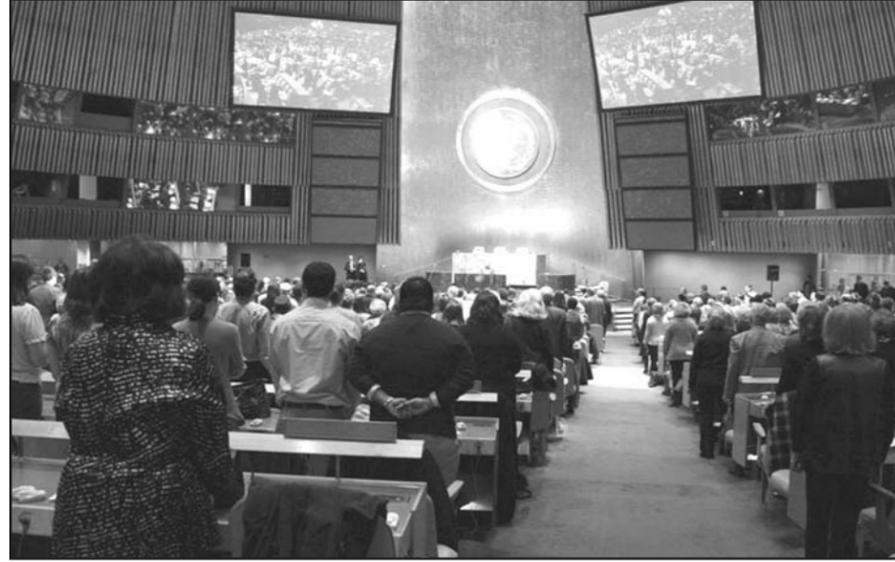
“The Holocaust has shaken the foundations of humanity forever. As the last survivors pass away, a struggle has begun to preserve traces of past Jewish life and the memory of the persecutions and massacres. On this day, UNESCO reaffirms its determination to combat all forms of Holocaust denial. Education is a key front in this struggle and also UNESCO’s unique contribution, through our work for youth, training of teachers, and curriculum design. This task, to which I am personally committed, lies at the heart of the resolution on Holocaust remembrance adopted by the Organization in 2007.

“The history of the genocide perpetrated during the Second World War does not belong to the past only. It is a ‘living history’ that concerns us all, regardless of our background, culture, or religion...”

“The 2012 International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust is dedicated to the remembrance of children. The murder of children, which amounts to eradicating the future, is

surely the most drastic sign of the attempt to annihilate a people. The vast majority of Jewish children in Europe, nearly one and a half million, were killed during the Holocaust. All of those children, whether they perished or were saved, carried within them the essence of the whole of humanity. Let us pay tribute to them.”

Chairman of the Claims Conference Julius Berman, in his letter to the



Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust.

Chairman of The American Society for Yad Vashem, Eli Zborowski, wrote:

“Sixty-seven years ago today, the remaining prisoners at Auschwitz were liberated by the Soviet army. Sixty years after that liberation – which still came too late for far too many — the United Nations General Assembly designated January 27 as International Holocaust Remembrance Day. It has been used as an opportunity around the world to educate and commemorate, ensuring that the *Shoah*’s legacy will not be forgotten.

“Many of our own board members, who have devoted much of their lives as survivors to the importance of bearing witness, have used this occasion in recent years as an opportunity to tell their stories to audiences not necessarily familiar with the *Shoah* or the sufferings of the Jews under Nazism. I want to highlight two such examples.

“In the United Kingdom, Claims Conference Vice-President Ben Helfgott has of

course long been active in Holocaust education and remembrance efforts in that country. As a trustee of the Holocaust Educational Trust, Ben Helfgott was part of a delegation that met with Prime Minister David Cameron and Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg at 10 Downing Street on January 24. They were joined by students who have taken part in the Holocaust Educational Trust’s ‘Lessons from Auschwitz



Project,’ in which students from around the U.K. together visit Auschwitz.

“The two government leaders signed the Trust’s ‘Book of Commitment,’ pledging that the government will continue to perpetuate the memory of the Holocaust. The Prime Minister wrote:

“With each year that passes since the end of the Holocaust, we have a greater responsibility than ever to remember the dreadful events that took place. By learning from history, we must pledge that nothing like this ever happens again. I commend you for the excellent work that you do, educating new generations about the suffering of the past and ensuring that we never forget one of the darkest periods of our history.”

“Ben is also the new president of the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust, established in 2005 by the British government. The Memorial Day Trust works with schools, colleges, and communities across the UK to educate about the Holocaust and its

contemporary relevance. It encourages local events commemorating the *Shoah* that were held this week throughout Britain, attended by local government officials and often featuring the participation of survivors. The Trust’s main ceremony was held this year on January 26th in London, attended by Members of Parliament and community leaders.

“At the United Nations, Claims Conference Treasurer Roman Kent has been a fixture of that institution’s Holocaust remembrance events for several years. On January 24 a moving exhibition opened at the U.N., ‘The Face of the Ghetto: Pictures Taken by Jewish Photographers in the *Litzmannstadt* Ghetto, 1940–1944.’ The exhibit was compiled by the Topography of Terror Foundation in Berlin.

“The ghetto’s Jewish Council had the photos taken in a desperate effort to show the productivity of the Jewish residents in order to spare them from deportation. Between January and September 1942, the Nazis deported more than 70,000 Jews from *Lodz* to the *Chelmno* extermination camp. There were no further deportations until June 1944, when the Nazis began to liquidate the *Lodz* ghetto, by then the last remaining ghetto in Poland, with 75,000 Jews still alive. In June and July 1944 the Germans resumed deportations from *Lodz*, and about 3,000 Jews were deported to *Chelmno*. The Germans deported the surviving ghetto residents, including Roman Kent, to Auschwitz in August 1944.

“Below are excerpts from Roman’s speech at the U.N.:

“There are truly no words, no tales, no pictures which can possibly convey the brutality, terror, and bestiality that occurred on a daily basis in these places of horror. Can pictures bring forth the stench of dead bodies that permeated the air 24 hours each day as they were being slowly carted in a wagon for burial by walking human skeletons?... Thus, looking at this exhibit, I realize that we survivors are living witnesses as to what transpired. Therefore, it is our responsibility to do everything in our power to make sure the world understands that ghettos and concentration camps must never be permitted to exist again on the face of this earth.”

DEMJANJUK ASKS JUDGE TO RECONSIDER CITIZENSHIP BID

Convicted Nazi war criminal John Demjanjuk wants a federal judge to reconsider a decision denying his bid to regain his U.S. citizenship.

U.S. District Judge Dan Aaron Polster rejected the retired autoworker’s citizenship claim in December, saying Demjanjuk lied about where he was during World War II.

Demjanjuk’s attorney asked the judge to reconsider the citizenship request, saying he had not seen all the newly discovered documents that could help his cause.

Demjanjuk was convicted by a German court that found he had served as a guard at the Nazis’ *Sobibor* death camp in occupied Poland. He was sentenced to five years in prison.

Demjanjuk, who’s in his 90s, has been in poor health for years and has been in and out of a hospital since his conviction.

His lawyers argued that the government failed to disclose important evidence, including a 1985 secret FBI report uncovered by The Associated Press that indicates the FBI believed a Nazi ID card purportedly showing

that he served as a death camp guard was a Soviet-made fake.

Federal authorities had said Demjanjuk, who has denied serving as a guard at any Nazi camp and is free on bail, was trying to cast himself as a victim following his conviction in Germany on more than 28,000 counts of accessory to murder.

Demjanjuk’s public defender, Dennis Terez, said in the latest filing that the judge should give him the chance to question the government’s claims and ask what caused a retired FBI agent to become suspicious of documents released by the Soviet Union.

In a response to the original defense citizenship filing, the government included an affidavit from former FBI agent Thomas Martin who said the March 4, 1985, report written by him was based on speculation about a Soviet forgery, not any investigation.

The Ukrainian-born Demjanjuk was a Soviet Red army soldier captured by the Germans in 1942. The German court found he agreed to serve the Nazis as a guard at *Sobibor*.

MASS GRAVES UNEARTHED IN TREBLINKA

British forensic archaeologist, Caroline Sturdy Colls, has unearthed fresh evidence to prove the existence of mass graves at the Nazi death camp *Treblinka*.

Some 800,000 Jews were killed at the site, in northeast Poland, during the Second World War, but a lack of physical evidence at the site has been exploited by Holocaust deniers.

As Jewish religious law forbids disturbing burial sites, Caroline and her team from the University of Birmingham have used “ground-penetrating radar.”

Her work at the site, where the Nazis tried to destroy all traces of industrial-scale killing, is being followed in the forthcoming documentary *The Hidden Graves of the Holocaust*.

The program’s presenter, Jonathan Charles, wrote that the ground-penetrating radar had also discovered the foundations of buildings and that two are likely to have been gas chambers.

Sturdy Colls said: “All the history books state that *Treblinka* was destroyed by the

Nazis, but the survey has demonstrated that simply isn’t the case.”

She added: “I’ve identified a number of buried pits using geophysical techniques.” The program’s presenter wrote that the pits contain the burnt remains of thousands of bodies.

The forensic archaeologist, who has now presented her findings to the authorities responsible for the memorial at *Treblinka*, said: “I really hope this is the first stage in a long-term program to seek out those hidden graves of the Holocaust.”

Survivor Kalman Taigman remembers his arrival at the camp’s railway station, packed into a cattle wagon.

“I was with my mother. We were about 100 people in a wagon. They opened the doors, firing guns and hitting us, and sent us into a yard. I ran with my mother and tried to calm her.

“They told me to leave my mother but I didn’t do it quickly and I was hit on the head. When I got up, she was gone. She went with all the rest of the women to the gas chamber.”

HUNGARY LAUNCHES WALLENBERG MEMORIAL YEAR

Government ministers from Hungary, Sweden, and Israel, on January 17, launched the Raoul Wallenberg Year, commemorating the centennial of the birth of the Swedish diplomat who saved the lives of tens of thousands of Hungarian Jews during the Holocaust.

While serving as Swedish envoy in the Hungarian capital, Budapest, from July 1944, Wallenberg gave Jews Swedish travel documents and set up safe houses for them. He is also credited with dissuad-



An undated black and white photo showing World War II hero Raoul Wallenberg.

ing German officers from massacring the 70,000 inhabitants of the city's ghetto.

Hungarian Foreign Minister Janos Martonyi, Swedish counterpart Carl Bildt and Israeli Cabinet member Yossi Peled were joined at the inaugural event at the National Museum in Budapest by members of Wallenberg's family and Holocaust survivors he saved.

Speakers stressed Wallenberg's heroics and the importance of passing on the lessons of the Holocaust.

"He risked his life in a struggle against one of the evil ideologies that has haunted our continent," Bildt said. "There is a duty never to forget, always to remember. We have to pass on the knowledge of what

happened during the Holocaust to generations to come."

The Nazis, who occupied Hungary in early 1944, launched mass deportations of Hungarian Jews to concentration camps such as Auschwitz with the collaboration of local authorities.

Martonyi said the Holocaust was the "tragedy of the whole Hungarian nation."

"During the Holocaust, the Hungarian state was weighed in the balance and found wanting ... It was unable to defend its citizens and, while under occupation, assisted their deaths," he said.

There is some confusion what happened to Wallenberg after the war. The Soviets initially denied Wallenberg was in their custody, but then said in 1957 that he died of a heart attack in prison on July 17, 1947.

After the Soviet collapse, that version of events was challenged by Alexander Yakovlev, the one-time chairman of a presidential panel investigating the fate of repression victims. In 2000, Yakovlev said he had been told by a former KGB chief that Wallenberg was killed in *Lubyanka* prison.

That year, Russia also conceded that the Soviet authorities had wrongfully persecuted Wallenberg and posthumously rehabilitated him as a victim of political repression.

Unverified witness accounts and newly uncovered evidence have suggested, however, that he may have lived beyond his official death date.

"We can't (even) take flowers to Wallenberg's grave," Martonyi added. "We are still waiting for the full historical revelation of his life and death."

Wallenberg commemorations and celebrations of his efforts in Hungary include a memorial concert on April 15, the issue of a Wallenberg postal stamp on May 10, conferences, and a September memorial event at the Dohany Street Synagogue — the largest in Europe.

CHURCH SAYS EICHMANN WAS "KIND-HEARTED"

Protestant church officials in Austria and Germany lobbied the West German government to try to help Adolf Eichmann, one of the main organizers of the Holocaust, after his arrest by Israeli agents in 1960. One church leader described Eichmann as "fundamentally decent" and "kind-hearted."

The superintendent of the Protestant Church for Upper Austria, Wilhelm Mensing-Braun, based in the Austrian city of Linz where Eichmann spent part of his childhood, wrote a letter to the foreign affairs department of the Evangelical Church in Germany in Frankfurt claiming that the mass murderer "had a fundamentally decent disposition," was "kind-hearted," and was characterized by "great helpfulness."

At that time, Eichmann was about to be put on trial in Jerusalem for crimes against humanity.

Braun went on that he could not imagine that the former SS officer "would ever have been capable of cruelty or criminal acts."

AUSCHWITZ HAS A RECORD NUMBER OF VISITORS IN 2011

The memorial site of Auschwitz-Birkenau says it saw more than 1.4 million visitors in 2011, a record high for the former death camp.

The figure underlines how the death and labor complex has become one of Europe's most visited Holocaust remembrance sites.

While the large number of visitors is seen as important for Holocaust education, mass tourism there is also adding

strain to the barracks and other structures. Many are already in a state of severe dilapidation due to the passage of time, and the officials overseeing the site are struggling to preserve what they can.

The museum and memorial site said most of the visitors last year were from Poland, but other nations represented in large numbers are Britain, Italy, Israel, Germany, France, and the United States.

NAZI HUNTERS LAUNCH NEW DRIVE TO PROSECUTE WAR CRIMINALS

The Nazi-hunting Simon Wiesenthal Center launched a new drive in Germany to catch the last perpetrators of the Holocaust still at large based on a major legal precedent set this year.

Efraim Zuroff told a news conference that the Center would offer a reward of up to 25,000 euros (\$32,450) for information leading to the capture and conviction of now elderly people implicated in Nazi crimes during World War II.

"The passage of time in no way diminishes the guilt of the killers," Zuroff said. "Old age should not afford protection to mass murderers. Each of the victims deserves that an effort be made to find their murderers."

He said a groundbreaking precedent set by the conviction in Germany in May of former camp guard John Demjanjuk, 91, could open the door to a new wave of criminal cases.

A Munich court sentenced the Ukrainian-born Demjanjuk to five years' imprisonment for helping the Nazis kill almost 30,000 Jews during his time at the *Sobibor* extermination camp in German-occupied Poland during World War II.

In a legal first, it found that simply demonstrating Demjanjuk's employment at the camp, rather than his involvement in specific murders, was enough to implicate him in the killings committed there.

"The Demjanjuk case should pave the way for the prosecution of many people who on a daily basis, for an extended period of time, were involved in mass murder," Zuroff said, joined at the press conference by an opposition deputy, Dietmar Nietan, and former MP Gert Weiskirchen.

The new drive, called Operation Last Chance 2, follows a previous program launched in the Baltic states in 2002 and extended to Germany in 2005.

It is co-managed by the US-based Targum Shlishi foundation and is aimed at helping governments locate Nazi war criminals in 33 countries.

Zuroff said that the previous campaign turned up 603 suspects around the world, of whose cases 102 were submitted to prosecutors.

He said the new drive would focus on German or foreign men who served in death camps or the *Einsatzgruppen*, special mobile death squads deployed mainly in occupied Poland and the Soviet Union before the camps opened. With perpetrators dying off, or becoming too frail to face trial, he said the number of potential defendants may amount to only about 40.

Zuroff said the Simon Wiesenthal Center now gave Germany relatively high marks for cooperation after decades of indifference and worked closely with the central office for the investigation of Nazi war crimes, based in the southwestern city of *Ludwigsburg*.

"We want to do whatever we can to help the German legal authorities bring these Holocaust perpetrators to justice," Zuroff said.

"We are hoping that this effort will inspire and encourage and motivate faster action."

He said those providing information would be given 5,000 euros for the indictment of a suspect, 5,000 euros for a conviction, and 100 euros per day for the first 150 days of imprisonment, for a maximum total of 25,000 euros.

Zuroff announced an international tips hotline: +49-1573-494-7307.

Nietan acknowledged that Germany had long dragged its feet in the postwar years in hauling Nazi war criminals to court but had an obligation now to make up for lost time.

"This society must face up to its responsibility — there must be no statute of limitations or line drawn under history," he said.

SLEEPING WITH THE ENEMY: BIOGRAPHY CLAIMS COCO CHANEL WAS A NAZI SPY

A new book about the life of Coco Chanel published in the United States aims to strengthen claims the French designer collaborated with the Nazis during World War II as a spy code-named "Westminster."

The book, *Sleeping with the Enemy: Coco Chanel's Secret War*, by Paris-based American journalist Hal Vaughan, claims



that not only was the designer the lover of a German officer, Hans Gunther von Dincklage, which has been well documented, but they were spies who went on missions to Madrid and Berlin. In addition, the book claims Chanel was deeply anti-Semitic.

"Vaughan reveals that Chanel was more than just a Nazi sympathizer and collaborator. She was a numbered Nazi agent

working for *Abwehr*, Germany's military intelligence agency," publisher Alfred A. Knopf said in a statement.

But a representative for the Chanel fashion house poured doubt on the book's allegations.

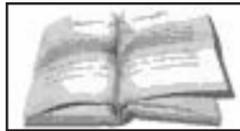
"What's certain is that she had a relationship with a German aristocrat during the War. Clearly it wasn't the best period to have a love story with a German even if Baron von Dincklage was English by his mother and she (Chanel) knew him before the War," the Chanel group said in a statement.

The fashion house also disputed that the designer was anti-Semitic, saying Chanel would not have had Jewish friends or ties with the Rothschild family of financiers if she were.

But the book draws on English, French, German, and American archives to claim Chanel, whose menswear-inspired fashions propelled her to become one of the most influential figures in fashion, went on missions with Dincklage and others to help recruit new agents willing to serve Germany.

It gives her *Abwehr* agent number as F-7124 and code name as "Westminster," named after the Duke of Westminster with whom she had a love affair. She died in Paris in 1971, aged 87.

She has long been speculated about as being a spy, but was released after being questioned about her ties to Nazi Germany by a judge in France. The book prints some excerpts of her court testimony.



BOOK REVIEWS

THE DEATH OF THE SHTETL

The Death of the Shtetl.

By Yehuda Bauer. Yale University Press: New Haven, 2009. 208 pp. \$23.00 paperback.

REVIEWED BY DR. DIANE CYPKIN

Yehuda Bauer is a highly regarded Holocaust researcher and writer. All his works underscore the miracle of Jewish survival. Concomitantly, his writings conscientiously and respectfully commemorate the lives of all those who did not survive. Finally, Bauer's learned contributions to the study of the Holocaust are truly invaluable. In sum, we are all exceptionally fortunate when another of his works is published.

In his most recent volume, *The Death of the Shtetl*, Bauer focuses on an area that has garnered much less study, the eastern part of Poland, known as the *kresy* ("marches"), basically East Galicia, *Volhynia*, and Western Belorussia. Bauer further sharpens his focus by examining a few *shtetlach* ("small towns") from each of these areas. In doing so he looks, most especially, at life before the war and what happened when war came. Sadly, we all know the end. In the process, the author definitively shows us just how *shtetlach*

lived and died. And we, his students, learn much . . .

First off, importantly, we come to see vividly how the thirties — with their political, economic, and social turmoil in Poland and the *kresy* — resulted in a tremendous increase in anti-Semitism. Soviet occupation in 1939 only made matters worse as, among other things, Ukrainians, Poles, and Belorussians saw some few Jews rise in a Communist community less concerned with the Jew as Jew and more concerned with the knowledge and abilities the Jew had to offer. Thus by 1941, when the Nazis arrived on the scene, Ukrainian nationalists had come to hate Jews with a passion; Poles generally hated them a bit less, while Belorussians were more moderate in their dislike. Thus, too, sadly, we also come to realize just why so few Jews survived the war from the *kresy* — only "2 percent of 1.3 million." For escape from the Nazis was just the beginning. Jews could be just as easily — and

were — murdered by Ukrainian gangs vying for the opportunity to kill them, Poles, and, less often, Belorussians.

Then again, Bauer, the historian, is not afraid to admit that "character," "chance," and "luck" played a major role in whether

Jews survived the Nazi occupation or not. For who the head of the *Judenrät* was in the ghetto you were imprisoned in, where the ghetto was located in the *kresy*, when you made your escape, and exactly who you met when you escaped — all these details made a major difference. For, in fact, the author notes that individual Ukrainians and even Germans saved Jews! On the other hand, there were Soviet partisans who killed them!

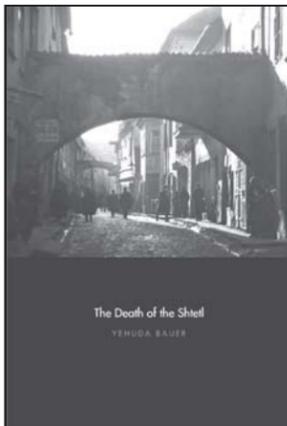
In *The Death of the Shtetl* we also come to realize what an important role youth movements, active before the war, would come to play during the war years. In the *kresy*, Zionist youth movements were particularly popular. Many of these same young people would hold leadership posi-

tions in Nazi resistance groups all over the area — resistance both possible and impossible! Hence "in East Galicia and central *Volhynia*. . . there are reports of resistance groups in forty *shtetlach*, and of fifty breakouts in attempts to flee from the ghettos." "In the northern parts of the *kresy* . . . [there are] more than sixty *shtetlach* for which there is fairly solid evidence of resistance groups."

Indeed, Bauer makes it quite clear that there was no lack of courage among the Jews of the *kresy*, but of time. The Nazis and their collaborators brought death quickly to the *kresy*, much more quickly than they did to other regions . . . and any kind of minimally "successful resistance" needed time.

Interestingly, in this volume the author also notes that the *shtetl* showed signs of "dying" when the Soviets came. Why? Jews were given freedoms they never had. Jews began to look beyond the *shtetl*. Jews began to dream of their place in a world open to them. It makes one wonder as to just what might have been . . .

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



IN THE SHADOW OF THE SHOAH

In the Shadow of the Shoah.

Selected Poems by Frieda W. Landau. Poetica Publishing Company: Norfolk, Virginia, 2011. 79 pp. \$15.00.

REVIEWED BY RABBI ISRAEL ZOBERMAN

This inspiring and deeply penetrating first harvest of poetry by Frieda W. Landau, who has resided in Virginia Beach since 1998, is a most welcome addition to the literary expression as well as therapeutic sharing of the Second Generation of Holocaust Survivors, demonstrating the *Shoah's* lingering impact and hovering shadow upon the survivors' children and likely even beyond the second generation.

Landau, who has contributed as writer and photographer on military affairs to such well-known publications as *Newsweek*, *US News and World Report* and co-authored with her late husband, Alan Landau, *Airborne Rangers* (Motor Books Publishing, 1992).

She came into the world in 1946 during the traumatic experience of a pogrom in Lodz, Poland. In her poem "Birthday" Landau connects her birth, an event fraught with natural risks, with the extraordinary harrowing circumstances of such an anti-Semitic attack. "I was born in Poland. In Lodz. In June/In the middle of a post-war pogrom./I came into the world kicking and screaming/While those outside screamed hatred of my kind./They did more than scream: they kicked and beat and killed/The pitiful remnant who survived the/Murders by the 'master' race, aided/By the mob outside the hospital./My mother could hear them as I emerged/My birth and act of love and defiance"

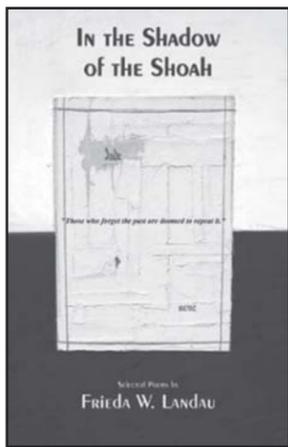
My own grandmother, Rachel Zoberman, upon my family's return to Poland from Russia in 1946, while traveling to her

hometown *Zamosc* where her youngest sister, Mania, survived in hiding, found herself in *Kielce* as a pogrom was raging in town. She was bypassed by the marauders who boarded her train but luckily mistook her for a Gentile. Landau's family and my own were fortunate to make it out of Poland before the Iron Curtain was closed, making escape nearly impossible. The Landaus, like my family, found shelter in displaced persons camps in Austria and Germany.

The Landaus arrived in the United States in 1951, in time to celebrate Frieda's 5th birthday, and settled in New York's Brooklyn. Landau vividly recalls the Holocaust survivors who became close friends of the family, substituting in a way for murdered relatives. The friends were unaware that the little girl understood their terrifying reminiscing. "I sit in the corner, listening wide-eyed/As the grown ups talk about the time/The ovens worked overtime and/All roads led to Auschwitz./They're speaking in German./Thinking I won't understand./They forget that German was my first language,/Not the 'hoch' German of the north, but the softer/Bayrisch, the dialect of Bavaria."

Landau picked up the German language from her German nanny, though as Landau recounts in the poem "Mamaloshen," her Yiddish means much to her as she bemoans the danger of losing it: "But in my dreams, I still speak the mother tongue." Yiddish is also my first language, before Hebrew took over, following my family's arrival in Israel in 1949 when I was three and a half years old.

Painful is the loss of close relatives along with a second loss of growing up without having them around. In "The Grandmother" (Continued on page 14)



BERLIN AT WAR

Berlin at War.

By Roger Moorhouse. Basic Books: New York, 2010. 464 pp. \$29.95 hardcover.

REVIEWED BY JIM LANDERS

We know more all the time about the sufferings inflicted by Nazi Germany. Much of the horror seems imponderable, but there is no lack of sympathy with the victims. The greater mystery is why German society would abandon the tenets of civilization.

Berlin at War does a fairly good job of asking and, sometimes, answering questions about this mystery. Berliners knew that their Jewish, gay, Gypsy and handicapped neighbors were being deported to a dark fate. What did they do? Very little. What did they think? The Berlin imagination seems to have failed.

A modern accounting lists 55,696 Berliners among the 6 million Jews killed in the Holocaust.

Roger Moorhouse, a British specialist in modern German history, helps to explain this by turning to the United States. Polish resistance fighter Jan Karski went to Washington in 1943 and met with Jewish leaders. He described what was happening in the concentration camps. Supreme Court Justice Felix Frankfurter responded, "Mr. Karski, I am unable to believe you." Frankfurter elaborated by adding, "I did not say this young man is lying. I said I am unable to believe him. There is a difference."

Moorhouse writes: "One has to assume that the vast majority of both Aryan and Jewish Berliners either knew nothing of the Holocaust or else were unable to believe and accept what little they might have heard."

Fear, prejudice and a beaten-down apathy played their parts as well. Before the war, Berlin was a city of 4.3 million where 200,000 had protested against Adolf Hitler's rise to the chancellorship. In April 1939, 2 million watched the long military parade through the city that celebrated Hitler's 50th birthday.

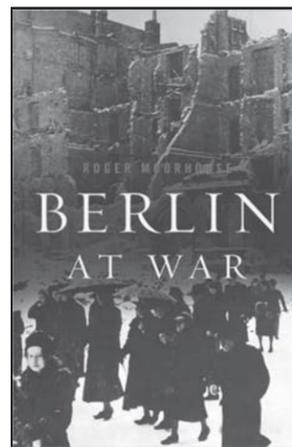
In 1943, Britain's Royal Air Force hoped a massive bombing effort aimed at Berlin would break the regime. After one of these raids, a foe of the Nazis asked in her diary: "Why does no one stand on the street and shout 'Enough! Enough!?' Why is no one going crazy? Why is there no revolution?"

There were revolutions that swept several German cities in the imperial collapse that ended World War I. But even Operation Valkyrie, the assassination and coup attempt directed by German officers against Hitler in 1944, caused barely a stir among Berliners.

Moorhouse uses many diaries, journalist accounts, and SS "mood reports" to piece together his book. The experience seems to have left him wavering, uncertain of how to account for the Nazi regime's endurance.

At one point, he writes: "Even the rising death toll on the Eastern Front failed to spark any widespread civilian opposition and resistance to the Nazis; on the contrary it engendered a sense of apathy and depression. Nevertheless, as the war ground on to its conclusion, the patience and stoicism of the Berlin public would be tested to destruction."

Yet even as the Soviet Red Army neared Berlin, members of the Hitler Youth handed out cyanide capsules at a performance of the Berlin Philharmonic. This was fear and resignation, not defiance.



JEWISH HOLOCAUST VICTIMS REMEMBERED IN GROWING WEB DATABASE

BY COURTNEY CAIRNS PASTOR,
TAMPA BAY TIMES

The Zoldan children died when the eldest was 6. But no memorial would list their names, no tombstones would mark their graves.

That may be why Rose Rosen had never heard of them until last March when she interviewed a relative about family members who had died in the Holocaust.

Rosen knew that her uncle's wife had a sister who died at the *Birkenau* extermination camp with her husband. But she didn't realize that Channah and Isaac Zoldan had children.

They had three, said her aunt, a Sarasota resident who shares Rosen's name. The baby, David, was just 18 months when they were killed. His sister, Gita, was 6, and his brother, Hirsh, was 4.

If her aunt had never mentioned them to Rosen, history would have forgotten them. Instead, their names have become a permanent part of an international memorial of Holocaust victims. David, Gita, and Hirsh are listed now in the Central Database of *Shoah* Victims' Names. The online database documents Jewish people killed in the genocide, relying on pages of testimony from surviving friends and family when no official documentation exists.

"Nobody would have known that these kids existed," Rosen said. "Now they have a name; they have a place. It's not much — but it's huge."

Rosen, a casting director who lives in Carrollwood, is organizing a local effort to collect testimonials and submit them to Yad Vashem, the Holocaust research and memorial center in Jerusalem that manages the database project.

Yad Vashem started collecting names of Jewish victims in the 1950s. The effort got a big push in 2004 when the database went online. Since then, 1 million names have been added for a total of 4 million, according to the research center. An estimated 2 million more names are needed to complete the list. The information is stored on the Web and in Yad Vashem's Hall of Names.

Rosen is among coordinators nationwide helping in the effort. Volunteers record pages of testimony from the victims' descendants. The testimonies are important because many victims' identities were not documented, Rosen said. Some western European countries logged Jewish names and deportation information, which made recording the information easier, but parts of eastern Europe, the former Soviet Union and Greece did not keep complete records, according to Yad Vashem.

Rosen got involved in 2006 after reading a story about the database. She had been



Rose Rosen's parents, Holocaust survivors Bronia and Abe Rosen, in Marseille, France, in 1951. Bronia was pregnant with son Bernie. The names of Channah and Isaac Zoldan were added to the database. They were killed in March 1944 at age 28. Their three children, Gita, 6, Hirsh, 4, and David, 18 months, were also killed.

interested in learning more about her family after her parents died. Both had survived the Holocaust — her mother lived in the *Lodz*

Ghetto in Poland and later was sent to five concentration camps, while Rosen's father fled to Russia to join the army.

The couple met in France after the war and moved to the United States in 1956. Rosen's mother, Bronia, wrote poetry and short stories about her life in the ghetto, but her father, Abe, rarely talked about the war.

"It was just something they didn't really address," said Rosen, 52. "They just lived their lives and did an incredible job of it."

Survivors don't always want to come forward, some fearing that their lives are still at risk if they talk about it. Other survivors, though, are realizing as they age that they need to share their memories before they are lost. Rosen is working with Gulf Coast Jewish Family & Community Services and other area Jewish organizations, and tries to reassure survivors that Yad Vashem will respect and care for their stories.

She and her volunteers have collected almost 300 pages of testimony in the Tampa Bay area and are trying a new approach to reach more people who could contribute information at upcoming events.

It's touching to see your family recorded in this way, Rosen said. Visiting the database almost feels like visiting a cemetery. She had never met her grandparents, aunts, and uncles who died in the Holocaust, but the pages of testimony gave her a place to pay her respects.

BELATEDLY RECOGNIZING HEROES OF THE HOLOCAUST

BY ISABEL KERSHNER,
THE NEW YORK TIMES

When 20 people gathered for a modest ceremony in the tranquil cemetery of this kibbutz in central Israel, the intimacy and quiet dignity of the event belied the tumultuous historical forces coursing beneath it.

The occasion was the reinterment of the remains of Samuel Merlin, a founder of a small but brazen band of militant Zionists and Holocaust rescue activists who shook America and challenged the Jewish establishment in the 1940s, but who until recently have been largely excluded from official Holocaust history.

The activists, known as the Bergson group, have been credited by modern historians with playing a pivotal role in rescuing hundreds of thousands of European Jews.

But the group was rejected by the Jewish establishment it challenged, both in the United States and in Israel, where its militant tactics and right-wing Zionism clashed with the mainstream. Mere mention of the group stirs up old passions and painful questions about what America did or did not do to save European Jewry, and the extent to which schisms within Jewish ranks hampered more effective action.

More recently, prominent historians have begun to recognize the group's achievements. On July 17, 2011, Yad Vashem, the official Holocaust remembrance authority in Jerusalem, held a symposium on it for the first time.

For those attending the reburial of Mr. Merlin a few days earlier, including some widows and children of the group's members, the event was a symbolic start of a process of reconciliation.

"This is a moment of healing for American Jews and Israeli Jews," Rafael Medoff, director of the David S. Wyman Institute for Holocaust Studies in Washington, said shortly after reciting *Kaddish*, the Jewish prayer for the dead, over Mr. Merlin's grave.

The institute, which has been instrumental in promoting the Bergson group's

legacy, co-sponsored the conference at Yad Vashem.

The Bergson group formed in 1940 when about 10 young Jews from Palestine and Europe came to the United States to open a fund-raising and propaganda operation for the Irgun, the right-wing Zionist militia. The group was organized by Hillel Kook, a charismatic Irgun leader who adopted the pseudonym Peter H. Bergson. Mr. Merlin was his right-hand man.

The group began by raising money for illegal Jewish immigration to what was then the British Mandate of Palestine and promoting the idea of an army composed of stateless and Palestinian Jews. But the mission abruptly changed in November 1942



Esther Rafaeli, 85, widow of a Bergson group member, at the grave of Samuel Merlin, whose remains were reinterred in Israel.

after reports of the Nazi annihilation of two million European Jews emerged. Like earlier reports of the mass killing of Jews, the news barely made the inside pages of major American newspapers like *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*.

The Bergsonites were appalled by what they saw as the indifference of the Roosevelt administration and the passivity of the Jewish establishment, which staunchly supported the administration and largely accepted its argument that the primary American military objective was to win the war, not to save European Jews. The group embarked on a provocative campaign to publicize the genocide and to

lobby Congress to support the rescue of Jews, roaming the hallways of Capitol Hill and knocking on doors, displaying a degree of chutzpah that made the traditional, pro-Roosevelt Jewish establishment uncomfortable.

The group took out a series of fiery, full-page advertisements in *The New York Times* and other major dailies highlighting the mass murder, soliciting donations at the bottom of each one to pay for the next. With help from celebrity supporters like the director and writer Ben Hecht, the impresario Billy Rose, and the composer Kurt Weill, they staged a flamboyant pageant called "We Will Never Die," filling Madison Square Garden twice before sending the show on the road.

In October 1943, the Bergson group organized a march of 400 Orthodox rabbis on the White House, most of them in traditional black garb, a spectacle the likes of which had never been seen in Washington.

Finally, in January 1944, under heavy pressure from the Treasury secretary, Henry Morgenthau Jr., President Franklin D. Roosevelt set up the War Refugee Board by executive order, leading to the rescue of 200,000 Jews.

"Without Hillel Kook and the Bergson group," said David S. Wyman, author of the book *The Abandonment of the Jews: America and the Holocaust 1941-1945*, which first re-evaluated the role of Bergsonites, "there would have been no War Refugee Board."

Yet the American Jewish leadership at the time fought the newcomers, saying their tactics would lead only to increased anti-Semitism. Rabbi Stephen Wise, the Jewish community's chief representative, wrote to a colleague in 1944 that the Bergsonites "are a disaster to the Zionist cause and the Jewish people."

Jewish American leaders were apparently afraid of making waves, and of losing their own prominence.

"This was an era in which militant civil action was just not done, certainly not by Jews," said Charley Levine, an Israeli-based international communications and

public relations expert who has studied the Bergson group. "This was before Vietnam."

The Bergson group was no less ostracized by the leaders of Israel after its founding in May 1948. An early showdown came that June when the group dispatched a ship called the *Altalena* to Israel loaded with weapons for the Irgun, in violation of an agreement with the new state to stop independent arms acquisitions.

David Ben-Gurion, Israel's first prime minister, ordered his troops to fire on the ship. Sixteen Irgun members and three soldiers were killed in the confrontation. Mr. Merlin, who was on board, was shot in the foot.

Mr. Merlin and Mr. Kook went on to serve as members of Israel's first Parliament, but the Bergsonites soon had an ideological falling out with their own political leader, Menachem Begin, the Irgun leader who later became Israel's prime minister. They remained at odds with the left-wing Mapai and Labor leaders who dominated the state for its first 30 years.

The dissension led to the Bergson group's being blanked out of the early histories of the Holocaust. "My father and his group went against the grain of those writing the narrative of the war," said Mr. Kook's daughter, Rebecca Kook, now a political scientist at Ben Gurion University of the Negev in Israel.

But with the perspective of time and the opening of additional Holocaust era archives, including Mr. Merlin's, the Bergson group has begun to be reworked into Jewish history.

Mr. Merlin's detailed account of the rescue campaign was published posthumously. Mr. Merlin died in the United States in 1996.

In a foreword to the book, Seymour D. Reich, a veteran leader of major Jewish organizations, wrote, "The time has come to acknowledge, unequivocally, that Rabbi Wise and his colleagues were wrong."

Instead of attacking Mr. Bergson, they should have focused on the rescue mission, he wrote, adding, "That was their obligation, and they failed."

SURVIVORS' CORNER

SEVENTY YEARS LATER, GHOSTS OF WORLD WAR II REMAIN INDELIBLE

BY STEPHANIE BECKER, NBC

There's a ghost in my house. No, I'm not delusional. In fact, I saw it being created.

It's about the "Ritchie Boys": thousands of World War II soldiers, mostly German-speaking Jews, who fled the Nazis and fought for their new nation — the United States — as intelligence officers. Many Ritchie Boys lost their entire families to the Nazis. With their intimate knowledge of the enemy and the German language, plus their tragic personal histories, they are among the most interesting but least known of the "Greatest Generation" of fighters.

They are nicknamed for Fort Ritchie, a rather isolated base tucked away in the mountains of Maryland. There they spent months in intensive training before making their way back to the front to interrogate their former countrymen.

The surviving Ritchie Boys are now old men in their 80s and 90s with long memories. For the first time in 70 years, a dozen of them showed up for a reunion thanks to an 89-year-old bundle of energy named Guy Stern. He's the director of the Holocaust Memorial Center outside Detroit — and a Ritchie Boy.

Guy was the only member of his immediate family to survive the Holocaust; the others perished in the Warsaw ghetto. He was just 15 when he came to the U.S. to live with an uncle. When he first tried to en-

list, he was told "no Germans allowed." But six months later he was drafted and shipped to Fort Ritchie.

When I asked these Ritchie Boys how they felt toward the Germans they were interrogating, they said, almost to a man, that they were soldiers first and had a job to do. Guy spoke for many when he said:



Memories of World War II have influenced Si Lewen's artwork since he served as an intelligence officer for the U.S. 70 years ago. Cameraman Anthony Derosa filmed him in his studio.

"If you were not disciplined and professional, your rage would take you over, make you less effective as an interrogator."

These little Jewish guys could make German prisoners talk without lifting a finger. Guy explained his interrogation technique, a tag team with fellow Ritchie Boy Fred Howard.

Fred would be the good cop, coaxing intelligence out of German prisoners, chitchatting about local soccer teams and favorite foods. If that didn't work, Plan B was to play on the prisoner's deathly fear of the Russians: Guy, pretending to be a scary Russian officer, would gratefully offer to take the recalcitrant German off the American's hands. Nothing was more terrifying to a German than to be a POW in Russian custody.

One war story that brings a smile to Guy's cherubic face involves sexy siren Marlene Dietrich. A German exile, Dietrich defied her homeland by performing for U.S. troops throughout the war. At one show, Guy and Fred managed to sneak backstage and get her attention. Fred's mother had been Marlene's massage therapist back in Germany, and she was thrilled to see him. The two starstruck soldiers convinced Dietrich to let them drive her 25 miles to see a fresh crop of German POWs.

Sexy dames are sexy dames no matter whom they're allied with. Despite Dietrich's disloyalty to the Fatherland, the prisoners rushed the wire fence, wild to see her. American MPs immediately threw them all

out. Party poopers are party poopers no matter whom they're allied with.

But my favorite Guy story is very contemporary. When we went to interview him at his home, a very attractive woman (who looked to be in her early 40s) let us in. She had Guy's last name and a noticeable German accent.

I figured, ah, Guy's granddaughter grew up in Germany. But you never can tell these days. Diplomatically I asked: "So, where do you fit in the family hierarchy?"

She answered, "I'm his wife." I do not have a poker face. She laughed and explained, "Yes, I'm his second wife and I'm 40 years younger." Nice guys finish first!

But my favorite of the Ritchie Boys in our story is Si Lewen. At 93 he has an adorable, elfin quality and more energy than my 8-year-old nephew. He'd urged us to hurry and come to his home for the interview in June, rather than wait for the reunion in July: "At my age, you never know." He said it playfully, but then added more soberly: "My wife and I wake up every morning and wish each other happy birthday, because you never know if we will have a chance to say it again."

Then he and his wife started arguing whether they had been married 73 years or only 69. Si says he felt married to her from the moment of their first date. We should all have such happiness.

Si has always been an artist, so when he

(Continued on page 14)

THE EXODUS FROM JAMAICA

Some 260 Jews sent to refugee camp in Jamaica during World War II spent three years in paradise while their relatives were murdered in concentration camps. One mystery remains: Are any of them still alive?

DAVID REGEV, YNETNEWS

Sahar Bar couldn't believe his eyes. On a dusty carton bag, between the shelves loaded with material on the activities of the Joint during the Holocaust, he saw one word: "Jamaica." Unsurprisingly, his first thought was that the file ended there by mistake. "Jamaica reminds me of Bob Marley," he says. "What does the Holocaust have to do with Jamaica?"

But a peek into the file revealed a treasure: The unknown rescue story of 260 Jews who were rescued from bleeding Europe in 1942, in the middle of World War II, and sent to a camp in Jamaica. They spent three years there, dealing with the tropical weather and the kashrut problem and mainly with idleness in the faraway golden cage while their relatives were murdered in concentration camps.

At the end of the war the camp was dismantled, and its refugees were scattered all over. A rare documentation remained in the Joint archive and is revealed here for the first time. It tells the unbelievable story of the transfer from the European hell to a Caribbean country with white beaches and reddish sunsets. One mystery remains: Where did the Jews who spent three years of their life in the camp go to? And are any of them still alive?

"Together with the Polish refugees in Lisbon, whose documents were found to be invalid and were given an ultimatum, was also Dr. Shlichter, a surgeon from Brussels who escaped the Gestapo through the skin of his teeth. He sent on behalf of all of us a telegram to Winston Churchill for his birthday and asked him for help.

"A day before the end of the ultimatum, the response arrived: The British government will send the refugees to a colony in Jamaica, where they'll be able to live as free citizens!

"When the list of refugees whose request to immigrate was approved arrived, we suffered a heavy blow. My two brothers couldn't join, as the exiled Polish government demanded that they join the Anders Army. My mother knew she would never see them again, and a year later she became ill from grief. Immediately after the war she died in New York."

The testimony of Miriam Stanton, who arrived in Jamaica at the age of 28, is the most detailed document on the refugees' life in the camp, which was built in the summer of 1940 on a sugar orchard outside the capital of Kingston. She shared her memoirs with the British Library as part of a project recording the testimonies of Holocaust survivors.

Bar, a 30-year-old archivist and a history MA student in charge of categorizing the Joint's material, encountered the story by chance, following a request from one of the families inquiring on the fate of its loved ones after 70 years.

It all began in November 1941. Some 500 Polish Jews were staying in Lisbon, Portugal — one of the only Western countries which still let Jews in. As their visas to the United States were no longer valid, they faced deportation. This meant they would return to the Nazi occupation lands and be sent to the death camps.



Jewish refugees in Jamaica.

About 200 of them decided to ask for the help of the exiled Polish government, and a day before the deportation date they reached an agreement with the British government that would see them evacuated to the Gibraltar Camp in Jamaica, a British colony at the time.

The British government demanded in return that the Jews fund their stay, and the

Joint said it would pay for it. The 200 who were lucky enough to enter the list of the living arrived at the Lisbon port on January 24, 1942, joining some 850 Jewish refugees on a ship making its way to the US, Latin American countries, and Cuba.

On February 9, the ship docked at the Kensington port, bringing 157 refugees headed to the Gibraltar Camp. They were later joined by some 100 additional refugees from Luxemburg and the Czech Republic.

"At first we were slightly shocked," testified Stanton. "There was nothing in the rooms apart from blankets, beds, a chair and table, but it was much better than the place we came from. The camp manager introduced himself at the dining hall and said he hoped we would be comfortable. There was a hospital there with doctors and nurses."

Later, she testified, the refugees asked for books, newspapers, and a radio — and received them. "The food wasn't bad either. There were fresh vegetables. We asked for fish and got kosher food as well. We prayed at the Sephardic synagogue established by the Joint in the camp, and we had a sense of acceptance and embrace."

The spacious camp was built in a valley surrounded by hills with palm trees. Immediately after their arrival, the Jews received their own compound, and the photos found in the archive document their routine: a group of young Jewish girls in white

(Continued on page 15)

IN POLAND, UNBURYING A NATION'S JEWISH PAST

BY DON SNYDER, NBC NEWS

Zuzanna Radzik wants Polish children to know that almost every Polish town and village was part of the Holocaust.

There were about 3.5 million Jews in Poland before World War II, making up 10 percent of the overall Polish population. And in some pre-war Polish towns Jews comprised as much as 70 percent of the residents.

But although Polish children learn about the Holocaust in school, many believe the



Holocaust remembrance advocates plastered images of Polish Jews on buildings in Warsaw that were part of the Jewish ghetto before World War II wiped them out.

killing was confined to death camps like Auschwitz and Treblinka.

However, the Holocaust also happened in little known places like *Stoczek Wegrowski*, a town of about 5,000 where 188 Jews were shot dead on September 22, 1942. The massacre took place on Yom Kippur, the most solemn Jewish holiday.

"We bring history to children in towns and villages who have never met a Jew or seen a synagogue," Radzik said. "When we show them where the ghetto was in their town and that Jews were killed there, it all becomes real."

Radzik represents an increasing number of Poles who believe Jewish heritage is integral to Polish history and that citizens must learn about that aspect of the past to understand contemporary Poland. The Holocaust all but wiped out the country's Jewish population – today the number of

Jews in Poland is estimated to be just 15,000, according to government estimates.

TEACHING THE NEXT GENERATION

Faith motivates Radzik, a 28-year-old Catholic theologian. "We have a long history of Christian anti-Judaism," she said. "We should do our repentance for that and be strong about fighting anti-Semitism."

Radzik supervises The School of Dialogue Among Nations, a Polish non-profit organization that seeks to eliminate anti-Semitism and to foster better relations between Poles and Jews.

The school deploys educators throughout Poland to teach young people about Judaism and the places in their towns where Jews once lived and worked. These educators highlight shared religious traditions and teach about Jewish holidays and their connections to Christian calendars.

In *Kielce*, where 24,000 Jews lived before the war, making up approximately one-third of the city's population, the educators' effectiveness was clear after they visited.

"I've been living here since I was a baby," a local teenager wrote, "and I did not know the meaning of the monuments for Holocaust victims I passed by every day and where the Jewish cemetery is." Thanks to the program, she now does.

BRINGING LIFE BACK TO THE OLD GHETTO

But it is not just Radzik's organization that is highlighting the role of Jews in Poland's past.

Beata Chomatowska, a 34-year-old journalist who lives in *Muranow*, a neighborhood built on the rubble of the former Warsaw ghetto, has created the web site *Stacja Muranow* (*Muranow Station*) to educate residents about their neighborhood's history.

It's estimated that up to 300,000 Jews from the area were sent to death camps,

particularly in the wake of the famous Warsaw ghetto uprising of April 1943. After brutally quelling the insurrection, the Germans leveled the site, leaving countless victims buried in the ruins.

"This area is still dead 68 years after the Germans destroyed it," said Chomatowska. "It is my obligation to remember the people and the place that was here before."

There are few physical reminders of the former ghetto. One of them is *Muranow's* sometimes hilly terrain, which results from the fact that much of the rubble was not cleared and new housing was built on top of the ruins.

However, Chomatowska is proud of recently completed murals by Warsaw artist Adam Walas in the entryway leading to an apartment complex. The artwork features prominent Jews who lived in *Muranow* before the war, such as Ludwik Zamenhof, creator of Esperanto.

Asked what motivates her, Chomatowska said, "I was always interested in Jewish culture and history, and a world that disappeared."

LOOKING FOR UNMARKED GRAVES

Like Radzik and Chomatowska, Zbigniew Nizinski brings to light a world that disappeared. Inspired by the Bible and a fervent belief that the memory of the dead must be preserved, Nizinski has dedicated his life to finding unmarked graves of Jews murdered by the Germans.

In particular, the 52-year-old Baptist travels to tiny villages in eastern Poland. "We discover and rescue the graves from complete oblivion and place memorial stones," he said. "It is so unjust that there are so many Jewish burial sites that are not visited because there are no relatives left."

Nizinski usually travels by bicycle, finding elderly people who remember where murdered Jews are buried. That's how he met 90-year old Wladyslaw Gerula near *Przemysl* in southeastern Poland.

The Germans killed Gerula's parents for hiding Jews. They also killed the hidden Jews. Although Gerula does not know his parents' burial place, he knows where the three Jews are buried, and he placed a

large stone, carved with a Star of David, on the spot. He considers the spot his parents' memorial, although they were also



Zbigniew Nizinski found an unmarked grave near *Lublin*, in southeastern Poland, where 70 Jews, mainly women and children, perished during the Holocaust. After researching the story, he discovered the names of 26 out of the 70 people killed, and the tombstone seen here was erected.

honored at Yad Vashem, Israel's official Holocaust memorial, on April 25, 1995.

One of the unmarked graves Nizinski discovered is near *Stoczek Wegrowski*. Buried here are Rywka Farbiarz and seven other Jews murdered by the Germans on November 26, 1942. Farbiarz's 10-year-old daughter, Chasia, survived the massacre, lying silent beneath the dead.

Chasia, who now lives in Israel, visited the grave with her two sons in June for the unveiling of a memorial stone Nizinski placed there.

"WE MISS THEM"

Nizinski, Chomatowska and Radzik's work reflects growing recognition that acknowledging the nation's Jewish history is essential to Poland.

Dr. Alina Molisak, who teaches Jewish literature at Warsaw University, cites the tremendous influence of Jewish authors on Polish literature. "You can feel the Jewish absence," she said, reflecting on the Holocaust, "not only in literature, but in culture and science. We miss them."

SEVENTY YEARS ON, WWII POGROM STILL HAUNTS SURVIVORS

After surviving one of the worst Holocaust pogroms which began exactly 70 years ago in Romania's east, Leizer Finchelstein still wonders how ordinary folk could turn into mass murderers.

About 15,000 Jews out of the 45,000 living in the city of *Iasi* were brutally killed in the summer of 1941.

In only a few days between June 28 and July 6, they were forced out of their homes, executed on the streets, or forcibly crammed into "death trains," where only a small number survived, according to a report by an international commission of historians headed by Nobel Prize for Peace laureate Elie Wiesel.

Huge concrete mass graves scattered in the green hills surrounding *Iasi* are the silent reminders of the massacre.

"The *Iasi* pogrom is a turning point because Romanian authorities, with some participation from the German authorities, killed Jews on the streets of the city, in front of the neighbors, friends, and acquaintances of those Jews," recounts Paul Shapiro, director of the Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies at the US Holocaust Memorial Museum.

"This sent a strong message to the Nazis and to other perpetrators who were just figuring out at that point in time how to commit mass murder," he adds.

The "method" tried during the *Iasi* pogrom was then copied across Eastern Europe, from Russia to Ukraine and Poland.

Shapiro, like Finchelstein and dozens of Jews from Israel whose relatives died in the pogrom, gathered in the end of June in *Iasi* to officially mark the 70th anniversary of the massacre.

Finchelstein, a tall and lively 88-year-old retired carpenter, has never missed a single commemoration.

"I had only read about pogroms. Before, I had no clue of what it really meant. I think no one can imagine how terrible it is," he told AFP in an interview.

Finchelstein was 17 when he, his parents and eight brothers and sisters were forced out of their house by Romanian soldiers.

While walking to the police headquarters where most of the arrested Jews were rounded up, "I saw lots of bodies in the streets of *Iasi*, lots of blood in the gutter," he recalls.

After several hours at the police headquarters, where Jews were beaten and killed by dozens, Finchelstein and hundreds of others

were taken to the station and forcibly crammed into train cars.

"Doors were locked from the outside, all small windows and cracks were sealed. We had no air, no water, and the heat was unbearable," he recalls.

"People died like flies. You would see someone standing, and then a minute afterwards he was dead."

To try and survive, people drank their urine or sweat pressed out of their shirt.

Finchelstein was taken out the train in *Podu Iloaiei*, a village 20 kilometers from



Roundup of Jews during a pogrom in *Iasi*, Romania.

IS JEWISH LIFE IN HUNGARY AND POLAND SUSTAINABLE?

BY RUTH ELLEN GRUBER, JTA

It's not easy to decipher the complicated trajectory of Jewish life in post-Communist Europe.

"There are claims and counterclaims about contemporary European Jewish life," Jonathan Boyd, the executive director of London's Institute for Jewish Policy Research, said. "At one end of the spectrum there are reports of a remarkable renaissance of activity; at the other there is a strong narrative of decline."

Boyd's institute recently published a pair of reports written by local researchers in Hungary and Poland that offer a more nuanced view. The reports looked at the development of Jewish life in these two countries since the collapse of Communism and examined the challenges their Jewish communities face going forward.

The reports, Boyd said, "illustrate that both perspectives are correct: While Jewish life has undoubtedly been reinvigorated since the collapse of Communism, considerable investment is required to ensure the long-term sustainability of Jewish life in both places."

Hungary, with an estimated 100,000 Jews, has the largest Jewish population in post-communist Europe outside the former Soviet Union. In Poland, the European Jewish heartland that was home to more than 3 million Jews before the Holocaust, the Jewish population today is estimated at only 8,000–15,000.

The reports were prepared on the basis of personal interviews with a range of Jewish community activists in each country, followed up by focus-group discussions. Their results highlight similarities in the post-Communist Jewish revival process

but also illustrate the differences between various Jewish communities.

They also demonstrate the increasing importance of alternative forms of engagement in nurturing identity among younger Jews.

The research in Hungary showed a community reinvigorated over the last 20 years but facing the challenge of low engagement in communal life, with only 10 percent of the Jewish population affiliated with a Jewish organization.

Young people especially appear alienated from established Jewish communal structures, such as the umbrella Federation of Hungarian Jewish Communities — or Mazsihisz.

The JPR Hungary report calls for an urgent overhaul of Mazsihisz and the entire institutional system of organized Hungarian Jewry to ensure that decisions on issues affecting the whole community are made in a democratic and transparent fashion.

It also calls for greater religious pluralism and more cooperation and coordination among the plethora of often competing local Jewish groups and initiatives. This, it said, could help foster the emergence and training of a new generation of leaders.

"One of our purposes was to present conflicting views on every issue we considered," sociologist Andras Kovacs, an expert on Hungarian Jewish issues who was one of the co-authors of the report, told JTA. "We wanted to provoke debate."

In Poland, research bore witness to the rebirth of a community that remains tiny but has a disproportionate impact both at home and abroad, in part due to the impor-

ance of Polish Jewish history and heritage to world Jewry.

Because of this, the report said, and "because of the remarkably positive reaction of the Polish state and most of civil society to Jewish interests and concerns," Jewish programs in Poland "have a very high multiplier effect," with a direct impact "both on the world community of Jews of Polish origin, and on Jewish and non-Jewish Poles alike."



Krakow Rabbi Boaz Pash presents a talk to visitors in the 16th century Remuh Synagogue in Krakow.

Therefore, it said, preservation and study of Jewish heritage — from cemeteries, synagogues, and Holocaust sites such as death camps, to archival, museum, and library collections — "are of great importance."

Moreover, it said, while Orthodox Jewry remained the primary established religious stream, only a minority of the community identified with Orthodoxy.

The report urged greater investment in programs supporting Jewish cultural initiatives and non-Orthodox alternative forms of Jewish engagement.

"There is a future for the Jewish community in Poland, but the community will remain small," Konstanty Gebert, a leading Jewish intellectual and writer who co-au-

thored the report, told JTA. "While the Orthodox part will remain a core of it, it represents only a minority," he said.

"Culture is a main identity factor for young Jews," he went on. "The most important things are happening on the interface between the Jewish community and society at large."

Jonathan Ornstein, the director of the Jewish Community Center in Krakow, said the report gave a good overall picture of Jewish life in Poland today and many of its complexities.

"It accurately portrays Polish Jews as being optimistic and not overly concerned with anti-Semitism, which stands in marked contrast to the rest of Europe," he told JTA.

But he added, "I would have liked to see more focus on the somewhat unnatural structure of the community, where official religious life is Orthodox but few of the members are. Polish Jewry coming to terms with that situation, and having its institutions more accurately represent the people, is to me the greatest challenge we face moving forward."

The reports were the first two of a series of JPR investigations into contemporary Jewish life in Eastern and Central Europe funded by the Rothschild Foundation (Hanadiv) Europe. Future reports will deal with Ukraine and Germany.

"This research highlights the importance of avoiding generalities about Jewish life in Central and Eastern Europe," Sally Berkovic, the chief executive of the Rothschild Foundation Europe, said in a statement. "Despite some shared experiences, each Jewish community, with its distinctive characteristics, has responded differently to the challenges precipitated by the fall of Communism."

FUGITIVE GIRL'S ART BRINGS TEARS AT YAD VASHEM SHOW

BY GWEN ACKERMAN, BLOOMBERG

Israeli artist Maya Cohen-Levy is speaking animatedly when she catches her breath and her eyes fill with tears. She's just noticed four colored sketches framed on the wall in front of her — drawn by her mother as a 12-year-old hiding alone from the Nazis in a Polish widow's cellar.

"This shook us up," she says, recalling the story behind the sketches, on display for the first time after being donated to Yad Vashem Museum of Holocaust Art. "It's like we were living on the edge of a chasm and suddenly we had to look in."

Renata Braun, who faced death if discovered by the Germans, stayed in a basement in 1943 and 1944. While fugitives such as Anne Frank wrote, Renata was calmly working with pencil, gouache, and watercolor. She copied photos of people she no longer saw from the family album, and scenes from a book of the Polish epic poem "Pan Tadeusz." Each sketch is highly detailed and neatly signed in the corner.

The pictures arrived at the museum in Jerusalem after director Yehudit Inbar happened to notice a short mention of the drawings made by Cohen-Levy during an interview with an Israeli newspaper.

"I was so excited because there are no such finds like this today from the Holocaust period, especially those of children," Inbar says of the day she came across the sketches mentioned in the paper. "Children were hidden in very difficult circumstances. An adult can save things, but a child? Here we have a girl, a talented girl, and she

saves these drawings and takes them with her."

Yad Vashem research led to testimony Braun gave between 1945 and 1947 that is kept in the Jewish Historical Institute in Poland, with a copy in the Yad Vashem archives. The documents gave Cohen-Levy and her siblings their first peek into the childhood of their mother, who died aged 38 after refusing to speak for years about her past.

The children found the sketches — which she only showed to her husband once — in an attic.



"The Prussian Homage" by Renata Braun. Braun created the work while hiding from the Nazis.

In the testimony, Braun describes life in Nazi-occupied Poland, the arrests, fires and being forced to leave her childhood home. She tells of how, once her parents

finally decided to reunite and flee, they failed to show up for a meeting with the Polish woman who was hiding their daughter, and were presumed killed.

"I never heard from my parents again," the testimony says.

About 6 million European Jews were killed in the Holocaust during World War II in a systematic Nazi campaign across Europe that included random executions, plunder, and death camps. There are no accurate statistics on how many children survived, in hiding or otherwise, although it is likely that the large majority hidden in Eastern Europe did not, Yad Vashem says, citing historical evidence.

Braun's seven drawings were on ordinary paper scraps, one of them with musical notes written on the back. All were put on permanent loan to the museum, though not all were in good enough shape to be restored.

Curator Eliad Moreh attributes Braun's survival, in part, to her love of art.

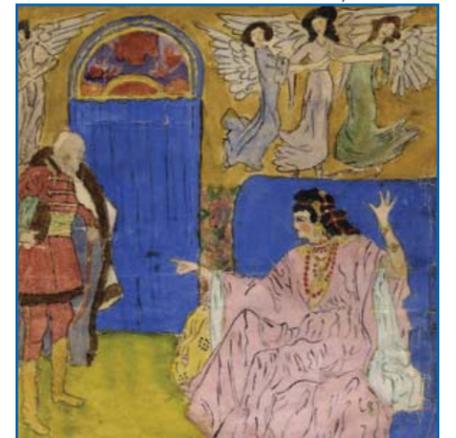
"All alone, the young girl went back to the warmth of her home, to what she had learned, and it was the culture that gave her the strength to continue," Moreh says. "It is so strong that it becomes her anchor."

On the eve of World War II, Braun's home city of Lvov was the third largest city in Poland and home to about 100,000 Jews, most of whom were merchants, manufacturers, and artisans.

Between June 1941, when German forces entered the city, and July 1944, when the Red Army took control, most of the Jews had been killed, according to the Yad Vashem Encyclopedia of the Ghettos

during the Holocaust. The area is now Lviv in western Ukraine.

"I always looked at Yad Vashem from afar, as a national symbol, an institution, somehow not connected to me," Cohen-



A gouache-on-paper picture by Renata Braun (later known as Rina Levy). The work shows Teliemena and the Judge Soplica in a scene from the epic poem "Pan Tadeusz" by Adam Mickiewicz.

Levy says. "Now I see how, without these people, I wouldn't have a story."

After the war, Braun moved to Israel, changed her name to Rina Levy, married, had three children, became an artist, and died in 1969. She didn't speak of the time in hiding or the Holocaust, says Cohen-Levy, a painter and sculptor.

"I was 13-and-a-half when she died," Cohen-Levy says. "All I can say is that she believed in art as if it was something bigger than anything else." Cohen-Levy's father held a canvas for her mother as she lay dying in bed just so she could continue to paint. "In some way, I felt I had to continue painting for her."

AUSCHWITZ MUSEUM PUBLISHES PRISONER SKETCHBOOK

BY ALEX MACBETH, SPIEGELONLINE

Found hidden away in a bottle, the Auschwitz Memorial Museum has published sketches drawn by a prisoner at the *Birkenau* extermination camp. They provide a rare first-hand glimpse of life and death inside. The book is part of the museum's plans to launch a catalogue of 6,000 artworks in its archives.

The sketches are chilling — prisoners arriving at a concentration camp, children being torn from their parents' arms, a guard casually smoking outside a gas chamber as bodies are loaded into a truck. The images, recently published in a book by the Auschwitz Memorial Museum, were taken from a unique sketchbook drawn around 1943 at the *Birkenau* camp. A former prisoner working as a watchman discovered the 32 sketches in a bottle near the death camp's crematorium in 1947.

The Sketchbook from Auschwitz includes the 22 pages of drawings from an unknown prisoner whose initials were apparently MM. They represent a rare first-hand historical account of the Holocaust. "These sketches are the only work of art made in *Birkenau* that depict exterminations," said museum spokesman Pawel Sawicki.

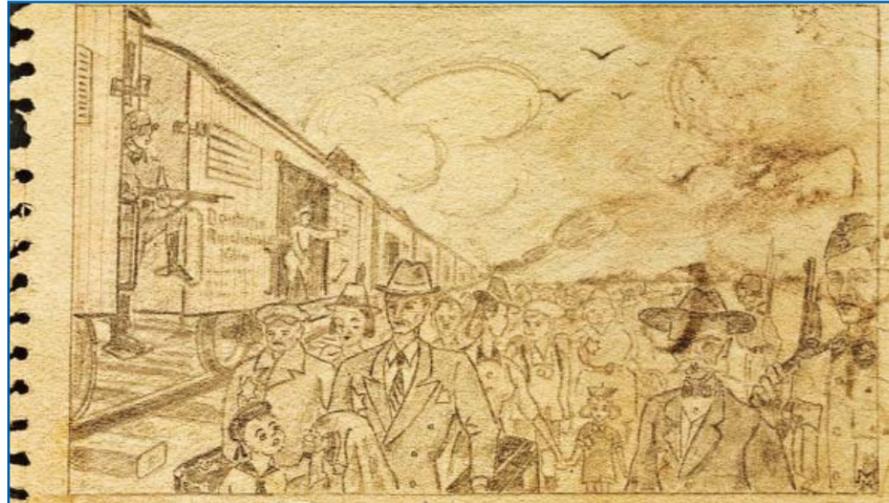
While the circumstances make it hard to identify or trace the author, details in the images themselves provide several clues as to when they were created. The main gate at *Birkenau*, for example, is depicted before an extension was added.

"The second wing of the main gate was built between 1943 and 1944, but is absent from the sketches. Thus we concluded that the sketches were drawn in 1943 or before. From our records we believe that the author would have worked in the hospital sector or gathering luggage from the ramp," Sawicki explained.

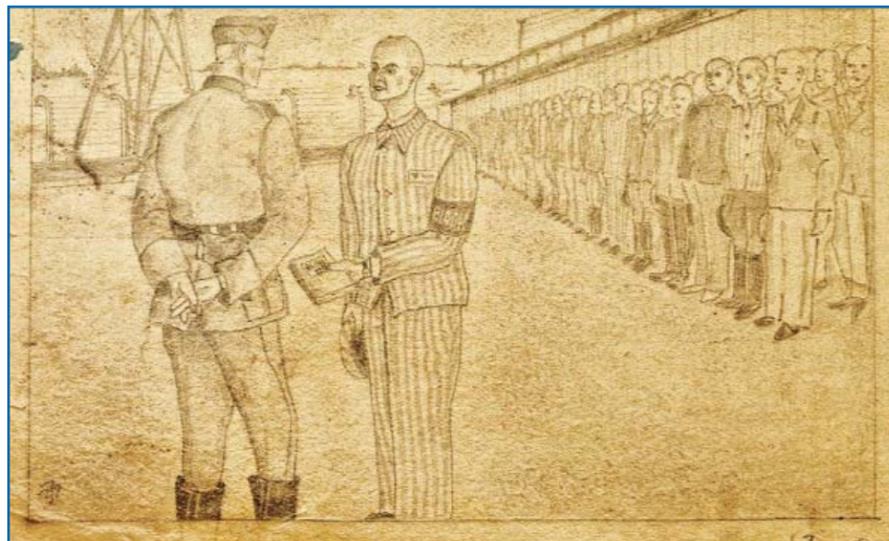
The most striking aspects of the sketches in the book are the minute detail and the artist's emphasis on presenting documentary evidence. "You can clearly see that the author was determined to present the largest number of details," Agnieszka Sieradzka, an art historian with the museum and the author of the book, wrote in a statement. "Badges of functionary prisoners, number plates of the trucks, and train cars on the ramp, as well as block numbers, are carefully depicted. The author of the sketchbook hoped that someone would find his work so that it would become a witness to extermination."

The Polish-English publication, launched by the Auschwitz archives on Jan. 16, is part of a larger commemorative project being undertaken by the museum. "The publication of the sketchbook is part of the museum's efforts to make more and more material from our archives available online," Sawicki said. The images were released to mark this year's 70th anniversary of the start of exterminations in the gas chambers at *Birkenau*.

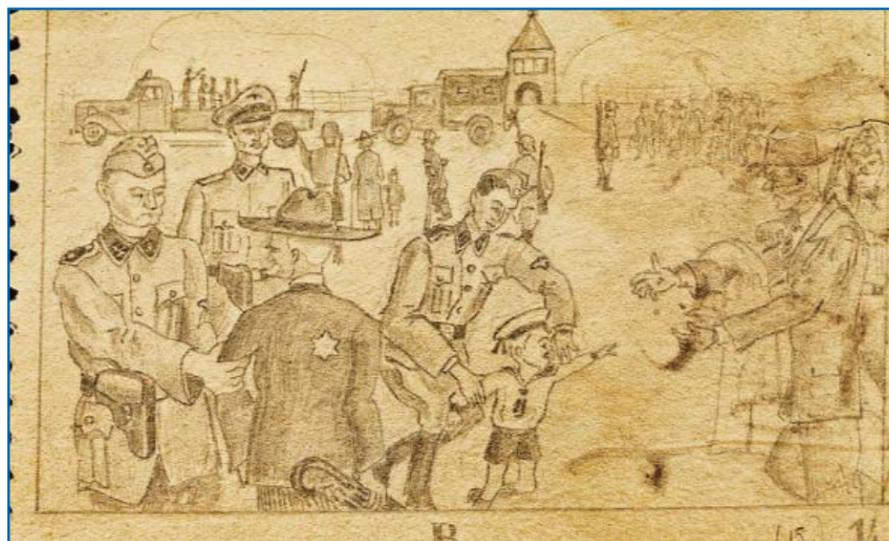
This spring the museum, which received a record 1.4 million visitors in 2011, is also planning to publish a catalogue containing images from the 6,000 or so works of art preserved in its archive collection.



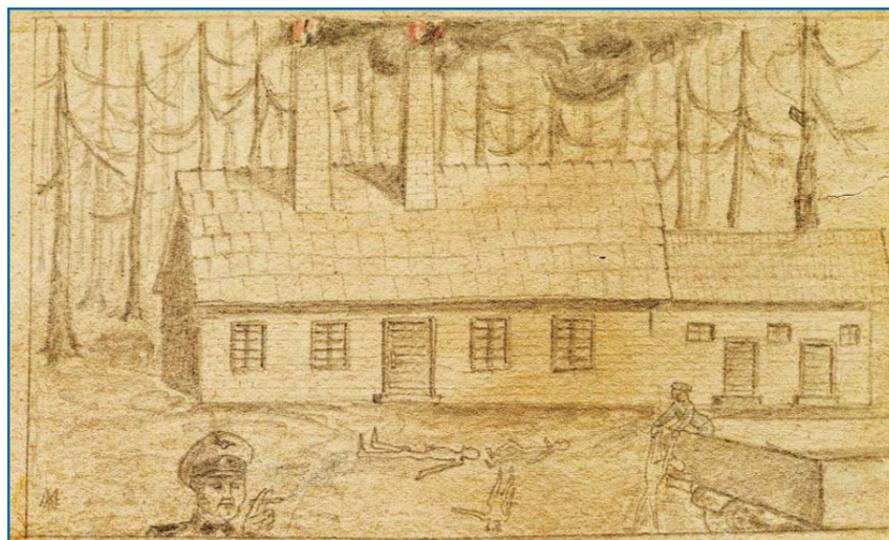
Prisoners are seen arriving by train.



A prisoner is seen stepping forward for a roll call.



Families in the death camp were often separated, as depicted in this scene.



The crematorium, where more than a million people were killed, is seen here.

NEW LIFE FROM OLD ARCHIVES

In a previous issue (*M & R* March/April) we reported that Yad Vashem signed an agreement with Ukraine, which gives Yad Vashem access to Holocaust-era files that are expected to reveal information about hundreds of thousands of unidentified Jews murdered during the Holocaust. The following article offers a glimpse into how information from the archives could help reconstruct family history.

The opening of the archives in the former Soviet Union and the use of advanced software are enabling Yad Vashem to reconstruct family trees and to tell the stories of families whose existence was unknown up until now.

One example of such genealogical restoration is the story of the Begun family, all of whose members perished in the Holocaust. The location of this family and reconstruction of its life was made possible following the discovery of tax declarations and population registry forms that sat unseen for decades in archives in Eastern Europe. According to Gertner, the genealogical restoration of the Begun family is a fine example of the immense power of bureaucratic forms, "which can, at first glance, appear to be moldy and uninteresting."

His colleague Masha Yonin related how she felt goosebumps after the archival research on the Beguns had been completed: "We succeeded in bringing back an entire family from the grave, after it had been erased from history. Now the Kaddish [memorial prayer] can be said over its members."

Dr. Arie Begun, who was born in 1890, was a physician in the city of *Brest-Litovsk* (known in Yiddish as *Brisk*), which is today called *Brest*, in Belarus. Up until the 17th century, *Brest-Litovsk* was the central metropolis of spiritual life and Torah study for Lithuania's Jews. Its one-time inhabitants included Menachem Begin and the father of Ariel Sharon. On the eve of World War II, 40 percent of *Brest's* population was Jewish.

Begun, his wife, and their two daughters were murdered in 1942. None of their relations or friends survived the war. During the 70 years that passed from the time of their murder, it was as if the entire family had vanished. The only mention of the Beguns appeared in a Yad Vashem form filled out in 1967 by a Tel Aviv resident, who wrote that he and Arie Begun were from the same city.

In the municipal archives of *Brest*, Yad Vashem researchers discovered a little-known collection of some 12,000 application forms for identity cards that had been submitted by the city's Jewish residents to the authorities immediately after the start of the German occupation of the city. Among those documents was Arie Begun's application, which he had submitted together with his photograph. He listed his profession as "physician."

The researchers then located Begun's tax declaration form, signed on October 20, 1941, before the city's Jewish inhabitants were moved into the ghetto. From this form, the researchers learned that Dr. Begun was a dermatologist and that he had a clinic on Pilsudskiego Street. Although Begun declared a monthly income of 810 rubles, the tax assessor added the comment that Begun's earnings were much higher, reaching 6,840 rubles a month. This was because Begun neglected to declare that he received 30 patients daily in his home.

(Continued on page 14)



REPORT FROM YAD VASHEM

FROM THE BASEMENT OF *DER STÜRMER* TO THE YAD VASHEM WEBSITE

BY DR. DANIEL UZIEL

The weekly anti-Semitic newspaper *Der Stürmer* (literally, "The Stormer," or "Attacker") was founded in 1923 in Nuremberg by Julius Streicher, a local and not particularly well-known member of the Nazi party. Throughout his career, Streicher climbed the Nazi party hierarchy, eventually becoming the notorious *Gauleiter* (regional Nazi party leader) of Franconia in Bavaria. He continued to serve as publisher and editor-in-chief of *Der Stürmer* until the end of WWII, taking advantage of his position to promote his paper and increase sales. *Der Stürmer* was known for its extreme and explicit anti-Semitic content. Unlike other strongly anti-Semitic newspapers, such as the SS newspaper *Das Schwarze Korps* (The Black Corps), which also dealt with other issues and did so with a certain amount of sophistication, *Der Stürmer* addressed the lowest common denominator among its readers, and made anti-Semitism its main fare.

The circulation of *Der Stürmer* reached its peak in the 1930s, after the Nazis rose to power. During Streicher's trial in Nuremberg, it was reported that some 600,000 copies of the paper had been distributed weekly in 1935. Despite Streicher's own lack of popularity within the Nazi party's elite, he won the highest levels of support;

Hitler approved the publication of *Der Stürmer* during the war years, even as other papers closed down due to lack of newsprint. However, the paper's circulation fell during the war.

The vulgarity of *Der Stürmer* was well known also outside Germany, and its name became synonymous with Nazi anti-



A photograph sent by a German soldier to the editors of *Der Stürmer* with the caption: "Bialystok, a street of Jewish businesses. In the right foreground, a typical Jewess."

Semitism. After the war, the Allies convicted Streicher of crimes against humanity, and he was hanged.

During its circulation, the editorial staff of *Der Stürmer* created an archive, maintained in the cellar of the editorial building

at 19 *Fanenschmidstrasse*, in Nuremberg. Part of the collection came from various official sources, but a significant portion was collected from readers who responded to the editors' frequent publicized requests to send in interesting material. So, for example, soldiers stationed in Poland dispatched photographs of Jews and Jewish institutions. Those who had looted Jewish homes forwarded books, works of art, and other items. The collection also included many anti-Semitic cartoons drawn by Philipp Rupprecht, known by his pen name, "Fips." Some of the graphic materials in the collection bear editors' comments, and were retouched in preparation for publication.

At the end of the war, American forces seized the archive, and stored its contents at an American army base near Nuremberg, together with works of art and Jewish cultural artifacts stolen by the Nazis. Where possible, books and Judaica items in the archive were restored to their owners. In 1951, the Americans turned over what remained to the Nuremberg city archives, where it has remained to this day. Accord-

ing to the archives' records, the collection numbers 15,600 items, filed in 2,456 files. The collection deals primarily with Judaism and anti-Semitism, but also contains some material about Christianity, the Freemasons, and various international topics. The gradual demise of *Der Stürmer* during the war is reflected by the relatively small amount of material collected during this period. The bulk of the collection (41.8%) was created from 1933 to 1938.

Due to the keen interest of writers, curators, and researchers, the materials were digitized and meticulously catalogued in the 1990s, and in 2003, Yad Vashem acquired a digital copy of the collection. Following the launch of the Yad Vashem photographic database on the Internet early this year, staff at the Nuremberg municipal archive and Yad Vashem have begun to upload photographs of unidentified Jews from the *Der Stürmer* archive, with the hope that some of them may be identified.

"In October, 219 photographs were chosen from the collection and released to the public on our online database," explained Dr. Haim Gertner, Director of the Yad Vashem Archives. "As with the entire catalog of photographs, Yad Vashem welcomes all valuable comments from visitors to the collection that will help restore the identities of the people in these historic pictures."

YAD VASHEM CALENDAR TAKES A CONTEMPORARY TACK

BY OFER ADERET, HAARETZ

Yad Vashem, the Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Authority, has sent out thousands of copies of a new calendar for the new Jewish year. The calendar is filled with postcards relating to the Holocaust, and some, it seems, may well be seen by some groups as insensitive or even provocative. Yad Vashem claims in its favor that this is one of the institution's ways to "provide a more relevant and modern expression to the memory of the Holocaust."

One of the posters that stands out in the new calendar appears with the month of December 2012. The calendar features a famous picture of concentration camp prisoners in Bergen-Belsen crowded into their bunk beds – and in the middle of the picture is a large illustration of Bambi. The caption on the picture says "In 1942 Bambi captured our hearts." The picture gives the impression the prisoners are watching the movie. 1942 was the year Walt Disney's famous movie was released, and it was also the year the Final Solution was decided on.

The International School for Holocaust Studies at Yad Vashem has been running a postcard design project for the past decade. Hundreds of design students from all over Israel have taken part, along with professional graphic artists from Israel and abroad, as well as amateur illustrators. After participating in various Yad Vashem

seminars, the graphic artists designed the postcards which deal with the Holocaust, and its remembrance and significance.

The calendar project was conducted in conjunction with the Neri Bloomfield Wizo Academy of Design and Education and the Shenkar College of Engineering and Design. The Ministry of Public Diplomacy and Diaspora Affairs and the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany also aided in the project.

Einstein's famous $E=MC^2$ equation appears on the January 2012 page, accompanied by the text: "A world without Jews. Think about it." Liav Cohen from Wizo Haifa designed the image.

The picture adorning the Yad Vashem calendar for March 2012 looks like a one-way railroad ticket — and says "One-way ticket." Another image shows dress shirts arranged in a closet, where one shirt is part of a concentration camp inmate's uniform. There is also a traffic sign warning of a train crossing with the text "1933–1945."

Iris Rosenberg, the spokeswoman of Yad Vashem and one of the heads of the calendar project, said she does not think the calendar is in bad taste. "Yad Vashem does not deal only with the memory of the Holocaust, but also with the Holocaust in modern terms." The Holocaust is relevant to our lives and teaching the Holocaust is not just a history lesson, said Rosenberg. "The *Shoah* has for a long time not been just historical facts, but their significance. These works present that," she added.



A picture of Bambi superimposed over concentration camp victims in a Yad Vashem calendar. The text reads, "In 1942, Bambi conquered our hearts."

"PLEASE DO NOT STOP WRITING" CHERISHED LETTERS DONATED TO YAD VASHEM

BY LITAL BEER

As part of the national "Gathering the Fragments" campaign conducted by Yad Vashem, a collection day was held on Holocaust Remembrance Day 2011, encouraging the public to bring personal items from the Holocaust era to Yad Vashem for safekeeping. One of the donors that day was Mazal Matilda Levy, who donated letters and artifacts belonging to her family. Later, Mazal added photographs and more items to the collection, which tells the story of the Hunio family of Rhodes.

Mazal's mother, Rosa Levy, née Hunio, immigrated to Eretz Israel in 1938 together with her brother, Avraham. Their parents, Yoseph and Mazal Tov Hunio, remained in Rhodes, then under Italian rule. The other children managed to reach the United States and Uruguay. Rosa stayed in touch with her relatives by mail.

Among the many letters Mazal gave to Yad Vashem, one is written in Hebrew in Sephardic cursive script, sent by Yoseph and Mazal Tov to their children in the Holy Land: *With God's help, 5 Heshvan 5700 Rhodes (may the Supreme One preserve it) To my beloved relatives... siblings never to part, the children of Yoseph and Mazal Tov Hunio, Avraham and Rosa (may God preserve them and give them life),*

Jerusalem, Tel Aviv (may they be built and preserved speedily and in our day, Amen)

...Today we received a letter from you and we read it avidly and with great love because we had been waiting such a long time for some word from you. Blessed be His name, now that we know you are well, may it be His will that you always remain so forever and ever. You should know that



Standing at back: Rosa Hunio and Avraham Hunio, Rhodes, before they emigrated to Eretz Israel.

I am trying hard to send your father to you. And I shall also send you the items left at home, together with the machine. I will then finish up my business and other matters and also come, and we will all live together. But please do not stop writing to us, because the letter we received was from six weeks ago, and we were so worried that we had not heard from you in so long... I would only like to hear how you are, and how all your friends and acquaintances are, and pray for your well-being... Greetings from your father and your mother and from all

the members of the household. Greetings, we are your father and mother who bless you day and night.

Before donating this letter to Yad Vashem, Mazal Levy never knew of her grandparents' plans to immigrate to Israel. Sadly, their plans were never realized; Yoseph Hunio died and was buried in Rhodes in 1942. In July 1944, Mazal Tov Hunio, née Philosoph, was deported together with the other Jews of Rhodes to Athens and from there to Auschwitz, where she was murdered on 16 August 1944.

BIOGRAPHY OF AN INSPIRATIONAL SURVIVOR

The Jewish Journal seeks to recognize local authors and when possible, we try to interview them so that they can express their motivations rather than simply write a review. This interview is with George and Rochel Berman of Boca Raton, who have just completed the biography of Eli Zborowski. The book is called *A Life of Leadership*. It is published by KTAV Publishing House of New Jersey in collaboration with Yad Vashem of Jerusalem. It contains a foreword by Sir Martin Gilbert, the official biographer of Winston Churchill. The questions were asked by Rabbi Jack Riemer, who is a regular reviewer for the Florida Jewish Journal.

Jewish Journal: Who is Eli Zborowski?

George and Rochel Berman: Eli Zborowski has been in the forefront of Holocaust remembrance for over half a century. Among many other "firsts," he is responsible for the first synagogue-based *Yom HaShoah* commemoration in the United States. Since 1981 he has been chairman of the American and International Societies for Yad Vashem.

JJ: Why did you decide to write this book?

GRB: We provided communications services for several years to the American and International Societies for Yad Vashem. We came to know Eli Zborowski through this connection. We often wondered how an immigrant with no knowledge of English achieved so much while creating several successful businesses as well. How did he organize these societies? What was it about Eli that enabled him to attract the required volunteer skills and the funds? Had his Holocaust experiences ultimately strengthened him? As many of his accomplishments are not widely known, a book exploring his life would appeal to a broad audience.

JJ: What was it like working with Eli Zborowski?

GRB: We interviewed Eli Zborowski numerous times in the Florida offices of the American Society for Yad Vashem. At each session we arrived to find a conference

table spread with coffee cake and fruit. Eli Zborowski recounted in astonishing detail the events of his life, starting with his childhood memories, his experiences in hiding, serving as a courier for the underground, in the DP camp, his arrival in America, and his rise to business leadership and consequent wealth. Each session began with gracious hospitality and ended five or six hours later when Eli Zborowski escorted us to the elevator in his signature courtly manner.

JJ: What leadership qualities does Eli Zborowski possess? How did he acquire them?

GRB: Leadership requires courage. It is the expression of that courage that impels the people to do the right thing. At the age of 15, Eli was a daring courier for the Jewish underground. He took on many other risks, eventually becoming familiar with risk as just one factor to be included in any project plan.

When his father built their home, he demonstrated his respect for the workers by sitting and drinking with them during breaks. Many years later, when Eli acquired a factory in Mexico one of his first acts was the installation of a subsidized cafeteria. Eli's commitment to fairness and equality among men inspires and attracts followers.

Leadership is about taking responsibility. Eli has been taking responsibility since he was a teenager: for his family, for orphans, for the sale of Sheaffer products in Latin America, and ultimately, responsibility for assuring Holocaust education and remembrance in future generations. Responsibility is not a quality that one can acquire from others. Essentially accepting responsibility is a personal decision: an instinctive characteristic that permeates Eli's life.

JJ: What did you come to admire most about Eli Zborowski?

GRB: One of the most interesting things that we were able to trace through Eli Zborowski's entire life was that he was so often inspired to use his abilities to fill unmet needs. This would become the basis for his success in business. While he became financially successful, he always felt that it was through the grace of God, and should be used to improve the world. We also admired the passion, perseverance, and tenacity which he consistently exhibited in both his business and his Jewish communal activities.

JJ: Why wasn't he embittered by his *Shoah* experiences?

GRB: Embitterment usually arises from a feeling of having been victimized. The question then goes back to why Eli Zborowski did not regard himself as a victim.

A victim is helpless. Eli Zborowski never felt that he was helpless; he had a great deal of self-confidence. A bright, handsome child, he was a favorite among members of his extended family. His parents also contributed to his self-confidence. His mother taught him to speak a pure Polish, while his father provided a great deal of business knowledge, negotiating skills, and moral strength. His Holocaust experiences were about struggle and courage rather than victimization and despair.

In addition, any bitterness he might have felt would have been offset by his gratitude to his rescuers, who risked their lives for him and his family.

Eli maintains a very warm relationship with Poland. To this day he is admired among non-Jews in *Zarki* and highly regarded by the Polish government. This enabled him to play a significant role in opening the door to diplomatic relations between Israel and Poland.

JJ: What do you think will be his lasting achievements?

GRB: Without doubt, his greatest single accomplishment is assuring that the Holocaust will be remembered, and remembered correctly, for many generations to come. He inaugurated the first synagogue-based *Yom HaShoah* – Holocaust Commemoration Day program, and with characteristic tenacity, Eli convinced other congregations to follow suit.

His keen interest in developing educational programs about the Holocaust led him to form the American and International Societies for Yad Vashem, where he laid the groundwork for the Young Leadership Associates, an organization that comprises nearly 1,000 third-generation descendants of survivors and even young Jews who have no direct family connection to the Holocaust. This group creates Holocaust education opportunities for teachers throughout the United States.

Eli also endowed the first chair in Holocaust Studies at Yeshiva University and the Diana Zborowski Center for the Study of the Aftermath of the *Shoah* at Yad Vashem, which has already sponsored major international colloquia.

A century from now, these contributions to Holocaust remembrance will be Eli Zborowski's most lasting monument.

JJ: What do you hope the reader will get out of this book?

GRB: We hope that Eli Zborowski's story will illustrate the complex impact of the Holocaust in the decades following the Liberation. We also hope the book will help the reader understand the vibrancy of *shtetl* life before the war and the intense longing for a return to Zion even prior to the Holocaust.

Eli Zborowski's life as a teenager appeals to young people, empowering them to engage in *tikkun olam*. In his foreword to the book Sir Martin Gilbert, the Holocaust historian and official biographer of Winston Churchill, says, "In this book there is not a single dull page, not a single story that does not resonate today with the capacity to inspire new generations."



BEING STRATEGIC ABOUT PRESERVING JEWISH HERITAGE

BY RUTH ELLEN GRUBER, JTA

In 1989, on the eve of the fall of Communism, the American poet Jerome Rothenberg published a powerful series of poems called "Khurbn" that dealt with the impact of the Holocaust on Eastern Europe.

In one section, he recorded conversations he had had in Poland with local people who had little recollection of the flourishing pre-war Jewish presence.

"Were there once Jews here?" the poem goes. "Yes, they told us, yes they were sure there were, though there was no one here who could remember. What was a Jew like? they asked.

"No one is certain still if they exist."

I often think of this poem when I travel to far-flung places in Eastern and Central Europe, and it was certainly on my mind on a trip to Slovakia.

That's because yes, there are still Jews here, and the post-Communist revival has reinvigorated Jewish communities in the region.

But also, despite this, numbers are still so small that even in many places where Jews once made up large parts of the population, Jewish history and heritage have been, or run the risk of being, forgotten.

"Look," my friend Maros Borsky reminded me in Bratislava. "Kids who were born after 1989 don't even remember Communism."

Borsky is trying to do something about this — which is why I was in Slovakia.

The vice president of the Bratislava Jewish community, Borsky is also Slovakia's leading Jewish scholar and expert on Slovak Jewish heritage. At 37 he is the leading Slovak Jewish activist of his generation, engaged in everything from religious, cultural and educational initiatives to his own personal commitment to raising his daughters in a Jewish home.

"I'll do anything to support his efforts, he has made such a difference to Jewish life here," said Andrew Goldstein, a British Reform rabbi who has played a hands-on role in nurturing Jewish revival in the Czech Republic and Slovakia for more than two decades.

Now chairman of the European Union for Progressive Judaism, Goldstein comes to Bratislava once a month to hold classes and lead a non-Orthodox Shabbat service as an alternative to the one conducted by the city's only resident rabbi, Baruch Myers, who is affiliated with Chabad.

Goldstein and I met in Bratislava nearly six years ago when Goldstein and his wife

and I, along with half a dozen Israeli journalists, were on a five-day tour that Borsky led to Jewish communities and heritage sites around the country.

The aim was to introduce the Slovak Jewish Heritage Route, an educational and touristic itinerary Borsky devised as a means of integrating Jewish heritage and memory into local tourism, culture, and education so that Jews, their history, and their fate are not forgotten.

Borsky first conceived it five years ago, and I believe it is an important strategic endeavor that could provide a model for other countries. Only 3,000 Jews live in Slovakia today, but there are synagogue buildings or Jewish cemeteries in literally hundreds of towns and even major cities. The Slovak Jewish community does not have the resources to save or even to care for all these places.

So Borsky convinced communal leaders to sanction a strategy that concentrates on just a few. This resulted in his Slovak Jewish Heritage Route, which includes 24 flagship sites in all eight regions of the country. Our tour took in more than a dozen of the



Maros Borsky standing in the Orthodox synagogue in Zilina, Slovakia. The *shul* is one of the sites on his Slovak Jewish Heritage Route.

sites: from the active synagogue in Bratislava to *Presov* in the far east, where the magnificence of the surviving synagogue utterly dwarfs the potential of a Jewish community that now numbers only a few dozen people.

We saw synagogues used as art galleries, and one now used as an art school. There were little Jewish exhibits, and ruined synagogues still undergoing repair. In one of these, the partially ruined synagogue in *Liptovsky Mikulas*, Goldstein and his wife stopped to chant prayers so that the sounds of Jewish liturgy could once again be heard.

One of our most meaningful encounters was with a high school teacher in the small town of *Spisske Nova Ves* who for nearly a decade has made care of the Jewish cemetery and continuing research into the history of the destroyed Jewish community an integral part of her class curriculum.

"The saddest thing for me was not to see the empty synagogues, but to learn that the Orthodox synagogue in *Zilina* is still intact but not used for services," Goldstein told me after the trip. "On Rosh Hashanah the tiny community just meets in a nearby hall and reminisces — there is seemingly nobody to lead even a short service."

Rothenberg's poem was rarely out of my thoughts.

"Were there once Jews here?"

THE FUTURE OF HOLOCAUST EDUCATION

BY STEPHAN J. KRAMER,
THE JERUSALEM POST

On the 27th of Nissan we remember the victims of the Holocaust. However, remembrance is not a static picture of the past; it is also a dynamic task for the future, which poses major challenges for the Jewish world.

One of these challenges is education of our own youth. We are grateful that many survivors are still with us. We embrace them with the full strength of our love. And yet the generation of those who emerged from the jaws of the Nazi beast is increasingly retreating from our lives. Tomorrow's Jewish children will have to remember the Holocaust without the immense emotional power of meeting actual survivors. It will be an important task of Jewish education to bridge this gap.

We also must demand that the non-Jewish world keep the memory of the Holocaust alive – and much remains to be done in this regard. True, six years ago, International Holocaust Remembrance Day was established by the United Nations, and it is being observed in many countries. True,

the amount of Holocaust education in the democratic world has increased in the past decade or two. And yet there are valid reasons to worry.

A recent UNESCO-commissioned study by Israeli educational scientist Dr. Zehavit Gross of Bar-Ilan University showed that Holocaust lessons in Western countries often lead to massive anti-Semitic reactions from students. This does not mean the dimensions of Holocaust education should be reduced. On the contrary, we need a much wider educational effort aimed at all age groups and population strata.

The message we need to get across is straightforward. He who defiles another human being's dignity, let alone takes his life out of baseless hatred, commits a transgression against the spirit of humanity and against God who created all of us in His image. It is not enough for parliaments to make Holocaust denial punishable by law. Rather, let us repeat to the nations of the world the commandment of the Torah: "The stranger who lives in your midst... you will love him as yourself." Of course, I am not naïve. The hatred of Jews is unlikely to disappear. We our-

selves bear the main burden of responsibility for securing our existence. The fight against anti-Semitism remains a primary task. It is a sorry state of affairs when Jewish communities need police protection from anti-Semites. It is a disgrace when Jews, recognizable as such by their clothes or just by a kippa, must be watchful in the streets of London, Paris, or Berlin lest they become targets of abuse and violence.

But of course, the main targets today are the Jews of Israel, who are threatened with a second Holocaust by the Iranian leadership. The debate as to whether it is permissible to compare these would-be annihilators with the Nazis is beside the point, for if they should ever succeed, the results are likely to be similar.

The threat to Israel's very existence is not new. In 1948 Israel's Jews faced Arab armies which invaded the newborn Jewish state with the explicit purpose of destroying it. The ability of the nascent Israel Defense Forces to defend the country was by no means a foregone conclusion. Later threats, in 1967 and in 1973, were repelled, but the enemy's message remained clear: We want to kill you. As for Iran, de-

spite Israeli deterrence, there are scenarios under which the Iranian regime could well attempt to use its future nuclear arsenal to "wipe out the Zionist regime from the pages of history."

No less alarming than the Iranian intention is the miserable failure of the democratic world even to significantly slow the Iranian effort to obtain atomic weapons. Obviously, the prospect of another Holocaust against millions of Jews is not considered a reason for action.

This is a sobering thought. Of course, a nuclear Iran would be a strategic threat to the West, too. Israeli Holocaust researcher Prof. Yehuda Bauer once observed that World War II was started by an anti-Semitic regime that murdered six million Jews. However, he noted, 29 million of the 35 million people who died between 1939 and 1945 were non-Jews. This, Bauer said dryly, should give non-Jews a reason to ponder.

Yet we see that the world has not learned its lesson. We must do all we can to change this attitude. This, too, is part of the legacy of the Holocaust and its victims, whom we remember and honor on Remembrance Day.

A QUIET DRAMA IS TAKING PLACE AMONG ULTRA-ORTHODOX HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS

BY YAIR ETTINGER, HAARETZ

"Maybe you'll reconsider?" Shoshi Horowitz pleads with her mother, Hanna Glendoar. "We have to fill in a Page of Testimony, and we have to do it now." But Glendoar, aged 85, shrugs her shoulders and once again refuses. "It puts me off a little, I don't know why," she says, immediately adding: "It has no connection to the fact that I'm Haredi."

She can't explain the profound internal obstacle. The information she has is a gold mine for quite a number of people – her children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren, over 200 people, as evidenced by the family tree hanging in her living room – who have never heard from her in any systematic way what happened to her during "that" period, the Holocaust, and the names of her 44 relatives who were killed, out of a total of 48 before the war. She has never given her testimony for documentation in Yad Vashem, the World Holocaust Center, or anywhere else.

She knows that Yad Vashem is working on collecting and finding the names of those who were murdered, and openly admits that it is "neglect" that their researchers are not familiar with the names of her relatives. And still, for now it's enough for her that many of her descendants are named after the victims.

Her refusal to share memories and information from the Holocaust period – mainly with official institutions – is not always comprehensible. But Glendoar feels that she has actually undergone a significant process, and recently broke a hermetic silence of over 50 years – even if only in her close inner circle.

Today, around the Shabbat table, when a granddaughter or grandson expresses interest, something opens up, a small memory comes to light and is saved from oblivion.

At her advanced age, as the head of a huge family – she won't say the precise number of her descendants because it may bring bad luck – she is allowing herself to disclose some of the memories of a girl who celebrated her 18th birthday in the

Auschwitz concentration camp with an apple she received as a gift; a girl who was humiliated by a petty and cruel Nazi guard who was to dominate her dreams for years to come; a girl who even after the end of the war faced a difficult and dangerous journey home, to Hungary, before being united with her brother and her second cousin.

She attributes the change mainly to her present stage in life, but a key role was also played by the club of ultra-Orthodox Holocaust survivors that she joined a few years ago – a club that is apparently the only one in the world geared exclusively to the Haredi community.



An ultra-Orthodox Jewish man stands next to an exhibit in the Yad Vashem Holocaust memorial in Jerusalem. A sign that is part of the exhibit reads in German: "Germans! Defend yourselves! Do not buy from Jews!"

A quiet drama is taking place among Haredi Holocaust survivors. The Haredi sector, which is often under attack, and even more so recently, includes, like every sector, survivors who talk and those who remain silent, each with his or her own story. But the group of Haredi women who run *Misgav Lakashish*, headed by Tamar Shif, understood that Haredi survivors are unique. Some of them feel that they have limited legitimacy for telling the story, and the majority are unaware of their rights, after many years during which government authorities barely worked with Haredi survivors.

The organization that took up the challenge was the Jerusalem Foundation. In addition to running clubs for survivors and helping them to receive their rights from the

National Insurance Institute and the funds that come from Europe, the foundation started about three years ago to support the projects of the *Misgav Lakashish* NPO, which are designed for Haredi survivors.

About 400 men and women are involved in the various frameworks operated in the city by *Misgav Lakashish* – a club for women, and a study hall for men in which they study Torah, as well as visits to the homes of housebound women. The volunteer visitors are students from the Bais Yaakov seminary as well as older women who have undergone training in the Haredi department in the School for Holocaust Studies at Yad Vashem.

According to Dr. Idit Dayan, coordinator of welfare at the Jerusalem Foundation, "For years there was silence. The way of dealing with the Holocaust in general – and this is true of all the sectors – was to raise large families. Many survivors see that as their victory. But they didn't talk about the thing itself. One reason for that is that often their survival involved a failure to observe the *mitzvot* [religious commandments], and there are many Haredim who want to erase that past. Suddenly, after bringing many children into the world, they are willing to talk about the path that brought them where they ended up."

The weekly event in the center of the *Kaliv Hasidim*, in Jerusalem's *Ezrat Torah* neighborhood, probably represents the activity of the only Haredi club for Holocaust survivors in the world. Every week, over 70 women attend regularly, for a day of lectures, an exercise class, and lunch, which includes a kugel or quiche in the summer, and hot soup in the winter. Shif and club director Ruhami Marenstein say that here there is almost no open discussion of the Holocaust.

At first glance, it looks like any senior citizens' club. On second glance, one discovers the stories about encounters between women who decades earlier shared the

same hut in the concentration camp. Sometimes, the tables are divided spontaneously according to origin – a table of Romanians, another of Hungarians, and another of Poles; and there is also a table where the women prefer speaking Yiddish rather than Hebrew among themselves.

Shif says that the underlying fact here is that the women here are linked to one another by their connection to the Holocaust. For many of them, this is a fact that was suppressed with great effort and for many years. She says that over the years, they had trouble deciding how to approach the subject of the Holocaust.

"Once, we invited a psychologist to talk about the Holocaust. She showed a film about the Holocaust, and that aroused tremendous bitterness among several women, some of whom left in the middle. We weren't sure how to continue, and we found that we don't want to force the subject on them. It's clear that the prevailing atmosphere is the Holocaust."

"I went through what Jews went through, not the nicest things. Thank God we were saved and thank God we made a home. What we get here is a wonderful thing. The women don't complain. Sometimes we recall what we went through, but we don't talk about it too much."

Rachel, who asks not to have her last name published, says she didn't tell everyone about her experiences during the Holocaust: "Only to those who wanted to hear, not everyone is willing to hear. Anyone who wanted to hear said, 'Grandma, write it all down, soon there won't be anyone left to tell us.' I told them that they're invited to write down what I tell them, but I didn't tell much. Why go back to that after so many years? So many things happen, God sends us so many trials. Why do I need to go back to what happened over 60 years ago?"

Rachel Potash, on the other hand, the daughter of a Hungarian rabbinical family, said: "I tell a lot. I was a little girl of six in the Holocaust. My father believed in 'Remember what Amalek did to you,' and secondly he believed that children should

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GOEBBELS' SECRETARY BREAKS VOW OF SILENCE

BY ALLAN HALL, DAILY MAIL

The former secretary of Hitler's propaganda chief Joseph Goebbels has broken a 66-year vow of silence to talk about her service for the man who made Germans hate the Jews.

Since the end of World War II, Brunhilde Pomsel, now 100, has refused all requests for interviews and offers to publish her memoirs.

But after five months of negotiations she has given a single interview to *Bild*, Germany's biggest newspaper, in which she describes her four years as the chief secretary of the man closest to Hitler.

Frau Pomsel describes how Goebbels' children – the children he and his wife Magda would murder with cyanide in Hitler's bunker in April 1945 – used to play with her typewriter on Sunday afternoons.

She reminisces about eating goose with the Reich's propaganda minister at his island home and about receiving dresses from Magda because Allied bombs destroyed her own home and everything in it.

She took down every word that Goebbels uttered, both his private correspondence and his official orders, including those ordering roundups of Jews in Berlin to please Hitler that the capital was becoming "Jew-free."

Frau Pomsel was employed by Goebbels from 1942 until the end of the

war in May 1945. But while his propaganda presented him to the German people as a jovial fellow Nazi, she remembers him as a cold and distant monster.

"You couldn't get close to him," said Frau Pomsel. "He never once asked me a personal question. Right up until the end I don't think he knew my name.

"He got away lightly with suicide. He knew he would be condemned to death by the Allies. His suicide was cowardly, but he was also smart because he knew what was coming if he didn't take that way out.

"I was working as a typist at the propaganda ministry, and his radio station, and was the fastest. It was an order to be transferred to work for him. You couldn't refuse.

"I didn't know about the Holocaust. I was a stupid, politically uninterested little sausage of simple means. I only learned about the Jewish extermination programme after the war. Goebbels never mentioned it in his correspondence.

"I joined the party in 1933 – why not? Everyone did. I worked with three other secretaries in a wonderful library in a palace on the *Wilhelmplatz* in Berlin.

"A lot of the stuff I did was somewhat boring. But I gradually became his chief stenographer, recording everything that gushed out from him and from his chief aides.

"I wanted to live up to this ideal that if a boss trusted me, then I mustn't disappoint him."

Frau Pomsel recalls how Goebbels ordered her and three junior secretaries, on February 18, 1943, into the *Sportpalast* Stadium in Berlin. It was shortly after the defeat of the German Sixth Army at Stalingrad, the turning point of the war from which there was no way back.



Hitler's master propagandist Joseph Goebbels rabble-rousing a crowd.

On this day Goebbels delivered his infamous "Total War" speech to the German public, exhorting them to heights of frenzied sacrifice as he warned of a wave of vengeful, barbaric Russians bearing down on the Fatherland.

She recalled: "This was a service order, we had to attend. Magda Goebbels sat directly behind me as he raged.

"The photos show the crowd going wild as he asked them if they wanted total war and springing to their feet to give the Hitler

salute. I wasn't as jubilant as them. I knew what was coming..."

As chief secretary, Frau Pomsel had access to top-secret papers which showed how badly the war was in fact going for Germany.

She spent the last 10 days of the Third Reich in the cellars of the propaganda ministry. Russian artillery and American bombers flattened the city by day, RAF aircraft by night.

In this troglodyte world she pumped out the orders from Goebbels exhorting more and more resistance to a people crushed under the weight of the lost war.

"On May 1 the news came that The Boss – Hitler – had committed suicide the day before. The Russians came shortly afterwards and dragged me from the cellar. I spent the next five years as a prisoner of the Russians in special camps," said Frau Pomsel.

It was only after the war that she learned Goebbels and his wife killed their six young children by breaking cyanide vials in their mouths.

Goebbels then shot his wife before shooting himself. Aides poured petrol on the corpses, but the remains were only partially burned, and found by the Red Army.

"I will never forgive Goebbels for what he brought into this world," said Frau Pomsel. "And the fact that he could murder his innocent children in this way."

NAZI SOLDIERS HAVING THE TIME OF THEIR LIVES IN OCCUPIED NORWAY... AS THEY LAUNCHED THEIR REIGN OF TERROR

Chilling photos of German soldiers having a roaring time in Nazi-occupied Norway months before they murdered hundreds of local Jews have been discovered.

The pictures show members of Hitler's *Wehrmacht* enjoying picnics in a sunny



Two German officers partake in a drunken drinking game in a bar in Norway in July 1942.

meadow and sipping tea and eating biscuits at a tranquil garden party.

Other black-and-white images depict four uniformed troops indulging in drinking games in a bar, with one wielding a wooden mallet as if to strike his comrade with it as a joke.

More pictures from the album, which has come to light from a British collector, show soldiers posing with bemused Laplanders in northern Norway.

While the pictures appear to depict the Germans as an agreeable occupying force and a "nice bunch of chaps," they were taken four months before the Holocaust in Norway.

From November 1942 the Nazis began rounding up the Jewish population, who were sent to death camps like Auschwitz where half of them were executed. Nazi leader, *Reichskommissar* Josef Terboven, who ruled Norway during the occupation, is pictured in many of the photos.

Terboven was despised by both the Norwegians and many of his own men, and killed himself by detonating 110 pounds of dynamite in a bunker at the end of World War II.

It is not known who compiled the album, which is entitled "With the *Reichskommissar* North Norway and Finland 10-27 July, 1942," but it would have been for Nazi propaganda.

At the end of the war it was seized as a souvenir by an Allied serviceman.

The album was acquired years ago by the late Mark Dineley, a well-known military and arms collector from Salisbury, and it is now being sold at auction by his family.

Chris Albury, of Dominic Winter Auctioneers of Cirencester, Gloucestershire, said: "This is an important and virtually unique album.

"This album undermines the view that the Germans were a nasty bunch of violent and murderous people in the war.

"There is little evidence of violence in this album, which deceptively depicts them as a peaceful and benign occupying force.

"Some of the pictures almost show them as a nice bunch of chaps on their summer holidays.

"But it is quite a chilling juxtaposition because lurking over the horizon is the Holocaust in Norway.

"There are some very nasty and influential people featured in this album who played a major part in shaping Norway's history.

"A few months after these pictures were taken, martial law was imposed in *Trond-*

heim and surrounding areas, during which 34 Norwegians were murdered by extrajudicial execution.

"This served as a pretext for the arrest and detention of all male Jewish inhabitants of the area as part of the Holocaust in Norway.

"With the announcement of Germany's surrender at the end of the war, Josef Terboven committed suicide by detonating himself with dynamite."

In all there are 375 mounted gelatine silver print photos on 62 pages.

As well as the photos showing the Germans relaxing, there are other pictures of Nazi officials meeting and greeting one another, a U-boat, and a water bomb.

Some of the high-ranking Nazis include Terboven, high-ranking German army



Reichskommissar Terboven (far left) hosting a "tea party" with fellow officers in Namsos, Norway.

chief Alfred Jodl, and regional Nazi leader Karl Kaufmann.

Jodl was hanged following the *Nuremberg* war trials for signing the orders to allow the summary execution of prisoners.

Kaufmann was the first Nazi leader to deport German Jews after the Allied bombing of Hamburg in 1941 left many local Germans homeless.

BRAZIL APPROVES JEWISH STUDIES AGREEMENT WITH ISRAEL

Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff approved an agreement to allow students, teachers and researchers in Brazil to teach and research the Holocaust, anti-Semitism and other Jewish-related subjects.

Under the agreement, Hebrew-language and Jewish themes such as the Holocaust, anti-Semitism, racism, xenophobia, and intolerance will be part of curricula in some schools, universities, and other educational institutions in Brazil.

As part of an inter-country exchange, Portuguese will be taught in academic circles in Israel.

The agreement is the result of a longtime effort by Osias Wurman, Israel's honorary consul in Rio and ex-president of the Rio de Janeiro State Jewish Federation.

"Teaching the Holocaust in Brazilian schools is key in a moment when revisionist waves grow, notably from the Iranian government, which try to wipe the memory for future generations," Wurman told JTA. "We must shed light on the past in order to clear the future."

The Brazilian-Israeli agreement was signed initially in 2008, approved by the Brazilian Congress in 2010, and recently sanctioned by the presidency to aid in "developing and strengthening the friendship ties between both countries."

Rousseff, Brazil's first female president, attended a Holocaust Remembrance Day ceremony less than one month after she started her term one year ago.

"The Holocaust is not and will never be just a historic moment. The duty of the memory should not be mistaken for passiveness of the ordinary remembrance," she said at the time.

"Memory is the human weapon to prevent the repetition of the barbarism. We must not allow any kind of human rights violation in any country, and especially in Brazil. The Jewish tradition and dignity integrate the Brazilian nationality in a special way."

A QUIET DRAMA IS TAKING PLACE AMONG ULTRA-ORTHODOX HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS

(Continued from page 12)

know what their parents went through. It's not necessarily Haredim. Not everyone who has experienced terrible things has the emotional strength to tell, and they don't want the children to know what their parents went through or even to hear about such weighty and difficult things. To this day, if I dream about the Holocaust, I get up in the morning as though I haven't slept for a second. But I tell the grandchildren very often, they always want to hear."

"For years, it looked as though the family's support was so strong that no frameworks were created to treat the survivors apart from the family, with the exception of serious problems," explains Holocaust scholar Esther Farbstein, director of the Holocaust Education Center at the Women's College in Jerusalem. "But in their twilight years, the Haredi survivors understand that they can't rely on the family framework alone."

Farbstein says that the Haredi element that isolates the survivors from non-Haredi survivors is also important. "It's hard for them to talk about their faith with others, because they were supported by their faith," she said. "Many Haredim are preoccupied with their mission, which stems from the very fact that they survived. Haredi survivors are always asking: Why did I survive. That's not a question that all the survivors ask."

Farbstein claims that the clearest illustration of the need of the Haredi community to discuss the reality of the Holocaust is the discourse surrounding the observance of *mitzvot* in the Holocaust, which, she says, is tainted by ignorance. "It's impossible to understand the subject of observing the *mitzvot* in the Holocaust without under-

standing what really happened there," she says. "Anyone asking about observance of the *mitzvot* is causing many of the survivors to seclude themselves and to be on the defensive. There was an important *rebbetzin* [a rabbi's wife], a Holocaust survivor, who for a long time agreed to host students who asked her about the Holocaust. In the end, she told me that she couldn't stand it any more. The girls asked her questions like: 'If there was no water, how did you do *netilat yadayim* [the ritual handwashing before eating]?"

That stopped her from talking, and it's ignorance that creates that situation.

Leah Shahar, who coordinates the programs for Haredi Holocaust survivors in *Misgav Lakashish*, tells about the initial suspicions of the families: "When we send a volunteer to a woman at home, I call first in order to coordinate the visit. In many cases, the family agrees to have a volunteer come to the house, but warns me that the volunteer shouldn't dare ask anything about the Holocaust and shouldn't dare to bring Pages of Testimony from Yad Vashem.

"We had such a case about two years ago, with a woman whose children hadn't heard a word from her about the Holocaust. They knew that she had a number on her arm, and that's it. The female volunteer came to her home, sat in the room with her, and the woman immediately opened up about everything on her own initiative. She told the volunteer the story that she had concealed, from beginning to end. The children stood outside the door in shock, at one point they brought the volunteer pen and paper so she would write it down.

"When the woman died, a year ago, the one who told them their mother's life story was that volunteer."

SEVENTY YEARS LATER, GHOSTS OF WORLD WAR II REMAIN INDELIBLE

(Continued from page 6)

shipped off for D-Day, he shoved three sketch pads into his backpack and drew his way across Europe. His real job was to man a loudspeaker at the front and "soften up" the German troops, telling them about the delicious American food and then urg-



Recalling the horrors of *Buchenwald*, "Ritchie Boy" Si Lewen produced the haunting artwork "Ghost."

ing them to "Give up! You're surrounded by American soldiers!" And they'd reply, "No, YOU give up; you're surrounded by German soldiers!" Which was often closer to the truth.

But when Si came home, he destroyed everything: clothing, books, boots, and those extraordinary sketch pads. At least he

thought he did. One, with a young artist's initial views of landing on the beach in Normandy, survived. He handed me the pad and I was overcome with emotion, overwhelmed by the significance of what I held — a piece of personal history, a piece of American history, an artist's most intimate impressions at a most vulnerable time.

Si may have burned physical reminders of the war, but he could not erase it from his memory. Its horrors influenced much of his art over the last 70 years — particularly entering *Buchenwald*, the Nazi concentration camp, two days after liberation.

To Si, a German Jew who escaped the fate of millions, the survivors did not seem human. Their images in shades of black and white fill a museum. While our camera rolled, Si picked up a stick of charcoal and furiously attacked a blank canvas, creating a haunting "Ghost."

As we prepared to leave, Si asked if I wanted the "Ghost." I felt almost ashamed to say "Yes!" so loud and so fast. He pulled my Ghost from the canvas stretcher, signed it, rolled it up, and handed it me.

It's not uncommon for producers to walk away from a story with a parting gift. My office is filled with pens, mugs, hats, and T-shirts. But never have I been given something so magnificent.

Since I'm not collector of original art, I asked how I should frame it. "Frame it?" Si asked with a little chuckle. "Ach, save your money! Just a few thumbtacks on your wall will do the trick."

For what it is worth to me, it should be framed in diamonds and gold. Thank you Si... for everything.

NEW LIFE FROM OLD ARCHIVES

(Continued from page 9)

Two months later, on December 21, 1941, Begun submitted his annual tax declaration. His address was different now: 73 Kostuszko Street. The researchers learned from this change in address that Begun had been transferred to the ghetto. "He works in a Jew-clinic in the ghetto and earns approximately 200 rubles a month," wrote the income tax assessor.

Eight months later, on August 31, 1942, Begun filled out another tax declaration. He was now earning only about 100 rubles monthly from his work in the *Judenrat* clinic. In contrast with the previous form, it was now explicitly written that Begun was working "only inside the ghetto." This is apparently the last document signed by Begun before his death. A month and a half later, in mid-October 1942, all those remaining in the ghetto were murdered.

Another archive, in Moscow, was found to hold a list of the names of the murdered Jews of *Brest-Litovsk*. It had been drawn up by one of the Soviet committees investigating Nazi crimes that had been set up under Joseph Stalin's orders, which accompanied the Red Army as it reentered regions that had been liberated from the Nazis. According to this list, Arie Begun was 52 at the time of his death. More important, the list revealed that he had a family, all of whose members were murdered with him. The Yad Vashem researchers thus discovered the three other members of Begun's family: his wife Sofia, aged 48, and his two daughters, Sisilia, 22, and Shulamit, 16. The fact that one of his daughters was named Shulamit (Sulamifia in Russian) and that he signed the above official papers "Arie," instead of using the accepted Russian alternative, "Lev," demonstrated to the researchers that the Beguns had been a Zionist family.

"Thus," summed up Yonin, "from bureaucratic forms, we recreated an entire family. Had it not been for the archival documentation, we would have never known about the family's existence." Yonin described it as "a very moving event."

Last summer, Yad Vashem completed the mapping of yet another such "unknown" family. In an archive in Riga, capital of Latvia, Yad Vashem researchers located books containing the administrative records of the city's tenants' committees. In one of those records, dating from 1941, the name of Minka Chakars née Edelman appears; she is listed as having

been born in 1910 and as living at 132 Marijas Street in Riga together with her only daughter Austrā, who was born in 1940.

A close study of later records also found in this archive showed that on October 22, 1941, Minka moved to 2 Katolu Street, which was inside the ghetto. However, by the end of that year, she had moved back to her original address, which was outside. The researchers, who knew very well why she had entered the ghetto, could not understand how she had emerged alive and how she had returned to her home within only a few short months.

The answer was provided by three additional documents. The first was an order published by the Germans on October 7, 1941; it declared that any Jewess married to a Latvian could continue to live with him if he consented and on condition that she underwent sterilization.

The second document is a list of 47 Jewish and gypsy women who underwent sterilization surgery in 1942 and 1943. Minka's name appears on that list. In the hospital-discharge form that the physician filled out, he wrote down in Latin that Minka's operation had taken place on April 28, 1942. The third document found was a certificate indicating that she had converted to Christianity in 1941. It was issued on October 24, 1941, two days after Minka's internment in the ghetto.

The testimony of a relative who was still living helped Yad Vashem's researchers complete the narrative of Minka's story. According to it, Minka was a Latvian Jewish woman who had married a Christian named Vilhelms Chakars. In order to save her life and that of her daughter, she converted after the Nazis took over Riga. After she was evacuated to the ghetto, her husband asked his priest for an authorization that she had been baptized. The husband then bribed police officials with gold jewelry and they agreed to release her from the ghetto; apparently, he promised them that she would undergo sterilization, in accordance with the Nazi directive.

Minka and her daughter survived the war. Minka passed away on March 8, 1992, and her daughter died 15 years later. Minka's granddaughter today lives in Riga. Thanks to the recently discovered documents, she now knows that her grandmother was Jewish. The granddaughter agreed to the publicizing of her family's story here, for the sake of her grandmother's memory, but refused to have her own identity disclosed.

IN THE SHADOW OF THE SHOAH

(Continued from page 4)

I Never Knew," the poet ponders pointedly, painfully, and powerfully, "You who gave me my face and my name/Did you know what was coming/Did you know how soon/Did you know how hard/the darkness would fall on your world/Is that what clouds your face/Or are you only squinting into the sun"

Landau recalls being honored in New York's PS 139 to greet then-Vice-President Richard Nixon on Flag Day, but has also not forgotten her teacher's bigoted comment she managed to overhear, "Lamenting the choice of a dirty/Refugee kid instead of a real American/On such a momentous occasion." In the book's Introduction, the poet wisely highlights the ongoing role of the past, in spite of being the past, in shaping both present and future, individually and collectively, as she

thoughtfully engages us in the trying issues that the *Shoah* and the uneven human journey have provided her with. "The past is always there, barely glimpsed/Through the corner of your eye, /A presence felt more than seen/Tugging at your mind./Catching you unawares,/Casting a long shadow/Subsuming the future."

On the book's back cover, in "Remember," Landau pleads with us, through her losses and ours, to tightly hold onto the precious yet precarious link of memory, that we may preserve and save from oblivion's fate and Holocaust deniers those who should never be forgotten. "Gone, all gone, names, faces, lives/Last year's leaves raked, bagged and tossed/Trees falling in the forest of the deaf/When there is no one left to remember/Did they ever exist?"

THE EXODUS FROM JAMAICA

(Continued from page 6)

dresses playing ball; a synagogue with the Holy Ark; refugees around the long dining room tables.

A stranger looking at the smiles in the pictures would think that these were va-



Girls playing ball in the Jewish refugee camp in Jamaica.

cationers at a village hotel rather than war refugees.

But the pastoral landscape and the smiles hid quite a few tensions. In order to prevent friction with the local population, the Jewish refugees were forbidden to work or live outside the boundaries of the camp.

A representative of the exiled Polish government in Cuba, who visited the camp in December 1943, was under the impression that the refugees were in good condition but that "the work prohibition sends many of them into a life of boredom and depression, and therefore they seek to immigrate as soon as possible."

It was also reported that 20 religious refugees refused to eat meat due to the shortage of kosher meat.

In April 1944, some 55 of the camp's Jewish refugees had yet to receive an immigration visa. Two months later, a harsh epidemic erupted.

"On the day before the invasion to Normandy we woke up sick," said Stanton. "We woke up with a fever and a red rash

and depression. People cried. There were some who said we should have stayed in Europe. The fear was of typhus and we were quarantined for six weeks. It was very boring."

Blood tests conducted on the refugees revealed that it was Dengue fever. "The small stream at the margins of the camp was filled with mosquito, and these thousands of small and clever creatures were very fond of our European blood and passed the disease on to us."

The camp was dismantled at the end of World War II, and the few Jews remaining there scattered

all over. Testimonies and documents found later on reveal that most of them emigrated to South America and to the United States and a small number of them reached Europe. It's unclear if any of them emigrated to Israel.

Ever since discovering the box, Bar is restless and continues to search for additional testimonies, and mainly for someone who stayed alive. Stanton died six years ago at the age of 91, but the Joint has not despaired and is trying to locate the last residents of the camp or their offspring. "We want to tell them about the lives of the parents in Jamaica and what they did for them," says the organization's CEO Amnon Mantver.

One of the only means left to do so is one document, simple but moving: A list of 137 families which stayed in the camp. These are the names of the people looking out from the photos, only there's no one to say who is who. Are any of them still alive? Do their grandchildren know that they spent the war years in a sunny Caribbean country which gave them life?

PRESERVATIONISTS WORRY ABOUT "FORGOTTEN" NAZI CAMPS

Auschwitz, the most notorious camp in the Nazi killing machine, might soon claim success in its campaign to preserve the legacy of the Holocaust.

The foundation supporting the site in southern Poland has attracted tens of millions of dollars from donor countries, and the camp's barracks and other buildings seem set to be preserved for decades to come. The museum memorial at the former Nazi death camp attracts more than 1 million visitors per year.

Some fear, however, that the concentration of resources and attention on Auschwitz could overshadow other preservation efforts and threaten the integrity or even the existence of the memorials and museums at lesser-known camps and Holocaust sites in Poland.

"Because Auschwitz is treated as the symbol of the Holocaust and the whole world is supporting only this museum, everybody in Poland, including the government, seems to think that this is enough," said historian Robert Kuwalek, a curator at the state-run museum at *Majdanek*, the Nazi concentration camp and killing center near *Lublin* in eastern Poland.

"The problem is deeper because it is the lack of basic knowledge that the Holocaust happened in forgotten sites like *Belzec*, *Sobibor*, *Treblinka*, *Majdanek*, and *Chelmno*."

Belzec, *Sobibor* and *Treblinka* were the three killing centers of the so-called Operation Reinhard plan to murder 2 million Polish Jews in 1942 and 1943. During that operation, Kuwalek said, "more people were killed in a shorter time than in Auschwitz-Birkenau during the whole period that that camp functioned."

Despite their importance in the history of the Holocaust, these and other sites — such as forced labor camps — are overlooked by the vast majority of visitors. All are marked by memorials or museums, but some are located in remote parts of the

country, and most are in serious need of upkeep and preservation.

For example, the museum at *Sobibor*, the site of John Demjanjuk's crimes, was forced to close in June when funding from local authorities ran out. An estimated 167,000 to 250,000 people, mostly Jews, were murdered at *Sobibor*, in eastern Poland. In May, a German court convicted Demjanjuk, now 91, of complicity in the murder of 28,000 Jews there.

The museum reopened July 1 after the Polish Culture Ministry announced that it would be reorganized as a state-run institution funded by the ministry.

"Auschwitz is the great exception to the rule," said Rabbi Andrew Baker, the director of international Jewish affairs for the American Jewish Committee. Baker was the point man for the AJC in its cooperation with the Polish government to build a large and impressive monument and museum at *Belzec*, where 500,000 Jews were killed. The center opened in 2004.

The Auschwitz Foundation was set up in 2009 with the goal of raising \$163 million and thus guaranteeing an annual interest income of about \$6 million for the conservation of barracks, gas chambers, and other artifacts and material.

To date, nearly 20 countries have announced support for the effort, bringing the total pledges to more than \$122 million. Germany alone pledged about \$82 million. Israel was the latest country to pledge funds, with a \$1 million contribution.

"It seems that the future of Auschwitz with regard to preservation is mostly secured," said Tomasz Kunciewicz, director of the Auschwitz Jewish Center, an educational institution in the town of *Oswiecim*, where Auschwitz is located.

"However, regarding the more 'forgotten' death camps, such as *Sobibor*, the situation seems to be acute and there should be similar international efforts made regarding fundraising as in the case of Auschwitz."

HOLOCAUST-ERA PROPERTY DATABASE SETS MARK

A database of Holocaust-era property records has become the largest publicly available, single-source database of lost Jewish property assets from that era.

Project HEART — Holocaust Era Asset Restitution Taskforce, an initiative of the Jewish Agency for Israel in cooperation with the government of Israel, announced that the database hit the 1.5 million mark in the number of available records.

The online database was unveiled May 1 with 500,000 records. The records have been made available to help Jewish families identify personal property confiscated by the Nazis and to help victims seek restitution, according to the project.

The records include property addresses, lists of homeowners, professions, lists of known confiscated properties, business directories, insurance policies, and other archival information.

"This is the first worldwide list of property confiscated, looted, or forcibly sold during the Holocaust era to be made available to survivors and their heirs," Anya Verkhovskaya, HEART project director, said, adding that "the response to the database has been overwhelming, with approximately 100,000 hits happening each week."

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Martyrdom & Resistance

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