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AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR YAD VASHEM HOLDS ITS MOST SUCCESSFUL TRIBUTE DINNER IN THIRTY-SIX YEARS

On Sunday, November 12, 2017, the American Society for Yad Vashem (ASYV) gathered at the Pierre Hotel in New York City for its Annual Tribute Dinner, honoring Robert H. and Amy A. Book, Abbi Halpern and Barry Levine. With over 600 attendees, this year's Tribute Dinner raised a record-setting $8.5 million, including significant support directed toward Yad Vashem's unique educational programs with the Israel Defense Forces.

The theme for the evening was "Carry the Torch," and Dr. Ron Meier, American Society for Yad Vashem executive director, remarked, "We are thrilled to honor Bob, Amy, Abbi and Barry, who exemplify our theme of Carry the Torch as distinguished leaders of the second and third generations, respectively. The extraordinary outpouring of attendance and support for our exceptional honorees this evening is a true testament to the esteem in which they are held by family, friends and those whose lives they have touched. We are grateful to our honorees and to all who are involved for advancing Yad Vashem's sacred mission of Holocaust remembrance and education."

Rita Levy and Mark Moskowitz served as Tribute Dinner co-chairs, supported by Dinner Chair Emerita Marilyn Rubenstein, and honorary Dinner chairs Neil W. Book, Scott M. Book, and Douglas B. Book.

Following the Motzi, led by ASYV Treasurer Marvin Zborowski along with his sons Mark and Ziggi Zborowski, Master of Ceremonies Tony Orlando kicked off the evening with stories of his own connection to and support for Israel. He then introduced Leonard Wilf, chairman of the American and International Societies for Yad Vashem, who provided greetings and recognized all esteemed Holocaust survivors in the room. Lenny also introduced special guests, including Patrons of the Mount of Remembrance Sheldon and Miriam Adelson; Ambassador Dore Gold, from the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs; Malcolm Hoenlein, from the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations; Rabbi Marvin Hier of the Simon Wiesenthal Center; and senior Yad Vashem colleagues Dorit Novak, Shaya Ben Yehuda and Michael Fisher.

During his greetings, Lenny announced the creation of the Eli Zborowski Legacy Circle, to recognize individuals and families who have made Yad Vashem a part of their estate plans.

2017 Tribute Dinner honorees: Robert & Amy Book, Abbi Halpern, Barry Levine.

Following Lenny's remarks, Mark Moskowitz spoke passionately and personally about his experience on the 2016 Yad Vashem Leadership Mission and invited everyone to join him on the 2018 Yad Vashem Generation to Generation Mission to Vienna and Israel, July 2–9, 2018. In speaking about the 2016 mission, Mark highlighted the tremendous impact the presence of young leaders had on the mission experience. "It was extraordinary to witness the spark that was ignited in our young leaders — sparks of Jewish identity and a strengthened connection to Israel and their Jewish heritage," Mark noted. "The transformation of these young leaders left an indelible mark on all of us who shared their experience."

The event then turned its focus toward the esteemed honorees. Yad Vashem Leadership Award recipients Bob and Amy Book were introduced by close friend and transformational philanthropist Jay Schottenstein, who spoke about their exceptional leadership on behalf of Yad Vashem. Bob and Amy dedicated the Northern Garden of the International School for Holocaust Studies at Yad Vashem in honor of their son Douglas and in memory of Sam Halpern, *z"l*.

Caroline Arfa Massel, ASYV Board member, introduced Young Leadership Award recipients Abbi Halpern and Barry Levine. Abbi and Barry were presented with the Yad Vashem Young Leadership Award in recognition of their extraordinary service as co-chairs of ASYV's Young Leadership Associates. Abbi and Barry, both members of the third generation, have dedicated themselves to preserving the legacy of their grandparents and all Holocaust survivors and victims and to ensuring that other young leaders will join them in advancing Yad Vashem's sacred mission.

All of the honorees proudly and enthusiastically expressed their gratitude to the ASYV family and inspired all who were in attendance with their extraordinary vision, leadership and commitment for Yad Vashem.

Following the award ceremonies, David Halpern, ASYV treasurer, provided a moving "In Memoriam" tribute to the Holocaust survivors who had been lost, highlighting those from the ASYV community who had recently passed. He concluded his touching remarks with a moment of silence.

The evening culminated with a fundraising appeal led by entertainment industry icon and international philanthropist Haim Saban, who is a leader in his commitment to a strong relationship between the United States and Israel. Mr. Saban spoke passionately about Yad Vashem's partnership with the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) to make the study of the Holocaust an integral part of its edu-

(Continued on page 2)

IN THIS ISSUE

AFTER NAZIS KILLED HER FAMILY, THIS WOMAN JOINED THE PARTISANS TO FIGHT BACK

BY JOSEFIN DOLSTEN, THE TIMES OF ISRAEL

Nazis came for Rose Holm's family in the afternoon. By the evening, the 16-year-old was lying among corpses in the underground bunker where she and her family had been hiding.

"I was between those dead ones, and I didn't know if I'm alive or I'm dead," Holm, now 92, recalled.

Among those shot and killed were Holm's parents, her brother and one of her sisters, as well as some 85 other Jews hiding in the bunker outside *Parczew*, a town in the eastern part of Poland. Only one family member other than Holm survived: a sister who had left the bunker with her husband and young daughter before the Nazis came.

That unimaginable incident would go on to motivate Holm to fight back against the Nazis.

Rose Holm at her apartment, holding a photo of her late husband, Joe, October 31, 2017.

A few months later, she met a childhood friend who recruited her to join a group of Jewish partisans. Members of the fighting unit, which was under the command of Chiel Grynszpan, lived in the forest by day and fought the Nazis at night.

"I was thinking 'I have to take revenge, whatever's going to be, I don't care,'" Holm told JTA at her New York Upper East Side apartment. "I never [used to] think I'm going to be alive, and that's the way I survived with the partisans."

Today, Holm is elegantly dressed and soft-spoken. She wears a pearl necklace and offers home-baked cookies.

As a partisan, it was a whole different story, she said.

"I was like a wild one," she said. "I didn't know what I was doing. Whatever I'd been told, that's what I was doing."

Holm is among a shrinking group of living partisans.

"Each year there are fewer Jewish partisans who are able to share their experiences," Sheri Pearl Rosenblum, director of development and outreach for the Jewish Partisan Educational Foundation, told JTA in an email.

On its website, the group features the testimonies of Jewish partisans, including Holm and her late husband, Joe. It collected testimonies from 51 Jewish partisans from 2002 to 2015; only 16 are still alive.

Holm was one of just five women in her unit, which started with 25 people but grew to around 250 by the end of World War II. Partisan fighter units were reluctant to have women and children as members, but the friend who recruited her — her future husband — told the other fighters that the two were a package deal.

As part of the unit, Holm and the other women carried supplies and helped detonate hand grenades. The group focused on destroying bridges and roads that Nazis were using.

"A train used to come, so we used to throw the hand grenades," she recounted. "The hand grenades were very scary because if you pulled the ring [incorrectly], it could kill you."

Partisans would sleep in the forest with little to no protection from the elements.

"The first winter was a very, very bad winter. We used to sleep in the woods under the snow," Holm said.

A still from the Warsaw ghetto uprising, in which Jewish resistance fighters held the Nazis at bay for nearly a month in April and May of 1943.

They would make do with whatever food they got from non-Jewish Poles, who had been threatened that they would be killed if they did not aid the fighters.

"For survival you do everything, you don't think you're a human being," she said.

Sometimes the partisans would get a pig to grill in the forest.

"The first time was very hard, but when you're hungry you don't ask questions," Holm, whose religious family had observed Jewish dietary laws, said of eating pork.

Many times she came close to dying. In one incident, Holm entered the house of a non-Jewish Pole to get food and supplies. A German soldier discovered her and she ran, holding on to a sweater the Pole had given her. Later she found bullet holes dotting the side of the sweater, where the soldier had shot at her and narrowly missed.

During her time as a partisan, Holm didn't think about life after the war.

"I didn't think I was going to be alive," she said.

She became close with the friend who recruited her, and the two went on to marry shortly after the war, surrounded by the friends they made as partisans. In 1945, the couple moved to a displaced persons camp in Germany before leaving in 1949 for New York, where she found a job in a dressmaking factory and he in a cardboard box factory.

Joe Holm later opened his own butcher shop before the couple founded a factory producing women's sweaters about 10 years after moving to the United States. They had two children.

Joe died in 2009. Today, Holm lives in their home surrounded by photos of her husband, children, four grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

Holm once would not speak about their wartime experiences; talking about them makes her sad. In 2013, however, she told her story in a video for the Jewish Partisan Educational Foundation. The group also honored Holm and her husband at galas in 2010 and 2011.

There's also another emotion that comes with telling her story: incredulousness that she went through what she did and survived.

"My whole life, I'm just laying sometimes in bed and thinking, 'Is this true?'" she said. "I was thinking that I was reading [the story in] a book, that it's not from my life."

ITALIAN DOCTORS FOOLED NAZIS BY INVENTING THIS FAKE DISEASE

In 1943, a team of ingenious Italian doctors invented a deadly, contagious virus called Syndrome K to protect Jews from annihilation. On October 16 of that year, as Nazis closed in to liquidate Rome's Jewish ghetto, many runaways hid in the 450-year-old Fatebenefratelli Hospital. There, anti-Fascist doctors, including Adriano Ossicini, Vittorio Sacerdoti and Giovanni Borromeo, created a gruesome, imaginary disease.

"Syndrome K was put on patient papers to indicate that the sick person wasn't sick at all, but Jewish" and in need of protection, Ossicini told Italian newspaper *La Stampa* last year. The "K" stood for Albert Kesselring and Herbert Kappler — two ruthless Nazi commanders.

The doctors instructed "patients" to cough very loudly and told Nazis that the disease was extremely dangerous, disfiguring and *molto contagioso*. Soldiers were so alarmed by the list of symptoms and incessant coughing that they left without inspecting the patients. It's estimated that a few dozen lives were saved by this brilliant scheme.

The doctors were later honored for their heroic actions, and Fatebenefratelli Hospital was declared a "House of Life" by the International Raoul Wallenberg Foundation.

AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR YAD VASHEM HOLDS ITS MOST SUCCESSFUL TRIBUTE DINNER...

(Continued from page 1)

cational training for 120,000 soldiers each year, highlighting activities which include day seminars at Yad Vashem for 90,000 soldiers a year, programs at the newly established IDF training base in the Negev, and special programming for the chief of staff and the IDF high command. Mr. Saban's compelling remarks generated an outpouring of support for Yad Vashem's programs with the IDF. ASYV Young Leaders, a record number of whom attended the dinner, circulated around the ballroom to collect pledge cards from donors. The Young Leaders all wore custom-designed sweatshirts with the ASYV, Yad Vashem and IDF logos, which all guests received at the end of the evening.

In closing, MC Tony Orlando remarked, "We will never forget the six million who perished. As we carry the torch and pass on the lessons from the darkness of the *Shoah*, the brightest of lights lies right here within each of us."

The American Society for Yad Vashem is proud to thank all of its friends and supporters for carrying the torch for Yad Vashem and helping to make the 2017 Tribute Dinner by far the most successful one in ASYV's 36-year history.

YAD VASHEM IDENTIFIES 225,000 HUNGARIAN HOLOCAUST VICTIMS

BY AMANDA BORSCHEL-DAN, THE TIMES OF ISRAEL

Born in Budapest in 1937, Chayim Herzl remembers being taken by his mother Eugenia to visit his father Reuven Salgo at a labor camp outside the city in 1943.

"My hand was small, and I was able to pass some food to him through the fence. That was the last time I saw him," said Herzl.

He lost his mother in early 1945 when men from Hungary's Arrow Cross took her from their safe house outside the ghetto, organized by diplomat Raoul Wallenberg, while he hid under the bed.

Having lost his father at age six and his mother at eight, Herzl has only fleeting memories of his parents. Now, thanks to a comprehensive decade-long project to collect names of Hungarian Holocaust victims, completed in a collaboration with Israel's Holocaust memorial museum Yad Vashem and funded by the Fondation pour la Mémoire de la Shoah, Herzl has regained something he calls "indescribably priceless" — information.

Hungarian Jews were marched down Wesselenyi Street in the heart of Budapest's Jewish quarter, on their way to be deported to Auschwitz.

Through the project, Herzl learned that his father died just days before the end of the war in a POW death march, after having been forced into a labor corps in the Hungarian army fighting on the Eastern front. Beyond that, he now has a document with his father's signature. The signature, his father's orthographic fingerprint, is the only piece of his father's writing Herzl owns.

"Through the efforts of Yad Vashem's names collection project in Hungary, I was finally able to find a sense of closure in knowing what happened to my father. Finding a document containing his signature is evidence to the world that my father lived and a testimony to the tragic fate that befell him and so many Hungarian Jews," said Herzl.

"The job is not yet complete: My mother, from the day she was taken from me, has vanished from the face of the earth and remains among the undocumented. I know that Yad Vashem is committed to leaving no stone unturned in the effort to identify as many Holocaust victims as possible," Herzl told *The Times of Israel*.

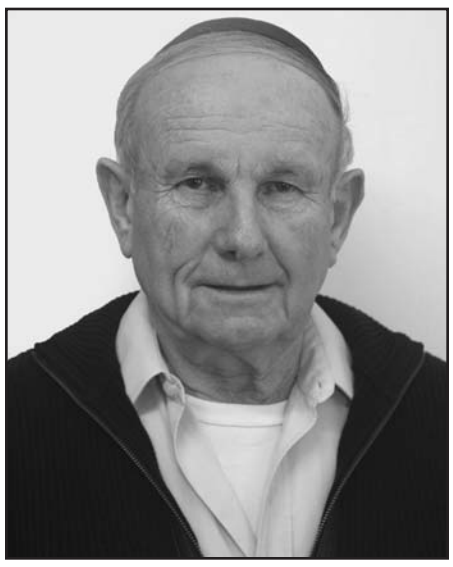
Ten years ago, approximately 40 percent of Hungarian victims were identified after the advances made by Holocaust historian and Holocaust survivor Serge Klarsfeld. Klarsfeld in the 1980s launched the Nevek Project, gathering names from lists of prisoners of forced labor and concentration camps during World War II. Because of funding and bureaucratic issues, he abandoned his project.

Building on Klarsfeld's Nevek Project, Yad Vashem–trained historians have added some 225,000 victims' names over the past 10 years of intensive research. This major project was funded by the Fondation pour la Mémoire de la Shoah and supported by the late French politician and Holocaust survivor Simone Veil, who served as its first president. Recently, Yad Vashem hosted an event that included a special tribute to Veil.

"Simone Veil saw special importance in the collection of names of Hungarian Jews. She witnessed firsthand the arrival and extermination of Hungary's Jews at Auschwitz-Birkenau. It was important to her that their identities be memorialized, and she therefore decided to support this important initiative," said Yad Vashem Chairman Avner Shalev.

But the scope of Yad Vashem's names collection project goes well beyond identifying Jewish Hungarian victims. It is, to date, the largest project Yad Vashem has undertaken and represents a holistic approach to collecting information and documents that far surpasses previous efforts.

"This is the most successful project that Yad Vashem's Archives has undertaken. The holistic approach of the project has become a model for other endeavors we are currently promoting in the name-gathering process, in particular the Polish Names Project, and we hope that with the continued support of the French Foundation we will achieve similar results to those we obtained in collecting names of Jewish victims from Hungary," said Shalev.



Chayim Herzl (Salgo) was born in 1937 in Budapest, Hungary, the only child of Reuven and Eugenia Salgo.

In addition to Poland, which has signed a cooperation agreement with the institution, Yad Vashem is implementing the information-gathering model it founded in Hungary in its names recovery efforts in the territories of the former Soviet Union and the Balkan States.

Dr. Alexander Avram, director of the Hall of Names and the Central Database of Shoah Victims' Names, explained the project's procedures and resonance.

Unlike the initial goal of the Nevek Project of attaching a name to every victim, the Yad Vashem project "has revealed part of their individual stories, and in some cases, for the first time was able to connect a rare photograph with the name of the faceless murdered," said Avram.

The intensive work began in 2007 and was conducted under the leadership of three Yad Vashem historians who trained a staff of some 20 researchers who were on the ground in Greater Hungary: Hungary, Slovakia, parts of Romania, Serbia and Transylvania. Through special diplomatic agreements forged with the Hungarian government in 2005 and 2006, said Avram, the researchers were granted full access to all state archives for this specific project.

"It is not easy in these countries to find documentation about the Holocaust and Jews," said Avram. "They are no key words for catalogues; there is no archive in Europe that has a topic 'Holocaust' and catalogues for this or for Jews."

The team pored over archive material from all sorts of offices — including the Ministries of the Interior, Defense and Agriculture — "page by page, to map those documents important to Jews and the Holocaust," he said. The important pages were scanned and sent to Yad Vashem, which is in the process of uploading the pages into its database.

The team, trained by Yad Vashem, must be fluent in Hungarian, and have skills in German, Romanian, Serbian and other languages of the region to decipher the handwriting of the pre–World War II documents.

In December, the intensive research collection is finishing, but the team will continue to decipher documents to add more names and stories into the database.

"In our database, we have 4,700,000 names of Jews murdered in the Holocaust. That means that more than 1 million are not identified," said Avram. Whereas in central and western Europe some 95% of the victims documented as Jews were arrested, sent to transit camps, and then sent on to death camps, in eastern Europe there is less of a paper trail.

Although he said the teams of researchers at Yad Vashem will continue to document victims, it is important to note, said Avram, that the teams have "exhausted most of the easy sources, and now look for names scattered in less-explored sources where they will sometimes read a book of 500 pages to reach four or five names."

Eugenia (Geni) Salgo, née Herzl, mother of Chayim Herzl (Salgo).

"We are focusing our efforts in the countries where we have a more significant gap in names of victims," said Avram. In Hungary, for example, although there were organized transports, "nobody cared to register the names of the Jews on the transports," he said.

As in the case for Herzl, who discovered his father's fate through the Yad Vashem project, Avram hopes to find more than mere monikers for the remainder of the victims.

"We can sometimes build a personal story. Previous attempts were to document names of victims; in this project, we are trying to go further than that," he said, and transform the name into a person.

COMBAT AND GENOCIDE ON THE EASTERN FRONT

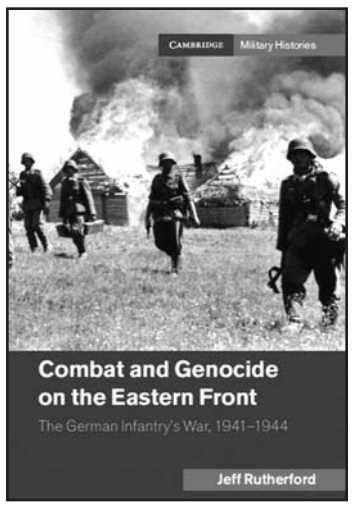
Combat and Genocide on the Eastern Front: The German Infantry's War, 1941–1944.

By Jeff Rutherford. Cambridge University Press: New York, 2014. 423 pp. $35.20 softcover.

REVIEWED BY DR. DIANE CYPKIN

The world will always wonder just how Germany, one of the most cultured nations of its time, would also be the birthplace of so many individuals who, during World War II, found genocide acceptable! Researchers have tried to explain this enigma from their varied vantage points: psychological, sociological, historical. Military historian Jeff Rutherford, in his exceptionally well-researched work, *Combat and Genocide on the Eastern Front: The German Infantry's War, 1941–1944*, gives us his thought-provoking view of just how this happened.

First off, Rutherford points out that Christian Gerlach, a researcher who has written a good deal about violent societies, found that the Nazi society itself was violent. And this violence was not merely a result of "government policies but was rather an expression of the German population's attitudes and values." All the participants were sure they were bringing "order" back to a Germany that was being destroyed. Thus the enemies, "communists, 'asocials' and later a multitude of groups including the mentally and physically disabled, homosexuals, and Jews," were targeted. In order to get as many Germans as possible to feel right about this violence and also "conform," Nazi governing officials, we read, utilized all propaganda means available to create a "Nazi conscience." The hoped-for result: "A truly moral and ethical German living in the Nazi racial state would intuitively understand the necessity and righteousness of eliminating Jews and other undesirables from the Nazi body politic."



The *Wehrmacht* soldiers of Army Group North, and specifically the 121st, 123rd and 126th Infantry Divisions specifically examined here, were, of course, representatives of that society. Called up on the October 10, 1940, they were three of the ten divisions that would invade the Soviet Union in June 1941. Before the actual invasion took place, there followed more "ideological education," which basically made sure the soldiers realized just what they were fighting for. The recommended text for instruction on "the German Volk" was Hitler's *Mein Kampf*. Indeed, these men were to be "racial warriors."

Still, it was "the *Wehrmacht's* adherence to a doctrine of military necessity," or, in simpler terms, the need to do "whatever was necessary to preserve its combat efficiency and emerge victorious on the battlefield," which, according to Rutherford, was the driving force and best explains the acts of the German army in the Soviet Union. From Rutherford we learn this hearkens back to the history of the "Prusso-German Army [which] traditionally [since 1870] subscribed to a radicalized notion of military necessity in which the institution focused on defeating the opposing army without regard for normal ethical or moral considerations." How did the aforementioned ideological training fit into all this? It made murder and all manner of murderous acts that much easier!

The 121st, 123rd and 126th Infantry Divisions, subordinated to the Sixteenth Army, were "charged with destroying the Red Army in the Baltic States, capturing the region's vital port facilities, maintaining contact with the northern wing of Army Group Center, and most importantly seizing *Leningrad*." In their initial advance, there were the usual battles, sometimes degenerating into pure savagery. Nonetheless, it was their defensive battles leading to the long-term occupation of parts of the above areas — unexpected, since Germany thought it would defeat the Soviet Union in just weeks — that appear, sooner or later, to have brought out the very worst in these divisions. Because the divisions were ill equipped for the winter of 1941–42 both in foodstuffs and clothing, countless Russian civilians were robbed of everything and left to die of starvation or the bitter cold. Partisans were hanged and left to "dangle" to make the populace realize the punishment for any act deemed anti-Nazi. Worse still was the collective punishment doled out when one person or no person was to be found guilty of some "crime"!

How did the German soldier generally feel about this? It was part of war . . . and the war was to be won at all cost. These Russian civilians, who German soldiers had also been taught were dirty fighters and simply animals, meant absolutely nothing and were "mere obstacles to final victory." Germany and what was good for Germany mattered!

Jews, meanwhile, meant less than nothing. To the Nazis they were the enemy! Sometimes the Nazis could fully depend on their collaborators when it came to the Jews. Rutherford particularly points out how this was the case in some Baltic countries. In fact, one German soldier watching Lithuanian gangs would write in his diary how stunned he was by the "heinous" acts he witnessed perpetrated on Jews. Otherwise, these *Wehrmacht* troops, working with *Einsatzgruppen* (murder squads) that followed closely behind them, thought nothing of helping them.

Needless to say, *Combat and Genocide on the Eastern Front* is an absorbing work!

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

SURVIVOR AV PERLMUTTER: "ANGEL" WATCHED OVER HIM

BY JANE ULMAN, JEWISH JOURNAL

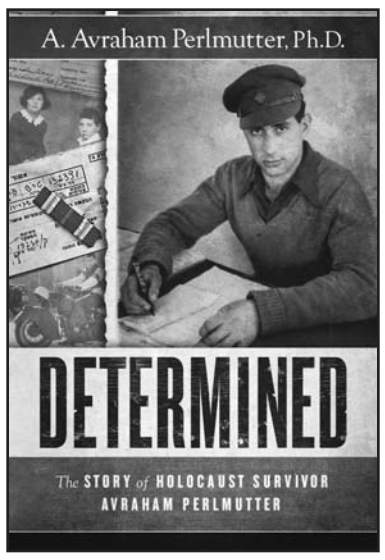
"Where's Adolf Perlmutter?" one of the German soldiers shouted, bursting into Suzanne Cohen's house in Amsterdam in March 1943, rushing past a 15-year-old boy living there who was known as Avraham or Av.

Upstairs they found one of the Cohens' sons, in his early 20s, and ordered, "You come with us." On their way out, they grabbed Av, realizing he was the one they were looking for — his official name was Adolf — and led both young men into a police van. They headed to the Jewish Theatre, which had been converted to a detention center from where Jews were deported to camps.

"The moment I came in, I was thinking how to get out," Av recalled. He noticed that pairs of German soldiers at the exits changed shifts regularly. At one door in particular, they actually abandoned their post to fetch their replacements. He mentioned this to the Cohen son, who deemed it too dangerous to try escaping. "They'll shoot us," he told Av.

Av was undeterred. In the middle of the night, when the exit was left unguarded, he calmly walked out and ran.

Avraham Abba Perlmutter, who was given the name Adolf by the Austrian government, was born on August 28, 1927, in Vienna, to Chaim and Malka Perlmutter. His sister, Thea, was three years older.



Chaim owned a textile store, providing the family with a middle-class, very observant life. Every morning, Av prayed with his father in the small *shul* located on their apartment building's first floor.

Av was a self-described "wild child." At 6, he was asked not to return for a second year in Jewish school because of his misbehavior. He attended public school and played soccer with neighborhood boys.

Av's life changed on March 12, 1938, with the annexation of Austria by Nazi Germany. Two days later, Av followed the crowds to one of Vienna's main streets, where he witnessed Hitler riding by in an open car.

Av's non-Jewish friends began beating him, and he no longer attended school. The following fall he enrolled in a Jewish middle school.

On the night of November 9, 1938, *Kristallnacht* began. The Perlmutter family's store was plundered.

Two months later, Av's parents arranged for him and Thea to leave for the Netherlands on a *Kindertransport* — a rescue operation for children — to join Av's aunt and uncle, Anni and Aby Bachrach. "It was like an adventure," Av said.

They arrived in *Wijk aan Zee*, a village on the North Sea coast, where they spent two months at a Catholic campsite run by nuns before being transferred to a series of refugee camps. Then, in December 1939, after a bout with diphtheria, Av was released to Sientje and Joop Van Straten, relatives by marriage, who lived in *The Hague*, 40 miles south.

Thea, meanwhile, was transferred to a Youth Aliyah camp east of Amsterdam in *Loosdrecht*, with a plan to join her parents in Palestine, where they had immigrated illegally in June 1939.

Germany invaded the Netherlands on May 10, 1940. And while Av continued attending school, playing soccer and celebrating his bar mitzvah, anti-Jewish measures were enacted gradually.

On October 7, 1942, after non-Dutch Jews were ordered to move from coastal areas, Av was sent to Amsterdam, where he was placed with Suzanne Cohen and her adult sons, within two miles of where Anne Frank and her family were already hiding. His relatives in *The Hague* were all murdered later in Auschwitz and *Sobibor*.

After Av escaped from the Jewish Theatre in March 1943, he ran back to the Cohens' house, where he hid in the backyard.

The next morning, Ellie Waterman, a member of an underground organization founded by Dutch Christian Joop Westerweel, coincidentally showed up. "It was a pure miracle," Av said. Thea had asked the group to

(Continued on page 6)

BEHIND THE PAGES OF THE WORLD'S MOST FAMOUS DIARY

BY NADINE WOJAKOVSKI, THE JERUSALEM POST

It's been 70 years since The Diary of Anne Frank *was shared with the world. The stepdaughter of Anne's father Otto Frank tells* Metro *the inside story of its publication.*

Pride of place on Eva Schloss's bookcase in her London home is *The Diary of a Young Girl*, also known as *The Diary of Anne Frank*.

Schloss's fascination with this iconic book is not merely due to the fact that she and Anne met as child immigrants in wartime Amsterdam, but rather because of a much closer connection that has dominated her life for over 70 years. After the war, Anne's father Otto married Eva's mother Fritzi. Had she lived, Anne would have been Eva's stepsister.

When the Russians liberated Auschwitz in January 1945, Eva and her mother ended up on the same homeward-bound transport as Otto Frank. Together, they made the long arduous trip to *Odessa*, returning to Amsterdam in June 1945, after the war. Otto and Fritzi became friends and eventually married in 1953.

Back in 1940, the 11-year-old Eva and Anne had already met. They were part of a group of friends who cycled, skipped and gossiped about boys in Amsterdam's Merwedeplein Square after school. But for Eva, years later, the diary was a revelation.

"I was the same age as her and I was quite amazed how Anne had a much more mature view of the world," Schloss, who has just celebrated her 88th birthday, recalls.

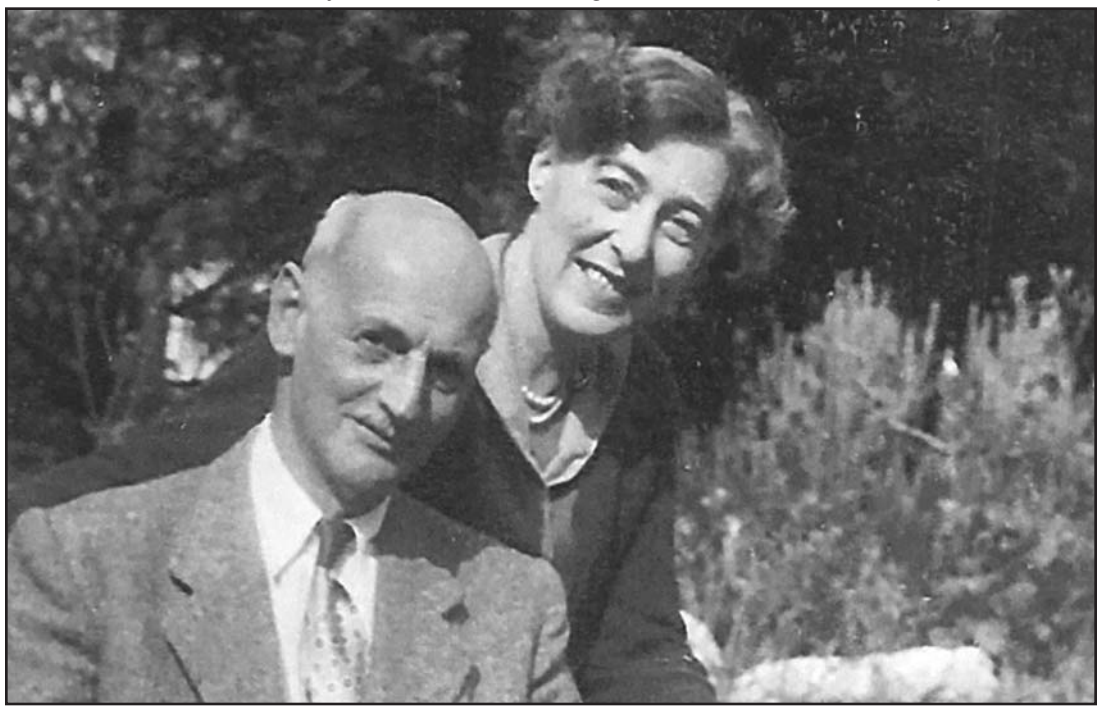
"She wrote about feminism and politics, and she said you don't have to wait till tomorrow to do good deeds and help people. She was really quite amazing for that age."

Eva — who was just 16 when the war ended and whose father Erich and brother Heinz Geiringer were sent to Auschwitz, but later perished in *Mauthausen* concentration camp — witnessed the story behind the publication of the diary. Otto had received it in the summer of 1945 from Miep Gies, his secretary before the war (at Opekta, his trading company in gelling agents for making jam) and one of the people who had hidden the family in the annex at Prinsengracht 263. It was Otto who had picked out the checked-cover diary as a gift for Anne's 13th birthday, in June 1942, just weeks before the family was forced into hiding. On handing over the diary to him after the war, Miep told Otto: "This is your daughter Anne's legacy."

"It took Otto three weeks to read it, reading just a bit each day, as it was so painful," says Schloss. "He was so proud of Anne's thoughts and her writings that he showed it to everyone."

Many people wonder at the polished style and expression of Anne's diary. While the Franks were in hiding, the Dutch education minister, who was in exile in London, appealed on British radio for people to keep war diaries. It was at this point that Anne started to rewrite the diary with the intention of publishing it after the war.

It was Jewish historian Annie Romein, notes Schloss, who told Otto that it was his duty to publish it. But finding a publisher was not easy — until a 1946 article by Romein's husband, Jan, helped put the diary in the spotlight. In his front-page piece in Dutch newspaper *Het Parool*, he wrote: "To me, however, this apparently inconsequential diary by a child... stammered out in a child's voice, embodies all the hideousness of fascism, more so than all the evidence at *Nuremberg* [trials] put together."



Otto and Fritzi Frank in London, 1957.

Eventually Dutch publisher Contact produced the book *Anne Frank, Het Achterhuis*, translated as *The Secret Annex*, in 1947.

Eva's mother Fritzi became involved in helping Otto get the first edition published. "They came together in the evenings often and talked about publishing it. Otto worked conscientiously, editing what should stay in." Otto left out intimate thoughts, like Anne's flirtations with Pieter and her negative thoughts about her mother.

In his own diary entry for June 25, 1947, Otto marked one word: "book." "How proud Anne would have been if she had experienced it," he later said.

But, recounts Schloss, the first edition wasn't particularly successful because people weren't in the mood to read more terrible things after all the suffering that had been endured in the war. "Moreover, no one thought what a little girl writes about day to day would interest anyone."

Undeterred, Otto got in touch with various foreign publishers, who had it translated. Then he tried America, but without much success, until publisher Doubleday decided to take a chance on it. It published the first English version, titled *The Diary of a Young Girl*. This was the turning point.

It was Jewish author and war correspondent Meyer Levin's rapturous review in *The New York Times* on June 15, 1952, that changed everything. His review ended: "'I want to go on living even after my death,' Anne wrote. 'I am grateful to God for giving me this gift, this possibility of developing myself and of writing, of expressing all that is in me.' Hers was probably one of the bodies seen in the mass grave at *Bergen-Belsen*, for in August 1944, the knock came on that hidden door in Amsterdam. After the people had been taken away, Dutch friends found Anne's diary in the debris, and saved it.

"There is anguish in the thought of how much creative power, how much sheer beauty of living, was cut off through genocide. But through her diary Anne goes on living. From Holland to France, to Italy, Spain. The Germans too have published her book. And now she comes to America. Surely she will be widely loved, for this wise and wonderful young girl brings back a poignant delight in the infinite human spirit."

The review made the diary an overnight bestseller, which "thrilled and amazed" Otto.

Otto gave Levin the opportunity to adapt the diary into a play, but he was unsuccessful in finding a producer to take on his work. In the end Otto and Levin were embroiled in a bitter dispute, over which Levin took Otto to court. Levin later wrote a book called *The Obsession*, where he described his feelings of being cheated out of his rightful due. Instead, the playwright couple Frances Goodrich and Albert Hackett obtained the rights to the play, and it premiered on Broadway in 1955. The play was a hit, and led to the first Anne Frank film, starring Millie Perkins, in 1959.

Otto married Fritzi in 1953 and they moved to *Basel*, Switzerland. In 1963 he set up a charitable trust; the royalties from the diary, the play and any other related source was, said Otto, "Anne's money." The proceeds have been distributed to many charities.

Otto bequeathed the unedited version of the diary to the Dutch government. After his death in 1980 the government decided to publish the diary in its entirety. It became available to all publishers. To date the diary has been translated into over 60 languages, with more than 30 million copies sold.

Schloss retains special memories of her stepfather, and the "grandfather" Otto became to her three daughters. His sensitivity — not wanting to marry Fritzi until Eva was married — coupled with his warmth and kindness, was a constant source of consolation and reassurance after the trauma of the war years.

Even when it was decided that Eva should become a photographer, after her school years, it was Otto who gave her his Leica camera. "I think Otto was an exceptional, wonderful, thoughtful and intelligent man. He was really an amazing person," reminisces Schloss.

"He was a wonderful grandfather to our three daughters. He often talked to them about Anne."

She believes the maturity of Anne's writing comes down to the education she received at home. "Otto read all of Dickens's books with her and he probably discussed many things with her, from which she formed her own judgment. It shows you how important it is not to leave all education to the teacher. A parent is very important in the education of the children."

Similarly, the message of education is one Schloss also shares with her audiences today as she travels the world telling her own story of survival in Auschwitz, as recounted in her three published books, *Eva's Story*, *After Auschwitz* and *The Promise*.

Otto never expected his daughter's diary to play such an important part in postwar education. It has become one of the great literary documents of the war, to be ranked alongside masterpieces like Primo Levi's *If This Is a Man*.

The diary ended up dominating Otto's life. "He was completely consumed, not necessarily by her, but by her thoughts and the message he could use." He traveled extensively to the US, Israel and Germany, dedicating libraries and schools in the name of his daughter.

"He spoke to young people about Anne and her message," concludes Schloss, "together with his own message, which was about peace and tolerance."

SURVIVOR AV PERLMUTTER: "ANGEL" WATCHED OVER HIM

(Continued from page 4)
find a hiding place for him.

"I was very Orthodox Jewish and I strongly believed that an angel of God was guarding me," Av said.

Waterman told Av to meet him at the train station. After a series of stops and train changes, Av exited at what he believes was *Zutphen*, a city in the east-central Netherlands, where Waterman led him to the house of an elderly couple.

After dinner, as German soldiers approached, Av hid in a bedroom closet. As one of the soldiers approached, Av began hiccupping out of fear and nearly choked, smothering the noise. The German opened the closet door and slammed it, cursing. "Fortunately for me, he didn't look very much," Av said.

Av Perlmutter. Photo by Carla Acevedo-Blumenkrantz.

The couple then hid him in a backyard coal bin. But after the Germans returned a second time, Av left, not wanting to endanger the couple.

Despite the late hour, Av knocked on a nearby door. "I'm Jewish. Can you hide me?" he asked the young man who opened it. The man, who had a wife and small child, concealed him behind some boxes in the basement.

"These Christians who were hiding Jews were extremely courageous, because if they were caught hiding a Jew, they were treated like a Jew," Av said.

The next morning, Waterman found Av and arranged for Dutch Christians in several cities to hide him. Then, sometime during the summer, Av was placed in a boarding house in *Rotterdam*, where two boys were staying, as well as a teacher, who taught Av English and French.

One day in September 1943, the boys heard the familiar pounding of German boots and quickly hid in a prearranged spot. After the Germans left, they split up, believing they would be safer.

Av wandered for about 20 minutes before a German soldier stopped him, asking for identification and summoning a police van. He placed Av in the partitioned back, guarded by two Dutch police officers. Thinking the policemen might be anti-Nazi, Av slid toward the rear doors of the van as the police officers talked. Av partially opened one door, and when the van slowed, he jumped out.

After running several blocks, he stopped a man on the street who took him home and contacted Joop Westerweel. An aide to Westerweel arranged for Av's last placement.

Av traveled to *Venlo*, in the southeastern Netherlands, where a pastor, Henricus Vullinghs, met him at the train station and transported him on the back of his bicycle five miles north to the home in *Grubbenvorst*, a town within three miles of the German border where Peter and Gertrude Beijers lived with three of their six adult children.

Forty-two of the village's 240 families, all Catholic, were hiding Jews. Pastor Vullinghs told his parishioners that they were assured a place in heaven if they saved a Jew.

As Av grew close to the Beijers family — he called the parents Mom and Pap — he began helping on the farm, becoming expert in growing asparagus.

After the Allies invaded Normandy in June 1944, they advanced toward Germany, and by September were approaching *Grubbenvorst*.

When several German soldiers moved into the Beijers' house, Av hid in the stable. Pap then built him a more secure hiding place, a concealed hole in the hill behind the barn. Av lay on his back all day, with red ants for companions, venturing out only in the evenings.

On November 22, 1944, the Allies liberated the village of *Sevenum*, about five miles west of *Grubbenvorst*, launching a heavy barrage eastward toward the Germans' defense line.

That night as Av joined the Beijers in their neighbors' basement, the Germans forced everyone out, planning to evacuate all town residents across the Maas River to Germany.

Afraid of entering Germany, Av remained in *Grubbenvorst*, hiding once again in the stable. With British artillery shells exploding ever closer, he left, reaching the street just as a shell landed on the stable, demolishing it. Again, Av said, "I knew at the time that the angel of God was with me."

As the pounding continued, Av crawled along toward the British line, feeling for mines. Suddenly someone shouted, "Halt," as Nazi soldiers jumped out from the roadside. "Where are you going?" one demanded. Av pointed to a nearby house. Just then the British began firing, and Av pushed himself free and ran, despite the mines and the bullets flying past him.

He reached a farmhouse where he found the entire Beijers family. The bridge over the river had been destroyed, thwarting the Germans' evacuation plans.

Two days later, Av persuaded one of the Beijers' sons to accompany him to *Sevenum*, now in Allied hands. They arrived on November 26, 1944, which Av considers his liberation date. "I felt fantastic," he said.

Wanting to help the British army, Av worked as an interpreter for a month as soldiers directed the locals in rebuilding the bridge. At Av's request, one soldier sent a letter to his parents in Palestine. In January, the Jewish Brigade came for Av, to reunite him with his parents. Av said goodbye to the Beijers.

Years later, he submitted their names and that of Pastor Vullinghs to Yad Vashem, which recognized them in 1994 as "Righteous Among the Nations." The Perlmutter and Beijers families have remained very close.

Av arrived in *Haifa* on July 16, 1945. Soon after his father picked him up, his aunt told him that his mother had died of an adverse penicillin reaction the previous January, two weeks before his letter arrived.

Weeks later, Av was living in Tel Aviv with his father and assisting in his small jam factory when they learned that Thea, who had been captured and sent to Auschwitz, had survived.

In 1947, Av joined the Haganah, the Jewish underground, but was badly injured in a motorcycle-truck collision. He was discharged as a wounded war veteran on November 8, 1949, and made his way to the United States.

He entered the Georgia Institute of Technology in Atlanta in 1951 to study aeronautical engineering, graduating in June 1954. After earning a master's degree at Princeton in 1956, he accepted a job at Kellett Aircraft Corporation in Philadelphia.

A year later, Av met Ruth Gitberg at a synagogue social. They married on August 31, 1958, and had four children. He later earned a doctorate in mechanical engineering from the University of Pennsylvania.

Av and two colleagues at Kellett formed their own company, Dynasciences, in 1961. When Dynasciences merged with Whitaker Corporation in 1969, Av moved his family to Los Angeles and worked in engineering and other ventures until he retired in 2015.

Av is now 90 and the grandfather of five. He wrote an autobiography, *Determined*, which was published in 2014, and a Dutch version, in collaboration with the Beijers family, was released in August 2017.

For 20 years, Av has been speaking about his experiences — at museums, schools and synagogues.

"I always like to tell my story in hopes that it helps others, especially children." he said. "I tell them that regardless of difficulties, don't give up."

GERMANS USE ALBUMS TO CLOSE THE PAGES OF NAZISM

BY ORIT ARFA,
THE JERUSALEM POST

At the weekly antique flea market in Berlin, Christoph Kreutzmueller, a Holocaust historian and curator for the new permanent exhibition of the Jewish Museum in Berlin, picked up a Nazi-era family album at random from a book stand, fascinated not by the black-and-white pictures that were there — but by those that weren't.

"They're all torn out," he said, pointing to a page consisting only of tear marks whose residue reveals the side of a tank and soldiers posing on a Mercedes. The "war" page?

The album, however, opens with a picture of paradise: a German couple with their nude toddlers are picnicking in a lush forest. As for the rest, most photos have been rearranged, out of order.

"There's the innocent reading that [the album owner] hated the war and didn't want to think of it anymore," Kreutzmueller said of the reason for the missing pictures. "The biased, 'mean' reading is that perhaps they showed murder. I think that he really didn't want to think of war anymore because the remnants that you see are not of fighting."

In another album from the same vendor (collected from an apartment liquidated upon the resident's passing), photos are neatly organized and labeled. They, too, open with "paradise" — a Nazi government-sponsored outing amid beautiful landscapes in May 1938. In October that same year, the month in which Germany began to deport its Polish Jews, the matriarch and patriarch celebrate their silver wedding anniversary. A few pages later, in 1940, the living room is newly adorned with a radio, the tool for Nazi propaganda nicknamed "*Goebbels Schnauze*" (Goebbels snout).

"There's another living room where you could see good old Adolf Hitler under the light bulb, so he's lit," Kreutzmueller said, noticing the tiny, mustached figure in the framed photograph on the wall.

Later, grooms appear in *Wehrmacht* uniforms at their respective weddings, and then from the war front. One son seemed to have sent a photograph from Russia in September 1941 — Kreutzmueller surmised that he had just been awarded the Iron Cross.

According to photo-historian Sandra Starke, who co-curated the 2009 traveling exhibit on *Wehrmacht* photo albums, "Focus on Strangers," the Nazi regime encouraged amateur photography, in part so Germans could record for posterity how nice life was under Hitler's reign.

"They supported the camera factories, made the prices low, made competitions, courses, training, how-to books," said Starke at her home in Berlin. She opened such how-to books, whose guidelines included: avoid levity while wearing a Nazi uniform; capture various angles of the perfect "Aryan" profile; do not include portraits with "racially inferior" friends. During wartime, the men usually took the cameras to the battlefields.

How family photos from the Nazi era are being maintained and kept today can give insight into how second-to fourth-generation Nazi-era Germans come to grips — or not — with possible family involvement in Hitler's murderous, tyrannical regime. These two flea market albums represent two approaches to the past: torn and "untouched."

An SS officer questions two Jewish resistance fighters in the Warsaw ghetto, 1943.

According to Michaela Buckel, project manager for March of Life, an organization that includes descendants of German *Wehrmacht* soldiers and Gestapo and SS members who seek personal reconciliation with Nazi victims and their descendants, most German families keep albums in their homes ignored. Among some of her friends, portraits of grandparents hang in the living rooms, sometimes in *Wehrmacht* uniform.

"What you normally won't find are family pictures in SS uniform," Buckel tells *The Jerusalem Report*. "In that case, it's more likely these photos are taken from the album, or the badges and insignia are blackened. Photo albums are rarely hidden. Often you just do not look at them."

Most German families, Buckel says, often tell stories of their own "victimhood" — air raids, fallen soldiers, prisoners of war.

"I'd say from experience that there is definitely a difference between how the national German government commemorates and memorializes the Holocaust and how individual families recognize the role their families played in the destruction/war," she says. "Today, most people in Germany would agree with the statement that the Nazis were criminals and the Holocaust a genocide without comparison. But they will not likely link that to their own families. Because you learn about the Holocaust in history with all its atrociousness, you can't link it to the great-grandfather whom you love and know as a kind man."

March of Life was founded by Pastor Jobst Bittner of TOS Ministries, which in American terms is a Christian Evangelical ministry, based in *Tübingen* in southern Germany — a city that once boasted a high concentration of avowed Nazi party members. Several years ago, Bittner encouraged his congregants to inquire into their families' history during the Nazi era. With the Holocaust generation dying out, most families must rely on family albums for clues if they did not receive first-hand accounts.

Until he heeded his pastor's call, Friedhelm Chmell, 40, felt indifference on obligatory visits to concentration camps.

"It never really touched my heart, so I never felt anything," Chmell, a hospital nurse, said via Skype from his home in *Tübingen*. "I felt a little bit sorry, but it was nothing personal."

As a young adult, Klaus Schock, 47, a March of Life member from a small village near *Tübingen*, never wanted to "touch" his family's role in the war years.

"In Germany, normally in school, you go into detail about Nazi times and the Nazi regime, and about the Third Reich," Schock said. "For me, it was like something that had nothing to do with my life. I was wondering why do we learn about this. It was a terrible time, so what? I wasn't really interested."

According to the oral history of Chmell's family, his maternal grandfather worked at an army desk job, literally. Two pictures of him in uniform were assembled as part of a family album arranged by his uncle: one of him writing a letter at a desk and another of him posing on the balcony at his *Antwerp* office.

"I always saw this picture with this office and everything seemed so peaceful," Chmell said. "We don't want to see behind all these nice stories and pictures they gave us. My whole family didn't ask further, 'What did he really do?'"

With the support of his wife, but not his siblings, Chmell became a sleuth. His investigation led him to *Antwerp*, Belgium, where, through Google Street View, he scoured balconies from the vantage point of the skyscraper in the photo. He eventually found the building where his grandfather posed and soon learned what it had housed.

"During World War II, it was the main headquarters of the Deutsche *Wehrmacht* in *Antwerp*, and then I searched for what the Deutsche *Wehrmacht* exactly did there."

His grandfather's department was responsible for summoning *Antwerp's* 20,000 Jews for deportation.

"When I found out this fact, it broke my heart," Chmell said, teary-eyed. "For the first time, I could see the truth about my family. I always thought there was nothing bad in my family, and maybe my family never killed a Jew, but he was one of the main people responsible in this office and he's responsible for 20,000 Jews. They went straight to Auschwitz."

Klaus Schock, a physicist, decided, on Bittner's call, to open the lids of boxes with albums, letters and even army medals that had been shelved in his grandparents' home.

At first, when he asked his parents about his paternal grandfather's service under the Nazi regime, they said, dismissively, that he had been a Nazi stormtrooper (the paramilitary wing of the Nazi party) for a brief period. Documents and pictures revealed the facts: his grandfather enlisted in the stormtroopers in 1932 and then renounced his Nazi party membership to become a professional soldier for the next 12 years.

His grandfather's album from France could be mistaken for that of a vacation: he took photographs of the Eiffel Tower and other French landmarks that suddenly became the Nazis' playground. But the war of annihilation and aggression was on full, organized display in the "Russia album."

Via Skype, Schock opened the album and showed neat, labeled titles of images of dead Russian soldiers — some in a ditch, some being hanged.

"I realized he must have seen a lot of things. Normally I'm a scientist and I'm more rational, but it shocked me."

The grandparents of Chmell and Schock are no longer living, but Schock recalls his encounters with his grandfather as a young boy.

"As long as I've known him, he just lived in the house nearby together with my grandma, and so when I had to decide to go to the military or to civil

(Continued on page 10)

PHOTO HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE ANNUAL TRIBUTE DINNER OF T

Seated: **Samantha Santiago, Doug Book, Sharon & Neil Book.** *Standing:* **Dorit Novak, director general, Yad Vashem; Ron Meier, executive director, American Society for Yad Vashem; Leonard Wilf, chairman, American Society for Yad Vashem; Robert H. Book & Amy A. Book, 2017 Tribute Dinner honorees; and Scott Book.**

Ron Meier, executive director of the ASYV; Edward Mosberg; Barry Levine, 2017 Tribute Dinner honoree; Abbi Halpern, 2017 Tribute Dinner honoree; David Halpern; Leonard Wilf, chairman of the ASYV; and Caroline Massel.

Robert H. Book, 2017 Tribute Dinner honoree; Mark Moskowitz, 2017 Tribute Dinner chair and Leonard Wilf, chairman of the American Society for Yad Vashem.

Cheryl Lifshitz, Marilyn & Barry Rubenstein, and Rita Levy.

The Karten, Toledano and Bookhamer families.

Haim Saban.

THE AMERICAN & INTERNATIONAL SOCIETIES FOR YAD VASHEM

Rose & Philip Friedman, Pinkas Lebovits, Dr. Herbert Dobrinsky, Judith Lebovits and Alexandra Lebovits.

Sheldon and Dr. Miriam Adelson.

Leonard Wilf, chairman of the American & International Societies for Yad Vashem, delivers his opening remarks, in which he pays tribute to the founding chairman Eli Zborowski, *z"l.*

Barry Levine, 2017 Tribute Dinner honoree; Adina Burian, 2018 Generation to Generation Mission chair and Mark Moskowitz, 2017 Tribute Dinner chair.

Leonard Wilf, Marvin Zborowski, Mark & Judy Zborowski.

;haron Halpern; Gary Koesten; Marcy Comerchero; Wendy Rosenblatt; Gladys Halpern, Neil Rosenblatt; Abbi Halpern, 2017 Tribute Dinner honoree; Jeremy Halpern; Brianna Halpern; Jasmin Halpern; Mindy & Alan Schall.

THE NETHERLANDS IS STILL HOARDING A COLLECTION OF ART LOOTED FROM JEWS BY NAZIS

BY AVRAHAM ROET, HAARETZ

Earlier this year, the city of *Deventer*, Netherlands, played host to an exhibition of works of art looted from Jews during the Holocaust. The show, held in the Bergkerk Cathedral in this town east of Amsterdam, featured 75 pieces, and was the initiative of two local art historians, Eva Kleeman and Daaf Loedeboer. The married couple were assisted in their efforts by Professor Rudi Ekkart, an art historian who for the past 20 years has headed the Origins Unknown Agency, which deals with looted art in Netherlands.

Much of the art confiscated from Jews during the German occupation can still be found in warehouses belonging to the Dutch state, or in museums around the country. Because the Dutch authorities have been remiss in preserving archives and documentation, however, it's not possible to make an accurate appraisal of the value of the plundered art, although unofficial estimates place it at between 150 million and 600 million Dutch guilders in 1940 terms, or between 3 billion and 12 billion euros.

Though the war ended more than seven decades ago, the scale of the thefts from Jews by both the Germans and the Dutch people themselves — not only during World War II but afterward as well — is still coming to light. Following the German conquest of the Netherlands, on May 10, 1940, Adolf Hitler and his deputy Hermann Goering began taking an intense personal interest in the acquisition of art, in particular paintings by Old Masters. Hitler intended to establish — in *Linz*, Austria, near the village where he was born — the world's largest museum of classical art and objects. To that end, he ordered the confiscation of art in every country occupied by the Third Reich. At the same time, Goering began stealing obsessively for his own private collection, often competing with Hitler for the same items.

In Netherlands, they found fertile ground for their efforts, as the country was home to a large number of art dealers, especially in Amsterdam. Many were Jews, some of whom had only recently settled in the Netherlands, in the wake of anti-Semitic persecution in Germany, Austria and Poland. They believed they would be safe from the Nazis in the free, democratic and neutral Netherlands. In the 1930s, in the midst of the global depression, art prices were relatively low. Dealers with the requisite capital could buy works cheaply and amass large collections.

Hitler surveying work by Erich Heckel and Ernst Grundig. The photo was featured in the film *The Art That Hitler Hated*.

Netherlands's conquest by the German army over the course of just four days came as a stunning blow to the Dutch people in general and to the local Jewish community in particular. Most of the borders were closed, and attempts to flee, though widespread, were rarely successful. The Germans were successful in imposing their rule in large measure thanks to the collaboration and betrayal of their country by members of the local Nazi Party, who already then constituted about 10 percent of the population, one of the highest proportions in Europe.

The country's art dealers soon discovered that the Germans were very interested in works by Old Masters and the like — and prices began to climb accordingly. Many of the merchants were happy to cooperate and trafficked in looted works; others, mainly Jews, were forced to follow suit, often giving up their holdings for bargain-basement prices. During the next five years, thousands of paintings were moved from Netherlands into Germany, most of them having been confiscated or extorted from Jews.

A large number of artworks were stolen through an institution that came to be called the Liro Bank. Established by the Germans on the shell of the expropriated Jewish-owned bank Lippmann, Rosenthal and Company, it became the major vehicle for wholesale but nominally legal theft from the Dutch Jews. It was Liro Bank that handled the sale of looted Jewish property of all kinds, using the revenues to cover the expenses entailed in deporting the Jews from Netherlands. The victims were forced to pay the authorities for moving them from their homes to ghettos, and later for transporting them to concentration and death camps in Netherlands and beyond. The Dutch railroad was punctilious about exacting payment for each person it carried on its cattle cars toward their death.

Another example of Dutch collaboration with the Germans can be found in *Rotterdam's* Boijmans Van Beuningen Museum. Even before the war, Daniel George van Beuningen (1885–1955), whose family dominated the business of transporting coal and other goods to Germany, was thought to be the richest person in this port city. A compulsive art collector, he ended up donating part of his collection to the Boijmans Museum, as it was then known, on the condition that the institution add his name to its own.

Only in recent years, however, has the scale of Van Beuningen's cooperation with the occupiers become known. During the war, he traded in classical artworks plundered from Jews and sold them to Hitler, Goering and others. Ronny Naftaniel, a longtime head of the Centrum Informatie and Dokumentatie Israël — the local organization fighting anti-Semitism — and a former spokesman of the Dutch Jewish community, has demanded the removal of Van Beuningen's name from the

(Continued on page 13)

GERMANS USE ALBUMS TO CLOSE THE PAGES OF NAZISM

(Continued from page 7)

service, he always wanted me to go the military, and he was a passionate soldier," Shock said. "He never talked about, say, Nazi philosophy or ideology; but looking back, I would say he never regretted it, and I don't think he realized what he really did, what kind of murdering he did."

Their respective processes of coming to terms with their families' history, rare among their peer group, have changed both their lives. Today, Chmell and Schock are staunch Israel supporters, fighting modern anti-Semitism as expressed in hostility toward Israel, propelled both by a sense of obligation they feel toward the Jewish people and by their Christian faith.

March of Life members believe face-to-face apologies by the descendants of Nazi perpetrators to Nazi victims, as opposed to national proclamations, could most effectively facilitate healing and reconciliation. In their marches across Europe, at sites of attempted Jewish genocide, they often connect with Holocaust survivors and their progeny, but one of

Christoph Kreutzmueller views old albums.

Chmell's most meaningful encounters occurred spontaneously in Israel.

"In May, I was in Jerusalem and went on a tram, and met someone who was the same age as me. His grandparents were collected at *Antwerp* and sent to Auschwitz, and one of them survived. That is one reason why I could meet him, and we connected on WhatsApp and I said I'm sorry about what my grandparents did to your family. It was such a special moment."

Schock believes he became a "softer," more emphatic person. "Looking into my family's past, it also revealed prejudice, racism and anti-Semitism inside of me. I realized that I am not better than my grandfather; I could have done the same things. That was shocking for me. But this opened the way that I could repent."

He and his wife of seven years never wanted children — until he visited Israel for the first time.

"Before the trip, I realized something must be wrong with me but I couldn't figure out why I was so afraid to be a father. When I came back from Israel, suddenly all the fear somehow disappeared."

Back at the flea market, inside the "untouched" family album, photographs become sparse after 1942 and virtually nonexistent from 1943, the year in which Hitler's downfall begins with his defeat at *Stalingrad*. The idyll disintegrates. A downed plane appears in September 1942. Women pose in front of an air raid shelter. Men are back home, holding canes, presumably injured. Finally, the end: a small boy standing in ruins, leaving no progeny, as it were, to safeguard the album and family legacy.

As their WhatsApp profile pictures, Chmell and Schock each proudly display family portraits — their own family albums won't be sold to the highest bidder at a flea market. Chmell loves taking family pictures.

"To show how I love my family, to show that our lives — mine and my wife's — have been changed totally, to remember all our family past but also to say our kids belong to the new generation."

"MEGILLAT HITLER"

BY DR. RAFAEL MEDOFF, UNITED WITH ISRAEL

FDR pledged "the abrogation of all laws and decrees inspired by Nazi governments or Nazi ideologists." But his public rhetoric apparently didn't express his private feelings.

Among the more remarkable documents of the Holocaust is a scroll, created in North Africa in 1943, called "Megillat Hitler." Written in the style of Megillat Esther and the Purim story, it celebrates the Allies' liberation of Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia, which saved the local Jewish communities from the Nazis. What the scroll's author did not realize, however, was that at the very moment he was setting quill to parchment, those same American authorities were actually trying to keep in place the anti-Jewish legislation imposed in North Africa by the Nazis.

On November 8, 1942, American and British forces invaded Nazi-occupied Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia. It took the Allies just eight days to defeat the Germans and their Vichy French partners in the region.

For the 330,000 Jews of North Africa, the Allied conquest was heaven-sent. The Vichy regime that had ruled since the summer of 1940 had stripped the region's Jews of their civil rights, severely restricted their entrance to schools and some professions, confiscated Jewish property, and tolerated sporadic pogroms against Jews by local Muslims. In addition, thousands of Jewish men were hauled away to forced labor camps. President Franklin Roosevelt, in his victory announcement, pledged "the abrogation of all laws and decrees inspired by Nazi governments or Nazi ideologists."

But there turned out to be a discrepancy between FDR's public rhetoric and his private feelings.

On January 17, 1943, Roosevelt met in *Casablanca* with Major-General Charles Nogues, a leader of the new "non-Vichy" regime. When the conversation turned to the question of rights for North African Jewry, Roosevelt did not mince words: "The number of Jews engaged in the practice of the professions (law, medicine, etc.) should be definitely limited to the percentage that the Jewish population in North Africa bears to the whole of the North African population… The President stated that his plan would further eliminate the specific and understandable complaints which the Germans bore toward the Jews in Germany, namely, that while they represented a small part of the population, over fifty percent of the lawyers, doctors, school teachers, college professors, etc., in Germany, were Jews." (It is not clear how FDR came up with that wildly exaggerated statistic.)

In 1943, 400 rabbis marched to Washington to beg FDR to help rescue the Jews of Europe, but the president declined to meet with them.

Various Jewish communities around the world have established local Purim-style celebrations to mark their deliverance from catastrophe.

The Jews of *Frankfurt*, for example, would hold a "Purim Vintz" one week after Purim, in remembrance of the downfall of an anti-Semitic agitator in 1620. Libyan Jews traditionally organized a "Purim Ashraf" and a "Purim Bergel" to recall the rescue of Jews in those towns, in 1705 and 1795, respectively.

The Jewish community of *Casablanca*, for its part, declared the day of the 1942 Allied liberation "Hitler Purim," and a local scribe, P. Hassine, created the "Megillat Hitler." (The original is on display at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.) The seven chapters of the scroll poignantly blend the flavor of the tale of ancient Persia with the amazing stroke of fortune that the Jews of *Casablanca* had themselves just experienced. It uses phrases straight from Megillat Esther, such as "the month which was turned from sorrow to rejoicing" and "the Jews had light and gladness, joy and honor," side by side with modern references such as "Cursed be Hitler, cursed be Mussolini."

The Jews of North Africa had much to celebrate. But after the festivities died down, questions began to arise. The Allies permitted nearly all the original senior officials of the Vichy regime in North Africa to remain in the new government. The Vichy "Office of Jewish Affairs" continued to operate, as did the forced labor camps in which thousands of Jewish men were being held.

American Jewish leaders were loath to publicly take issue with the Roosevelt administration, but by the spring of 1943, they began speaking out. The American Jewish Congress and World Jewish Congress charged that "the anti-Jewish legacy of the Nazis remains intact in North Africa" and urged FDR to eliminate the Vichy laws. "The spirit of the Swastika hovers over the Stars and Stripes," Benzion Netanyahu, director of the U.S. wing of the Revisionist Zionists (and father of Israel's current prime minister) charged. A group of Jewish GIs in Algiers protested directly to U.S. Ambassador Murphy. Editorials in a number of American newspapers echoed this criticism.

At first, Roosevelt administration officials dug in their heels. Under Secretary of State Sumner Welles insisted that technically, the region was no longer under Allied military occupation and the U.S. could not dictate how the local government ran things.

"The under secretary of state was perhaps right from a strictly formal viewpoint," Prof. Michael Abitbol noted in his study of North African Jewry during the Holocaust. "But he was strangely underestimating the immense influence wielded by the United States over North African internal politics."

Eventually, under the accumulated weight of public protests, the Roosevelt administration made it clear to the local authorities that the anti-Jewish measures needed to be repealed.

The implementation process, however, was painfully slow. In April 1943, the forced labor camps in North Africa were officially shut down, although some of them continued operating well into the summer. The Jewish quotas in schools and professions were gradually phased out. In May, the racial laws in Tunisia were abolished. Two hundred Italian Jews who had been taken by the Allies to a Tunisian forced labor camp, because they were citizens of an Axis country, were released after several months.

And on October 20, 1943, nearly a year after the Allied liberation, full rights for North Africa's Jews were at last reinstated. The victory that "Megillat Hitler" celebrated was finally complete.

A SECRET JAPANESE HISTORY

BY MONICA PORTER, THE JEWISH CHRONICLE

On my recent trip I discovered something remarkable. I was curious about the background to Japan's tiny Jewish community, so I did a little digging and learned about an astonishing episode of history.

We all know how cruel Japanese soldiers were to POWs during the World War II, and how appallingly they treated the Chinese.

But less well known is the fact that — despite its alliance with Nazi Germany — Japan offered Jews a refuge from the Holocaust. Many thousands were rescued by a Japanese government which consistently resisted Nazi demands to implement anti-Jewish policies, much less to deport Jews to the concentration camps.

By the late 1930s a number of anti-Semitic German books had been translated into Japanese, but they found few readers and had no significant influence on the population. And in 1938 Prime Minister Fumimaro Konoe and his military council prohibited the expulsion of Japan's Jewish settlers — merchants and traders who had come mainly from Russia, Germany and Eastern Europe, and settled in the port city of *Kobe*, where they established both Ashkenazi and Sephardic synagogues.

At the outbreak of war, Jews attempting to flee eastwards from Nazi-occupied Poland and finding themselves blocked by the Soviet Union, were offered an unexpected escape route via then-neutral Lithuania.

The Japanese consul to Lithuania, Chiune Sugihara, saved some 6,000 Jews by giving them entry visas to Japan, enabling their passage via the trans-Siberian railway to *Vladivostok*, and from there by boat to *Kobe*. The Japanese government required that visas be issued only to those who had gone through official immigration procedures and had sufficient funds.

Most of the refugees didn't fulfill the criteria, but Sugihara knew they were in danger if they stayed behind, so he ignored his orders and granted the life-saving visas anyway.

Once in Japan they were given shelter, food and medicines. Many then received asylum visas for Canada, Australia and elsewhere, as well as immigration permits for Palestine.

In November 1941 the Japanese government decided to consolidate the Jewish refugees remaining under its control by transferring them to the Jewish ghetto in *Shanghai*, which was under Japanese occupation. Amongst those protected in the Shanghai ghetto were the staff and students of the Mir Yeshiva, the sole European yeshiva to survive the Holocaust. (With visas issued by Sugihara, its 400 or so members had fled from Lithuania to Japan in late 1940.)

As the war neared its end, Germany pressed the Japanese army to liquidate the 50,000-strong Shanghai ghetto, but it refused to do so. The safe haven survived intact and after the war the majority of Jews who had been in Japanese-controlled territories dispersed to various Western countries

(Continued on page 14)

YAD VASHEM HONORS CHILEAN RIGHTEOUS AMONG THE NATIONS

Israel's Holocaust center Yad Vashem has posthumously honored a Chilean diplomat who risked his career to help rescue over a thousand Polish Jews during the Holocaust.

Professor Sergio Della Pergola, member of the Commission for the Designation of the Righteous, and Irena Steinfeldt, Director of the Department of the Righteous Among the Nations at Yad Vashem, presented Dr. Christian Beals Campos, a relative of Samuel del Campo, with the medal and certificate of honor on behalf of Yad Vashem, the State of Israel and the Jewish people.

Del Campo was a diplomat in the Foreign Service of the Republic of Chile who served as chargé d'affaires at the Chilean representation in Bucharest from 1941 to 1943. During this time he assisted Jews by issuing various documents — mainly to Polish Jews in *Czernowitz*, which is now part of Ukraine.

During October 1941, a ghetto was established in the city of *Czernowitz*, and deportations to Transnistria began. In the absence of an official Polish representation in Romania, the representation of the interests of Polish citizens in Romania was transferred to Chile, and del Campo began to issue Chilean passports for Jews of Polish nationality.

After the deportations from *Czernowitz* to Transnistria resumed in June 1942, del Campo continued to intervene with the Romanian authorities on behalf of "the Jews under the protection of Chile," Yad Vashem said. Based on recorded minutes from discussions in the Council of Ministers of Romania, Yad Vashem estimated that approximately 1,200 Jews received Chilean passports providing them with protection against deportation.

From left to right: Dr. Christian Beals Campos, relative of Samuel del Campo; Sergio Della Pergola, Member of the Committee for the Designation of Righteous Among the Nations; and Irena Steinfeldt, Director of the Righteous Among the Nations Department at Yad Vashem.

In the spring of 1943, diplomatic relations between Chile and Romania were severed, and Switzerland began to represent the interests of Chile. The documents del Campo issued were clearly not in line with the Chilean government's policy; when Swiss envoys asked the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Chile to clarify the policy of the Ministry regarding the granting of Chilean passports, they were told that "they would prefer not to grant new passports without the approval of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Chile."

Del Campo was appointed Consul-General in Zurich, but the appointment never came into effect, and del Campo never returned to serve in Chile's Foreign Ministry, Yad Vashem noted. He died in Paris in the 1960s.

"To act righteously requires one to, first and foremost, recognize the reality of what is happening around them. Del Campo was a foreign diplomat who lived in Romania and saw what was happening to the Jews," said Steinfeldt. "Instead of saying that it is none of my business and that I am not guilty of anything, he chose to open his eyes and act, and thus, endangered his position."

"Per Anger, a Swedish diplomat who lived in Budapest in 1944, said, as the Germans were conquering Hungary, that there is nothing in the company guidebook which tells us how we should behave in these situations. As such, these diplomats had to invent new ways [of helping endangered Jews]," she added.

Yad Vashem has recognized a number of diplomats as Righteous Among the Nations and is currently preparing a special exhibition together with the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs to honor them.

On November 23, 2016, the Commission for the Designation of the Righteous Among the Nations decided to recognize Samuel del Campo as Righteous Among the Nations.

NAZI CONCENTRATION CAMPS ON BRITISH SOIL

BY DR. YVETTE ALT MILLER, AISH.COM

The very idea that Britain, which fought against Nazi Germany and its allies throughout World War II, was home to Nazi camps might seem inconceivable. Yet thousands of Jews and others were imprisoned and murdered in a complex of four Nazi camps on a picturesque spot of countryside in Britain's Channel Islands, which were occupied by Germany during the War.

Visitors to the tiny island of Alderney, a British Crown dependency, might notice three concrete pillars just south of the island's airport. They are all that remains of *Lager Sylt*, one of four concentration camps on the island and the only one whose buildings remain at all. Many of the tourists who visit the island are unaware of what took place there.

In 1940, with war raging, Britain's Prime Minister Winston Churchill faced an agonizing decision: maintain a military presence in the tiny Channel Islands, which had been British dependencies for centuries, or redirect Britain's forces elsewhere? Churchill reluctantly pulled troops out of his country's three Channel Islands — Alderney, Jersey and Guernsey — and in June of 1940, Hitler's forces bombed the islands and then occupied them for the remainder of the war.

Though the islands had little strategic value, they carried enormous symbolic value for Hitler, who relished occupying British land. They were heavily defended, and orders came in to build a complex of labor and concentration camps on Alderney, the smallest and northernmost of the islands, just 60 miles from England's southern coast.

A waterlogged tunnel and the remains of the rail track in the Alderney site.

Slave laborers, mainly from Eastern Europe and Russia, were brought in to build the camps. One of the camps staffed by the feared SS was *Lager Sylt*. It was built to house and work to death Jewish prisoners, both from the Channel Island's tiny Jewish community and from elsewhere in Nazi-occupied Europe.

For years it was thought that these slave laborers toiled building the island's defenses. Recent government documents that have been unsealed show an even more sinister plan: the Nazis built extensive underground tunnels on Alderney in which to manufacture launchers for V1 missiles carrying unconventional weapons. The plan was to shoot missiles armed with the nerve gas Sarin at mainland Britain.

Conditions at *Lager Sylt* were brutal. In 1944, a group of heavily guarded prisoners was brought to the nearby island of Guernsey. Their arrival was recorded by a local priest, Reverend Douglas Ord: "Coming down from the harbor was a column of men in rows of five. All were in striped pajama suits and their footgear varied from wooden sabots...to pieces of cloth bound round the feet. Others were barefoot. There were more than 1,000 of them…. They were shaven-headed and in varying degrees of weariness or lameness…. It tore the heart to see the effects of this systematic and deliberate degradation of human beings."

Recently declassified British intelligence documents paint a chilling picture of the brutal conditions on *Lager Sylt*: "Too undernourished and exhausted to work efficiently, these men were mercilessly beaten by the German guards, and frequently, when they were too weak after a beating to stand up, they were clubbed to death or finished off with a knife." Some prisoners were crucified on the camp gates. Some were publicly tortured to death. A rocky stretch of shoreline on the island was known by locals as the "Valley of Death" because slave workers who were too ill or exhausted to work any longer were thrown to their deaths onto the rocks and the sea below. British intelligence estimated that half of the slave laborers at *Lager Sylt* died there.

For years, it was thought that about 400 prisoners died in the Nazi camps on Alderney, but recent research by retired British Colonel Richard Kemp and John Weigold have revised that figure to closer to 40,000. Many of the final resting places of the prisoners who died are unknown.

That has led to remains of those who died on Alderney being desecrated within the past year. British and French energy companies have been building links between the two nations in order to connect with a planned new power plant that is scheduled to be built in Alderney. Britain's *Sunday Times* recently published a leaked archaeological report revealing that construction has already "severely damaged" the island's main burial ground for prisoners from the camps, and that "greater damage" is expected as the planned energy link-up proceeds.

THE NETHERLANDS IS STILL HOARDING A COLLECTION OF ART LOOTED FROM JEWS BY NAZIS

(Continued from page 10)

museum, so far unsuccessfully. More to the point, the museum still has in its possession the looted works and refuses adamantly to part with them.

It is now known that, in order to acquire the art collections for the Germans and for himself, Van Beuningen embezzled the company in which he was a partner to the tune of a million guilders (about 20 million euros today). A legal process demanding the return of looted collections in which the businessman traded is ongoing, but the Dutch courts have so far rejected the heirs' demands.

INTERNATIONAL PRESSURE

After occupying Netherlands, the Germans waited more than half a year before issuing anti-Jewish ordinances. Even before official action was taken, however, Jewish art dealers began trying to flee or to arrange fictitious transfers of their property to non-Jews.

Jacques Goudstikker, a Jewish art dealer who fled Amsterdam in 1940. Over 1,200 artworks owned by him were stolen; a few hundred have been returned to his family.

One of the most prominent of these dealers was Jacques Goudstikker, who, in addition to owning many Old Dutch and Flemish paintings (including works by Rembrandt, Vermeer and Jan Steen), had in his possession classical works from Italy and France, among other places. Goudstikker owned two well-known castles, in addition to a magnificent house on Herengracht, one of Amsterdam's most prestigious addresses.

In the early days of the occupation, Goudstikker decided to flee Netherlands, together with his wife and son. The family embarked on a freighter bound for England, but during the journey he fell into the ship's hold and was killed — a mysterious death that has not been satisfactorily explained to this day. Goudstikker employees who remained in Netherlands sold his artworks at sharp discounts to Goering. Later, his firm was taken over by a German banker, who went on buying plundered artworks, which were in turn transferred to Germany.

Only a small number of Jewish art dealers succeeded in selling their businesses to non-Jewish trustees, thereby averting their confiscation by the Germans. More often, Jewish dealers fled to England or the United States in the war, abandoning valuable artworks in Netherlands, or selling them to finance their escape. The assets left behind were seized by the Germans, on the grounds that they were enemy property. Most of them ended up in the hands of Hitler and Goering. There were also a large number of suicides among the Jewish population immediately after the German conquest, and the property of those who took their own lives, too, including classic works of art, was confiscated and shipped to Germany.

The majority of Netherlands's Jews were ultimately deported to Auschwitz and *Sobibor*, and the property that remained in their possession, which included many works of art, was stolen by Dutch collaborators and transported directly to Germany for sale.

The competition between Goering and Hitler had the effect of pushing up the prices for art. Goering displayed no special discretion or orientation when it came to art, but rather grabbed everything he could lay his hands on. Inspired by their leaders, many German officers and administrators stationed in Netherlands, Belgium and France also helped themselves to the bounty. Many German museums took advantage of the opportunity as well to expand their collections.

The Allies, aware of the art-looting phenomenon, decided, as early as 1942–1943, that all plundered property would be returned after the war to its country of origin, without compensation being made to the then-current owner. To facilitate this, the Americans established the Monuments, Fine Arts and Archives program. In 1945, the Netherlands government set up the Netherlands Art Property Foundation (SNK) to address the phenomenon. Anyone who knew of artworks owned by his or her family that had been stolen could fill out an SNK form requesting their return. Tens of thousands of requests poured in, despite the fact that the majority of Netherlands's Jews (some 75 percent of a prewar population of 140,000 Jews) were murdered in the war, and of those who survived, at least a quarter were children, who were unlikely to know much about their parents' art collections.

A substantial number of SNK applicants indeed took their property back, but that still left tens of thousands of items in the hands of Dutch state authorities after their repatriation from Germany.

After SNK was dissolved, in 1957, responsibility for the art still in the possession of the Dutch state was transferred to its Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, which went to lengths to ensure that the looted works would remain in Dutch museums and their storerooms. In the 1970s, the ministry decided to sell many works, with the proceeds going into state coffers.

For example, the entire collection of Jewish banker Fritz Mannheimer, who died on the eve of the war, was seized by the Germans. The collection was subsequently returned intact to the Dutch authorities, and government representatives sold off some of the works. Hundreds of items remain in the Rijksmuseum, the national museum, in Amsterdam.

***A Child of the Honigh Family on Its Deathbed* by Bartholomeus van der Helst (1645).**

Toward the end of the 1990s, following international public pressure, the Dutch, like the governments of many other countries involved in the war, started to deal with still-unresolved problems of property and life related to World War II. The Dutch established several different commissions of inquiry. One of them, the Origins Unknown Agency, found that many items that were supposed to have been returned to their owners were still in the state's possession. The government published information about some 5,000 of them, and attempts were made to locate the rightful owners.

The heirs of Jacques Goudstikker were among those who received some satisfaction. In 2006, members of his family received the first of some 350 works, although they say that leaves another 900 pieces that were plundered. Leading the struggle for the restoration of Goudstikker's property is his daughter-in-law, Marei von Saher, and her daughter, Charlene. Von Saher's father, a former member of the German national soccer squad, was also a member of his country's Nazi Party.

Though Marei von Saher never met her father-in-law (she was born only in 1944, and met her husband, Eduard von Saher, in the U.S. in the 1960s), and is related to the Goudstikkers only by marriage — she waged a relentless legal fight against Dutch authorities, and in 2006 won a court case in which 202 paintings were returned to her. Some of them were immediately sold, fetching a total of $35 million, which was then used to pay a battery of lawyers in the United States. The family, which has had little connection to the Jewish communities in Netherlands, the United States or Israel, continues to press for the return of artworks from museums and private individuals in Netherlands and elsewhere.

CLAIMANTS GIVE UP

During the war, the Dutch government-in-exile stated that it would not recognize as valid any sale, transfer or plunder of artworks that were moved from Netherlands to Germany, and that it considered all such transactions null and void. After the war, all the works of art that were tracked down — tens of thousands in number — were unilaterally repatriated to the Netherlands.

Thus, after the war, the Netherlands was able to enjoy revenues from the sale of art collections it had received at no cost, and also benefited from the addition of other prized works, which were divided among museums in the country or have remained in the possession of the Culture Ministry to this day.

The prewar owners and their heirs, most of whom were Jews, demanded the return of the art, even if they had received partial or full payment for it during the war. They argued that the collections had been sold under duress and that there was no justification for their being confiscated now by the state — and at no cost, no less. Many of the Dutch Jews who were hidden by non-Jewish families paid them large amounts of money for the privilege, an operation that was often financed by the sale to collaborators of artwork and other objects that they had secretly retained when German authorities seized their property.

But in many cases, following protracted, exhausting and unsuccessful bureaucratic proceedings, claimants gave up on getting their property back from Dutch authorities. A case in point is that of Bernard Houthakker, an Amsterdam antiques dealer who survived *Theresienstadt*. He provided information to the Netherlands government about a valuable painting

(Continued on page 14)

THE NETHERLANDS IS STILL HOARDING A COLLECTION OF ART LOOTED FROM JEWS...

(Continued from page 13)

that had been stolen from him and had been returned to the state, but ultimately, for unclear reasons, abandoned the quest.

Another story that remains unresolved is that of Catalina von Pannwitz-Roth (1876–1959), a German-born Jew of Argentine descent, who during the war sold off six paintings, including one by Rembrandt, in return for an exit visa from Netherlands to Switzerland. The paintings were returned to the Netherlands, but after the war, Pannwitz-Roth waived their restitution, and today the works are in the possession of the state.

Generally speaking, in almost every case where Jews declined to take back artworks their family had owned, it was because the Netherlands government demanded payment of the amount the Germans had paid its collaborators for the works — even though the state had not had to pay for repatriation of the art.

Charlene von Saher and the painting titled *The Temptation of St. Anthony*, by Jan Wellens de Cock, which was owned by her grandfather, stolen by the Nazis, and returned to her family.

Still, there are also cases in which intervention by the courts and by the public commission produced positive results. An example is the collection of Friedrich "Fritz" Gutmann (1886–1944). In 1942, Gutmann was forced to sell his artworks to German dealers. He and his wife, Louise Gutmann von Landau, both of them converted Jews, were murdered — he in *Theresienstadt*, she in Auschwitz. After the war, their entire collection was returned to the Dutch government. The Gutmanns' two sons were compelled to go to court in an attempt to get the works back. In 1952, a court ruled that the art would be returned to the heirs, on condition that they pay the Dutch authorities the amount of money their father had received from the Germans for the works, to provide for his livelihood. It was only 50 years later, in 2002, that the public commission decided to return the collection to the family without payment.

During the war, Jacques Hedeman, a textile merchant, stored a painting he owned by the 17th-century artist Jacob Gerritsz, in the vault of an Amsterdam bank, before escaping to Switzerland. The bank turned the painting, "Shepherdess with Child in Landscape," over to the Germans. In 2002, the Dordrecht Museum purchased the work from a private individual in Germany. A subsequent investigation established that the painting had been looted from Hedeman. Ultimately, after the case received extensive publicity, the museum and Hedeman's heirs reached an "agreement" by which the painting would remain in the museum and the latter would pay an undisclosed amount to the heirs.

One question that remains unanswered is why Dutch Jewry has not intervened as a community in the matter of the return of artworks to their owners. Similarly, world Jewry — the World Jewish Congress or the Claims Conference — never tried to become involved. In Israel, the World Jewish Restitution Organization, founded by the Claims Conference agency and the government of Israel, is supposed to deal with looted Jewish property. However, none of these bodies has yet taken action in regard to the return of artworks.

Underlying the WJRO's failure to act for the return of works of art is, apparently, the fact that some of the property plundered from Jews in Europe, including works by Old Masters, ended up in the United States and other Allied countries. It's well known that American Jewry categorically ignores the issue of looted Jewish property that is in the United States. American Jewry's avoidance of dealing with these issues is a subject that merits separate treatment.

For its part, the German government announced recently that it will step up its efforts to return looted artworks.

Netherlands's rigid policy on the return of objects of art was modified somewhat at the beginning of the 2000s, but remains far from perfect. To this day, anyone who asks for his property back is compelled to go through endless bureaucratic procedures that make it difficult to obtain the items. Various heirs of major art dealers have chosen the legal route, and in some cases have been able to get part of their property back.

A SECRET JAPANESE HISTORY

(Continued from page 11)

or else emigrated to Palestine. Others stayed in Japan, with some marrying natives and assimilating into mainstream society. So why did the Japanese, capable of such ruthlessness towards other groups, display a soft spot for its Jewish inhabitants?

It seems that many within the Japanese leadership harbored a longstanding respect for Jews, in particular for Jewish financial and commercial acumen. This originated with the historic treaty in 1854 between Japan and the United States, which opened trade links with the previously isolated Far East country and heralded the arrival of Jewish merchants.

The first, in 1861, was 21-year-old, American-born Alexander Marks, who set up businesses in *Yokohama* and went on to make a hefty fortune. Another arrival was Jewish-American businessman Raphael Schover, who set up the country's first foreign language newspaper, the *Japan Express*.

But perhaps their highest esteem was reserved for New York banker Jacob Schiff, scion of an illustrious rabbinical family from Germany.

During the Russo-Japanese war of 1904-1905, he extended a $200 million loan to the Empire of Japan — the first major flotation of Japanese bonds on Wall Street — which provided half the funds needed for Japan's war effort. Why? Apart from sympathizing with Japan's underdog status, Schiff regarded the loan as payback, on behalf of the Jewish people, for Russia's bloody pogroms. A well-financed Japan won the war.

And so decades later, the Axis pact notwithstanding, the Japanese could not view the Jewish race as an enemy to be destroyed.

Japan was quick to recognize the formation of the State of Israel and establish diplomatic ties. Interest in Jewish culture and religion gradually grew in Japan, even within the Imperial family. The first synagogue in Tokyo was opened in 1953 with a formal celebration attended by Prince and Princess Mikasa. The city's present Beth David synagogue and community centre stands on the same site, in a sleek modern building dating from 2009.

There are about 1,000 Jews living in Japan today, the majority being expats from around the world.

Tokyo has the larger of two communities; there is a smaller, Sephardic one, in *Kobe*. And in *Yaotsu*, in central Japan, you can find the Chiune Sugihara Memorial Museum, dedicated to the consul who defied his superiors (an extraordinary act of insubordination in rigidly hierarchical Japanese culture) to save thousands of Jews about whom he knew little, except that they needed his help. In 1985, the year before his death, Yad Vashem named him a Righteous Among the Nations. The only Japanese national to receive the honor.

END-OF-YEAR TAX PLANNING FOR OLDER DONORS

BY ROBERT CHRISTOPHER MORTON, DIRECTOR OF PLANNED GIVING

If you are over the age of 70½, you can make a qualified charitable distribution (QCD) of up to $100,000 annually from your individual IRA (traditional or Roth) to the American Society for Yad Vashem before the end of the calendar year. This type of gift is also commonly called the IRA Charitable Rollover.

DETAILS

A donor older than 70½ can individually distribute up to $100,000 each year from his or her IRA (through its administrator) to the American Society for Yad Vashem without having to recognize the distribution as income to the donor.

This distribution can be used to satisfy the RMD (required minimum distribution) for the year the distribution has been made. Please note that the gift must be completed by December 31 (check cashed by ASYV) in order to qualify and no benefit may be received by the donor from the charity.

As the American Society for Yad Vashem is a public charity, it falls within the permitted charitable recipients of an IRA Charitable Rollover. The donor must notify the administrator of the IRA to make a direct distribution to the charitable beneficiary in order to qualify.

This giving opportunity was made permanent by the passing of the PATH (Protecting Americans from Tax Hikes) Act in December of 2015 by Congress. Remember, it is always wise to check with your accountant or tax advisor as part of your review process.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

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THE UNHEARD STORY: BULGARIA'S RESCUE OF 50,000 JEWS DURING THE HOLOCAUST

BY KATRIN GENDOVA, THE ALGEMEINER

You have probably heard of *Schindler's List* — Steven Spielberg's movie, which brought to life the story of a German member of the Nazi party who saved the lives of more than 1,000 Jews during the Holocaust, by employing them in his factories in occupied Poland.

You may have also heard of the heroic rescue of the Danish Jews: With the help of the Danish government, people and resistance movement, 7,220 out of the 7,800 Jews in that country escaped the Nazis, and found salvation in Sweden.

What's lesser known is the story of the 50,000 Jews who were saved by Bulgaria.

In his book, *Beyond Hitler's Grasp*, Michael Bar-Zohar states that "For years, Bulgaria's Communist regime had tried to suppress the real story about [this] rescue for a very simple reason. The Bulgarian rescue had been carried out mostly by Communism's three worst enemies: the Church, the royal court, and the pro-Fascist politicians. The Communist regime couldn't admit that fact because it contradicted its basic beliefs."

What's even more astonishing is that these 50,000 Jews were saved while Bulgaria was actually an ally of Hitler.

Bulgaria gained its independence from the Ottoman Empire in 1878. Yet the newly independent state did not receive all of the territories that it desired, leaving ethnic Bulgarians outside of its newly formed borders. In order to gain its territories back, the country allied with Germany, because Hitler promised to help Bulgaria. But that alignment came at a certain price.

The Sofia Synagogue in Bulgaria's capital city.

The rescue of the Bulgarian Jews was preceded by a series of dark events — especially the loss of 11,000 Jews in Thrace and Macedonia, who were sent to the Nazis, despite the fact that those territories were under Bulgarian administration. This happened because Germany did not acknowledge the annexation of Thrace and Macedonia to Bulgaria. Therefore, none of the Jews living in those areas received Bulgarian citizenship or nationality, making it impossible for the Bulgarian authorities to interfere.

The deportation of the Jews from Thrace and Macedonia alerted Bulgaria to what was about to follow in its country. In March of 1943, trains arrived in Bulgaria to transport all of the Jews straight to a death camp in *Treblinka*. Arrests began early in the morning, as policemen gathered Jews to await their deportation. However, not a single Jew left the country.

The local Metropolitan Kiril, ordinary Bulgarian citizens and members of the parliament mobilized against the deportation, and succeeded in preventing it.

The head of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church played a major role in the rescue, having arrived on the day of the deportation at the railroads where the trains were supposed to depart. Bishop Metropolitan Kiril sent a letter to the king of Bulgaria, pleading for the Jews to be saved. The church also opened its doors and provided shelter for the Bulgarian Jews.

Owing to the pressure of the public outcry and the persistence of the bishop, the king canceled the deportation, leaving the trains for *Treblinka* entirely empty.

Yet that did not stop Hitler from continuing to demand the deportation of the Jews. Months later, he tried again, requesting that all of Bulgaria's Jewish population be sent to Poland. In response, King Boris told the German leader that the country needed the Jews for labor; he then created labor camps where 20,000 men were sent to work — but remained in the country. The king's skillful and quick response to Hitler's demand prevented the second deportation of the Bulgarian Jews to the death camps.

The rescue of the Bulgarian Jews remained a long-kept secret until the end of the Communist regime in 1989. Fortunately, documents that recorded details of it were only hidden and locked up — not destroyed. Historians were then able to show the world the bravery of ordinary citizens and the decisive intervention of the Orthodox Church and the king of Bulgaria during the Holocaust.

In February of 2017, President Plevneliev was given the Friends of Zion Award in recognition of the 50,000 Jews rescued during the Holocaust — and acknowledging that Israel will not forget the lives saved by Bulgaria. With all of its dark and heroic moments, the story of a country that managed to protect its entire Jewish population while being an ally to Hitler is one that deserves to be recognized and remembered. Israel does — hopefully the rest of the world will, too.

REMEMBERING THE HOLOCAUST

BY IVOR MARKMAN, HERALD LIVE

Irene Fainman was just six when her family were given 10 minutes to pack for a concentration camp where she would not see a tree or flowers again for nearly three years.

Taken to the notorious Nazi concentration camp at *Ravensbruck* on September 16, 1942, Fainman was rescued by the Swedish Red Cross on April 27, 1945.

Fainman was born in *Schiedam,* near *Rotterdam,* to a Hungarian father, Bela Krausz, and a British mother, Rachel Orkin, in 1936.

Life changed after the Nazis invaded.

"I was at a little nursery school. One day we couldn't go any more and then we couldn't go to the park," she said.

She could not go skating on the canals with her father. Jews were also prohibited from riding bicycles or going to the movies.

Then the Nazis, with the help of the Dutch police, started taking them away to concentration camps.

On the night she and her family were taken away, the door was broken down and two Dutch Nazis came in.

"You've got 10 minutes to pack!" they said.

Fainman clearly remembers walking to a warehouse, where she saw hundreds and hundreds of people sitting on the cement floor of the warehouse.

When it was light they were taken by bus to *Westerbork*, a transit camp. It was very desolate and muddy with "fences and many, many barracks."

This was the same camp Anne Frank was later sent to before being sent to the Auschwitz extermination camp.

When they arrived, they were taken to a hall, where everyone had to undress. Their clothes were taken and the women given blue-striped clothing and wooden clogs.

Their hair was checked, and if they had lice, they were shaven.

"I was too small for a uniform, so the clothes that I had when I left Holland I wore for a year and a half in *Westerbork* [and] another year in *Ravensbruck*," Fainman said.

Every Tuesday a train came with a large sign reading "Auschwitz."

Nobody knew anything about Auschwitz, but 1,000 Jews had to be on that train. On February 3, 1943, Fainman's father and brother, Don, were sent to *Buchenwald* concentration camp.

Two days later, she and her mother were sent to *Ravensbruck*.

Fainman was shocked when she entered the barracks.

There were three-tiered bunks with four people per bunk. "Everybody got the same dirty blanket and a straw mattress. I don't remember if there was a pillow. I screamed and screamed," Fainman said.

"The smell — I couldn't breathe. Can you imagine unwashed bodies? People could only shower once in six months."

Near the toilets was a long trough with taps, but the towels were the size of face cloths.

Irene Fainman.

"It was freezing cold, so a lot of people didn't wash. I saw people with [sunken] cheeks, big eyes, shaven heads," Fainman said.

"I had blonde curls and they all wanted to touch my hair with their filthy hands.

"I just screamed, I couldn't stop looking at them and screaming."

That evening "they gave us this soup with beetroot and turnips — something called *Stück rube*, it means [turnip pieces] and it smelt ghastly. I refused to eat it."

In the morning prisoners were given one slice of bread with a tiny amount of jam and margarine.

"The next morning when they gave that one piece of bread, I was jolly hungry and I ate it," Fainman said.

"Everybody got up at 5 am for roll call. If the totals didn't tally, prisoners stood for hours, sometimes in the cold snow, rain and hail.

"People got frostbite or collapsed. The guards set dogs on them or came with whips.

"The women guards were worse than the men. They had big leather boots, flannel skirts and big leather coats.

"They weren't cold, and of course they had gloves, and everyone was shivering, but you weren't human, you weren't a person, so it didn't matter."

The *Blockälteste* (barracks leaders) had immense power.

"Some were very cruel, some were not. We had this *Blockälteste* who took our name off the [deportation] list.

"I don't think I ever saw a tree or a flower for a good few years. I was so excited when I saw one blade of grass."

When the camp was liberated, Fainman and her mother were taken to Sweden. Her brother survived the war, and they were eventually reunited in England.

DESTINATION UNKNOWN REMINDS US THAT NO AMOUNT OF TIME CAN MASK A TRAGEDY

BY BRANDON KATZ, OBSERVER

Why do we tell stories? Is it to entertain; to capture the attention of the mind for just a moment amid the deluge of everyday life? Is it to teach; to pass down lessons from one generation to the next? Is it to remember; to ensure that our histories are never lost? Maybe each story has its own reasons for being told, and it is the audience's responsibility to form their own conclusions. Perhaps that's why I felt the answer was all of the above and more while watching the upcoming Holocaust documentary *Destination Unknown*, which was released November 10 and features intimate testimony from twelve survivors.

The film is a story of death and life, suffering and liberation, pain and strength. It is as complicated, emotional, heavy and taxing as you think it is. It is the tale of innocent men, women and children being torn from their homes and their lives and sent off into the treacherous darkness of deadly uncertainty — to destinations unknown. It is not easy or simple and it is not enjoyable. But it is important, not just for Jewish people but for all.

"I wanted to make a film where the only voices are those of the survivors themselves, to capture something of the intimacy and immediacy I felt when talking with some of them directly," director Claire Ferguson said in production notes provided to media. "The challenge was to weave those individual voices together in a way that created a wider story, one that explored not only the pain of the Holocaust itself, but the building of new lives afterwards. My overriding question was 'How can you make a life after such pain?'"

Holocaust survivors Eli Zborowski (left) and Ed Mosberg, who appear in the film.

Not long ago, 58 people were killed and 546 were wounded when a gunman opened fire on music festival goers in Las Vegas. It is the deadliest mass shooting in U.S. history. And yet, the groundswell of support and unity that sprung up in its aftermath has nearly evaporated, in less than a month. Outside of those directly afflicted, our collective souls seem to have been unfettered from this tragedy like a breath leaving the body. I suppose this is inevitable. We live in an era in which the public binges on global tragedies, making each incident the worst thing ever until the next worst thing ever comes along soon after. How can we care about anything if we're trying to care about everything?

That's why stories matter. That's why *Destination Unknown* matters. It's a reminder that something happened. It's an inescapable calcification of the abstract pain that floats around this 70-year-old scourge on humanity. It's a connection for younger generations to a wound that their parents and grandparents suffered and survived through.

"I was inspired to start this project fourteen years ago when I visited Auschwitz and wanted to ensure that the remarkable stories of those who survive the Holocaust were preserved for posterity," producer Lilon Roberts said. "In the years since, I have met and interviewed a remarkable range of incredible people whose lives are an inspiration to us all. From the four hundred hours of testimonies that I recorded, I wanted a film which captured the essence of their experience, made a contribution to the history of those times and perpetuated the memory of the *Shoah*."

Destination Unknown does capture the essence of their experience in powerful ways, but the movie isn't just about the pain of what happened. It's also about the strength that is required to move forward. In that sense, one survivor captures the essence of the entire Jewish people when he proudly says, "My grandchildren are the answer to Hitler's Final Solution."

That is why we tell stories.

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