Warsaw — Elderly Holocaust survivors, wearing striped scarves that recalled their uniforms as prisoners of Nazi Germany, made a yearly pilgrimage to Auschwitz on January 27, exactly 73 years after the Soviet army liberated the death camp in occupied Poland.

On the date now commemorated as International Holocaust Remembrance Day, political leaders and Jewish officials warned that the Nazi genocide must never cease serving as a reminder of the evil of which humans are capable.

In Warsaw, Poland, U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson attended a solemn ceremony at the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising Memorial, which marks the day in 1943 that Polish Jews fought German forces. Also at home a lot has changed. We now live in the bedroom of our parents. What do I do, you know? I have to come to the end.

“Remember, the most important thing is not to take anything to heart and persever. Then we will definitely meet again.”

The letter was sent in the autumn of 1941. All three would later perish in the ghetto, a fact that Joseph and Rachel would not learn until after the war.

Staring at grainy video footage of Jewish children marching to their freedom though the barbed-wire fences of the Auschwitz death camp, 79-year-old Vera Kriegel Grossman excitedly points a finger at the screen upon identifying a dark-haired girl in a dirty striped uniform as her 6-year-old self.

“I can’t believe that happened to me. I wasn’t a child there. I was all grown up... it was like I was 100 years old.”

Archival footage shot by Auschwitz’s Soviet liberators is part of the Yad Vashem Holocaust memorial’s latest exhibition, ahead of International Holocaust Remembrance Day, exploring the power of photography during World War II. The 1,500 photographs and 13 films displayed come from various perspectives, those of victims and perpetrators alike, and look to offer today’s memory-saturated visitors a new angle for looking at the horrors of the Holocaust.

Photography, perhaps more than anything else, has come to shape our memory of the Holocaust. The “Flashes of Memory” exhibit also offers a glimpse behind the lens — showing the actual cameras used, the photographers who took the pictures and their various motivations.

“The exhibit is aimed at the brain, (Continued on page 8)
BY MATT LEBOVIC, THE TIMES OF ISRAEL

A though its name later became synonymous with the Holocaust, the Polish town of Oswiecim — or Auschwitz, in German — once brimmed with Jewish culture. The rise and fall of the community’s buildings left behind evocative relics, a few dozen photographs and many tales of the town’s special place in Polish-Jewish history.

Jews first settled in Oswiecim, west of Krakow, about 400 years ago. By the eve of the Holocaust, they made up half the town’s population of 10,000 people. The community put up more than 20 synagogues, famous schools and one of Poland’s first factories. Oswiecim was known as “not a bad place” to live for Jews; indeed, the Yiddish name for the town was Oshpitzin, which comes from the Aramaic word for guests.

Today, only the so-called Auschwitz Synagogue remains of that vanished Jewish landscape. Built in 1913, the modest shul located off the town square has changed hands many times. As it is the synagogue closest to Auschwitz-Birkenau, where the Nazis murdered more than one million Jews during World War II, visitors usually come on the same day as a tour of the site of the former Great Synagogue, which — legend has it — the souls of departed Jews performed a “death dance” with the living.

Among artifacts presented at the Auschwitz Jewish Center, a selection of liquor bottles from the newly opened Jakob Haberfeld distillery stands out.

In 1804, Jakob Haberfeld opened a “steam vodka & liquor factory” near a bridge crossing the Sola River. An early factory in Poland, the Jewish-owned outfit produced vast amounts of vodka, rum and juices. Next to the distillery was a 40-room family mansion, Haberfeld House, one of the town’s architectural icons.

Years before World War II, the Haberfeld family had a railroad spur built to a marshy region outside town, where river gravel for the distillery was plentiful. Later, during the Nazi occupation of Poland, the tracks were used to bring Jews to the very end of their journey, the “old Jewish ramp” outside Birkenau, where SS doctors conducted “selections” for the gas chambers. In 1939, with Alfons Haberfeld at the distillery’s helm, Germany invaded Poland. At the time, Haberfeld and his wife, Felicia, were returning from the World’s Fair in New York. The couple had left their two-year-old daughter, Franciszka, behind in Oswiecim, in the care of her grandmother. Two years later, with Alfons and Felicia Haberfeld trapped abroad, little Franciszka was murdered at Belzec, the first of six Nazi death camps to operate with stationary gassing facilities.

In 1967, more than two decades after rebuilding their lives in the United States, Alfons and Felicia Haberfeld made a return trip to Oswiecim. The distillery was under state ownership, and Haberfeld House was in disrepair, they noted with sorrow. Disturbingly, a new wave of anti-Semitism was forcing Shoah survivors and their children to flee Poland only one generation after the Holocaust.

The trip to Poland was too much to bear for Alfons Haberfeld. “Emotionally devastated” by the encounter, he died three years later, aged 66.

During the 1990s, long after the death of her husband, Felicia Haberfeld attempted to reclaim family ownership of the mansion and factory. The widow’s case did not convince authorities, and she lived to see the demolition of both buildings in 2003. With the structures gone, plans to operate with stationary gassing facilities.

IN THE SHADOW OF AUSCHWITZ, JEWS RETURN TO THEIR HOUSES

In Oswiecim, Poland, a water well is used in front of the so-called “Auschwitz Synagogue,” near the center of town, during the interwar period.

In Oswiecim, Poland, a water well is used in front of the so-called “Auschwitz Synagogue” near the center of town, during the interwar period.

In Oswiecim, Poland, a water well is used in front of the so-called “Auschwitz Synagogue” near the center of town, during the interwar period.

In Oswiecim, Poland, a water well is used in front of the so-called “Auschwitz Synagogue,” near the center of town, during the interwar period.

In Oswiecim, Poland, a water well is used in front of the so-called “Auschwitz Synagogue,” near the center of town, during the interwar period.

In Oswiecim, Poland, a water well is used in front of the so-called “Auschwitz Synagogue,” near the center of town, during the interwar period.

In Oswiecim, Poland, a water well is used in front of the so-called “Auschwitz Synagogue,” near the center of town, during the interwar period.

In Oswiecim, Poland, a water well is used in front of the so-called “Auschwitz Synagogue,” near the center of town, during the interwar period.

In Oswiecim, Poland, a water well is used in front of the so-called “Auschwitz Synagogue,” near the center of town, during the interwar period.

In Oswiecim, Poland, a water well is used in front of the so-called “Auschwitz Synagogue,” near the center of town, during the interwar period.

In Oswiecim, Poland, a water well is used in front of the so-called “Auschwitz Synagogue,” near the center of town, during the interwar period.

In Oswiecim, Poland, a water well is used in front of the so-called “Auschwitz Synagogue,” near the center of town, during the interwar period.

In Oswiecim, Poland, a water well is used in front of the so-called “Auschwitz Synagogue,” near the center of town, during the interwar period.

In Oswiecim, Poland, a water well is used in front of the so-called “Auschwitz Synagogue,” near the center of town, during the interwar period.

In Oswiecim, Poland, a water well is used in front of the so-called “Auschwitz Synagogue,” near the center of town, during the interwar period.

In Oswiecim, Poland, a water well is used in front of the so-called “Auschwitz Synagogue,” near the center of town, during the interwar period.

In Oswiecim, Poland, a water well is used in front of the so-called “Auschwitz Synagogue,” near the center of town, during the interwar period.

In Oswiecim, Poland, a water well is used in front of the so-called “Auschwitz Synagogue,” near the center of town, during the interwar period.
schools were vandalized. A total of 7,500 businesses were destroyed, and countless Jewish cemeteries and November 9, 1938, at least 96 Jews were killed in Germany and Austria.

Yet the heroic Giorgio Perlasca still remains unknown. Born in the small northern Italian town of Como and raised in nearby Padua, Perlasca belonged to a family consisting of civil servants and army officers. A native of Fascism, he volunteered for the army when Italy invaded Ethiopia in 1935. Later he joined the Corps of Volunteer Troops, an Italian force assisting the rebel forces of Francisco Franco in the Spanish Civil War from 1936 to 1939.

In gratitude for his service, Perlasca received a letter of thanks from Franco's victorious new government.

Giorgio Perlasca, September 1935.

The letter instructed the Spanish foreign service to come to his aid if he should ever need diplomatic assistance. At the time Perlasca had no idea how important this letter would turn out to be. Upon his return home to Italy, he found Mussolini had aligned with Hitler's Third Reich and introduced its racial laws in 1938. Perlasca, who had many Jewish friends from Padua and from his army service, was strongly opposed to anti-Semitism.

At one time he explained, "I was neither Fascist, nor anti-Fascist; I was anti-Nazi." From then on, he reserved his loyalty for the Italian king, Victor Emmanuel III.

In the early days of World War II, Perlasca avoided the draft by working as an import-export agent for the Italian army. He traveled to Zagreb, Belgrade and Eastern Europe, where he witnessed vicious Axis massacres of Jews and Serbs.

In 1942, he was assigned to Budapest. He found the Hungarian capital "full of life, where nothing was lacking and the restaurants and theaters were full of seemingly carefree people, many of them Jews." Tall, well-dressed and stylish, Perlasca also enjoyed an active social life, which came to an abrupt end in September 1943. Italy surrendered to the Allies and the country was split. Some Jews aligned themselves to Mussolini's Italian Social Republic, while others supported the king, who joined the Allies. Perlasca was arrest-ed as an enemy alien and interned in a camp near the Austrian border. Escaping in October 1943, he made his way back to Budapest.

In June 1944, just in March 1944 when the Hungarian Nazis seized power. Perlasca ran to the Spanish consulate in Budapest. Producing his vital letter from the Spanish authorities, he received a Spanish passport with his new name: Jorge Perlasca.

He soon discovered that the Spanish consul, Angel Sanz Briz, was issuing "letters of protection" for Hungarian Jews who were forced to wear the yellow Star of David. The embassy was overwhelmed with requests from stateless Jews seeking asylum in a neutral country such as Spain, or safe passage out of Europe.

The consulate also employed Jews as clerks and housed them in eight apartment buildings under its control. Perlasca offered his assistance. The Hungarian government then discovered that the Spanish officials had been harboring Jews in their houses and embassy, and began raiding the homes of diplomats. With Budapest in chaos, Angel Sanz Briz and other officials received orders to vacate immediately. Sanz Briz left a note for Perlasca imploring him to leave too. Realizing that without protection many Jews would be killed, Perlasca bravely decided to remain. The only person in the consulate with a Spanish passport, he went to the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Utilizing his boundless chutzpah and a letter he had forged, Perlasca succeeded in persuading the officials he had been appointed the new Spanish consul and that Sanz Briz was simply on leave. The German and Hungarian officials believed his appointment and his warning that Spain would retaliate if forced to turn over their refugees. Fortunately for him, they were unable to confirm Perlasca's new status with Madrid, and he was permitted to continue working.

"I couldn't stand the sight of people being branded like animals... I couldn't stand seeing children being killed," he stated. "I did what I had to do."

Perlasca described his situation: "At first, I didn't know what to do, but then I began to feel like a fish in water. I continued giving out protective passes and looked after the Jews in the 'safe houses' flying the Spanish flag. As the proverb says, 'Opportunity makes the thief.'"

The new "consul" organized food, medicine, and protection for 5,200 Jews in the consulate's apartments. (Continued on page 7)
MARTYRDOM & RESISTANCE
January/February 2018 - Shevat/Adar 5778

WORDWINGS

BY RACHEL E. GROSS, SMITHSONIAN.COM

The massacre started with a blood libel. That wouldn’t be unusual, except this wasn’t the Middle Ages or even Nazi Germany — it was 1946, a year after the end of World War II.

A few days earlier, an 8-year-old Polish boy named Henryk Blaszczyszyn had gone missing from his home in Kielce, a city of 50,000 in southeastern Poland. When Henryk reappeared two days later, he told his family he had been held by a man in a basement. As his father walked him to the police station to recount his story, the boy pointed at a man who was walking near the large corner building at 7 Planty Street.

He did it, Henryk said.

The building, which was owned by the Jewish Committee and housed many Jewish institutions, was home to up to 180 Jews. It did not have a basement. Most of the residents were refugees, having survived the horrors of the death camps that decimated more than 90 percent of the Polish Jewish population. After the war, they had returned to their homeland with the hope that they could leave the past behind them. They had no idea they were about to become the target of anti-Semitic aggression once again — this time from the Polish neighbors they lived alongside.

Wordwings, about a child-diarist’s experiences in the Warsaw ghetto — twelve-year-old Rivke Rosenblum — it’s as if we suddenly hear one of these children speak. Moreover, Pearl allows us entry into her thoughts. Thus among other things, we learn of her love for her grandfather, who sells pillows to embroiderers on the market in the ghetto. We can feel Rivke’s compassion for others in the ghetto through her descriptions of them — like the lady who sells half-rotten potatoes on the market, and the beggar with his little glove puppet, whom she has fondly nicknamed the “Peddler of Wind.” We recognize Rivke’s admiration for others in the ghetto, and her twin sister Ruchel, children who, because they don’t look Jewish, have become smugglers bringing needed goods (usually food) into the ghetto from the Aryan side of Warsaw — a historically accurate depiction. Oftentimes, it actually was Jewish children who didn’t look Jewish that kept ghetto Jews alive through their smuggling of foodstuffs.

Indeed, Pearl’s book gains depth, and adds to the knowledge of the Holocaust for students of the period, when it weaves people who truly lived and played important lesser-known roles in the Warsaw ghetto into the narrative. For example, we meet Bata, whose full name was actually Batya Temkin-Berman, a dedicated librarian. She had a special place in Rivke’s heart for the children in the Warsaw ghetto. She would bring them books to read, wherever they were, books that offered joy and nurtured imaginations, promising a tomorrow. Pearl has Rivke help Batya in distributing these books to the children. She also has her tell them stories — some of Rivke’s own making. The story of “The Jewish Geese” is especially wonderful. I leave that for the readers of Wordwings to discover.

Another individual Rivke interacts with and who actually lived in the Warsaw ghetto is Gela Seksztajn, an artist. Gela taught some of the children in the ghetto, she drew them, and she also helped “with costumes and scenery for their plays.” For, in fact, Adam Czerniakow, the Jewish head of the ghetto, and Janusz Korczak, who cared for many of the orphaned little ones in the ghetto — both noted in Wordwings — were very concerned with these children enjoying some kind of childhood.... Thus, there were puppet shows and children’s plays done. In Pearl’s volume we read about Gela’s work with the children. Then, with Pearl taking the liberty of a fiction writer, we also read about Gela showing Rivke how her diary, basical- lily Rivke’s writings in the margins of a beloved book of fairy tales by Hans Christian Andersen, will, alongside Gela’s drawings of ghetto children, become part of a secret archive called “Dyening Shabes” — in truth, a docu- mentation collected by Dr. Emanuel Ringelblum, recounting the history of the Warsaw ghetto. For in Pearl’s vol- ume, Ringelblum has asked Rivke, impressed by her work, to contribute her writings to this secret archive to be buried so future generations will know what happened in the ghetto... Rivke’s reaction: “I think of my diary placed inside one of those little concise cases in the cellar and then planted in the earth. In my imagination, my words and the words of Hans Christian Andersen push through a tiny crack in the dirt and turn themselves into wings...” And, if you think about it, Rivke’s wish came true. Wordwings has made it possible for her words to turn themselves into wings, flying miles and years... all the way to us... rep- resentative of so many innocent chil- dren whose words were lost....

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

KIELCE: THE POST-HOLocaust Pogrom THAT POLAND IS STILL FIGHTING OVER

BY RACHEL E. GROSS, SMITHSONIAN.COM

The violence went on for hours. As Miriam Guleman, one of the last remaining survivors of the pogrom, put it in the 2016 documentary film Bogdan’s Journey: “I couldn’t believe that these were humans.”

All told, 42 Jews were killed that day at Planty and around the city, including a newborn baby and a woman who was six months pregnant. Another 40 were injured. Yet beyond the horrific, those physical facts, the event would take on a larger historical significance. After the Holocaust, many Jews had dreamed of returning to their native lands. Kielce shattered that dream; for Jews, Poland could never again be home.

[“Kielce] really is a symbol of the exodus of Jewish survivors from Poland, and a symbol sometimes that there is no future in Poland for Jews,” says Joanna Sliwa, a historian with (Continued on page 10)
JAMAICA WAS A WARTIME HAVEN FOR JEWISH REFUGEES

BY SHELDON KIRSHNER, THE TIMES OF ISRAEL

A s improbable as it may sound, the Caribbean island of Jamaica was a wartime haven for European Jewish refugees fleeing Fascism and anti-Semitism. Jamaica, then a British colony, began admitting imperiled Jews in 1938 and continued welcoming them through the early 1940s. This little-known footnote in the annals of the Holocaust could easily have fallen through the cracks of history. It does not belong to Diana Cooper-Clark’s book, Dreams of Re-Creation in Jamaica, published by Friesen Press in Canada.

The refugees, mainly of Polish and Dutch ancestry, waited out World War II in the Gibraltar and Up Park internment camps in Kingston, the capital of Jamaica. Cooper-Clark, a professor in the departments of English and Humanities at York University in Toronto, describes their experiences through the prism of “hope, disappointment, pain, loss” and the prospect of a new life.

The author, whose interest in the Holocaust was sparked by a book she read at the age of six about the Nazi war criminal Adolf Eichmann, believes that about 1,400 Jews found refuge in Jamaica after the British Foreign Office informed the Joint Distribution Board, a Jewish organization, that Jewish refugees could come to the island if it paid for their upkeep for at least a year and if the newcomers passed a security test ensuring they were not spies for the Axis powers.

Much to her credit, Cooper-Clark has rescued this obscure episode from oblivion. Although Dreams of Re-Creation in Jamaica is a workmanlike account well worth delving into, it’s disjointed and repetitious at times. These defects, though, are mere quibbles when compared to the broad sweep of her pathbreaking book.

Cooper-Clark adds that the refugees were fed reasonably well. They were no worse off than “the people of the island, and they were eating better than many impoverished Jamaicans.” She goes on to write: “People in Europe had not seen the kind of food served in the camp for years, such as meat, fruit, vegetables, butter and sugar. Ersatz coffee was all that Europeans had had for years, while … the refugees often had Blue Mountain coffee, one of the best in the world.”

Rejecting the allegation that the venerable Jamaican Jewish community was indifferent to the refugees, she contends that some local Jews were indeed helpful. Citing an example, she says that Owen Karl Henriques, a prominent businessman, worked tirelessly on their behalf.

In an interesting aside, she sketches a pen portrait of Jamaica’s long-established, highly assimilated Jewish community. Pointing out that mixed marriages have taken a drastic toll on its size since the 1880s, Cooper-Clark says the descendants of such unions are far removed from Judaism. She gives three examples. Chris Blackwell, a musician and recording executive who has worked with Bob Marley and the Rolling Stones, is related to the Jewish Lindo family. Harry Belafonte, the singer, has Jewish roots. Colin Powell, the former U.S. secretary of state, is descended from Jews on his father’s side.

In another aside, she informs the reader that 65 Jews from the Caribbean islands and Central America, almost all of them Sephardim, were murdered during the Holocaust. It’s a largely unknown fact, even to those familiar with the Holocaust.

The author, whose interest in the Holocaust was sparked by a book she read at the age of six about the Nazi war criminal Adolf Eichmann, believes that about 1,400 Jews found refuge in Jamaica after the British Foreign Office informed the Joint Distribution Board, a Jewish organization, that Jewish refugees could come to the island if it paid for their upkeep for at least a year and if the newcomers passed a security test ensuring they were not spies for the Axis powers.

Much to her credit, Cooper-Clark has rescued this obscure episode from oblivion. Although Dreams of Re-Creation in Jamaica is a workmanlike account well worth delving into, it’s disjointed and repetitious at times. These defects, though, are mere quibbles when compared to the broad sweep of her pathbreaking book.

Cooper-Clark adds that the refugees were fed reasonably well. They were no worse off than “the people of the island, and they were eating better than many impoverished Jamaicans.” She goes on to write: “People in Europe had not seen the kind of food served in the camp for years, such as meat, fruit, vegetables, butter and sugar. Ersatz coffee was all that Europeans had had for years, while … the refugees often had Blue Mountain coffee, one of the best in the world.”

Rejecting the allegation that the venerable Jamaican Jewish community was indifferent to the refugees, she contends that some local Jews were indeed helpful. Citing an example, she says that Owen Karl Henriques, a prominent businessman, worked tirelessly on their behalf.

In an interesting aside, she sketches a pen portrait of Jamaica’s long-established, highly assimilated Jewish community. Pointing out that mixed marriages have taken a drastic toll on its size since the 1880s, Cooper-Clark says the descendants of such unions are far removed from Judaism. She gives three examples. Chris Blackwell, a musician and recording executive who has worked with Bob Marley and the Rolling Stones, is related to the Jewish Lindo family. Harry Belafonte, the singer, has Jewish roots. Colin Powell, the former U.S. secretary of state, is descended from Jews on his father’s side.

In another aside, she informs the reader that 65 Jews from the Caribbean islands and Central America, almost all of them Sephardim, were murdered during the Holocaust. It’s a largely unknown fact, even to those familiar with the Holocaust.

Mexico tops this list with 23 victims, followed by Cuba (19), Curaçao (15), Dominican Republic (two), Trinidad and Tobago (one), Saint Thomas, Virgin Islands (one), Guatemala (one), El Salvador (one), Nicaragua (one) and Guadeloupe (one). During this period, she says, the Nazis and their collaborators killed 160,000 Sephardic Jews.

Much to her credit, Cooper-Clark has rescued this obscure episode from oblivion. Although Dreams of Re-Creation in Jamaica is a workmanlike account well worth delving into, it’s disjointed and repetitious at times. These defects, though, are mere quibbles when compared to the broad sweep of her pathbreaking book.
prosecutors in recent years have esti-
minated. In 1940, immediately after the
ners are children who were kept
in the ghetto for years and had not
findings asked — among their compatri-
the roots of the Holocaust came to light.
Bruckenthal and her three oldest sons. They were on the list of
privileged prisoners who were "exchange candidates," with him, although she could not
secure his release. Hillel was then
sent to Germany. Now they could
communicate only by letters, which
He didn’t believe it when they told me
I was going to the Land of Israel with
the children," she recounted in her
testimony. "When someone from
Westerbork goes to a place other than Auschwitz or Bergen-Belsen — it
just couldn’t be," Mali said. It was, she
suggested, like someone being noti-
}
THE ITALIAN WALLENBERG WHO SAVED OVER 5000 HUNGARIAN JEWS

[Continued from page 3]
An intelligence network warned him in advance of possible Nazi searches. The diplomatic missions of four other neutral states — Portugal, Switzerland, the Vatican, and Sweden — also helped save Jewish lives.

In the following months Perlasca did more than organize the hiding, feeding and transport of thousands of Jews. He came up with a brilliant plan to use an old Spanish law which gave Spanish-born Jews full citizenship and protection. Perlasca successfully issued false safe-conduct passes claiming that Hungarian Jews were actually Spanish-born. The passes read:

"The relatives of all Spaniards in Hungary require their presence in Spain. Until we are able to establish communications and the journey back is possible, they will remain here under the protection of the government of Spain."

Giorgio Perlasca teamed up with Sweden’s Raoul Wallenberg, Angelo Rotta from the Vatican and Friedrich Born from the International Red Cross to vouch for Jews across Hungary. Together they helped organize and secure the escape of thousands of Jews.

However, Raoul Wallenberg possessed plentiful funds, but there was no one to pay Perlasca a salary. When consular funds ran out, he used his own money, then that of the local Jewish committee. Finally he had to ask for funds from the families hiding in the apartments.

A fearless man, Perlasca acted as if he really was a protected diplomat, openly risking his own life to save others.

On December 1st, 1944, he went to the train station and began arguing with a German officer, demanding the release of two Jewish children on a train headed for Auschwitz. Also present was Raoul Wallenberg, the Swedish diplomat whose similar daring acts also saved many Jewish lives.

"A young SS major pulled out his pistol, pointing it at me," Perlasca later recalled. "Wallenberg, standing nearby, shouted at him that he could not treat a Spanish diplomatic representative like this. Then, at a certain moment, an SS lieutenant-colonel arrived and asked what was happening. He listened, then ordered the major coldly to do nothing more because, ‘Sooner or later’, he said, ‘we’ll get the children anyway.’ They went away, and it was then that Wallenberg told me that the SS colonel was the notorious Adolf Eichmann."

Perlasca once noticed some Nazi soldiers leading a group of Jews to their execution. Using his bold air of authority, he insisted that the soldiers release the prisoners to his care. He overruled their protests and eventually they walked away, leaving the Jews safely behind.

When the Red Army bombarded Budapest towards the end of 1944, the Ministry of the Interior planned to move all Jews from the consular apartments into the ghetto, then set it on fire.

Perlasca refused to believe this horrific plan would be put into effect until he saw Jews from the Portuguese-protected apartments being marched to the ghetto. Rushing to the minister of the interior, he begged him to stop the plans, warning that if the Spanish government was not assured within 48 hours that the Jews under its protection would be safe, all Hungarians in Spain would be imprisoned and their property confiscated. He further added that the Brazilian and Uruguayan governments would be urged to follow suit. The minister of the Interior decided to abandon his vicious plan.

When Soviet troops entered Budapest in January 1945, the Jews were finally able to leave the apartments. However, the Russians forced Perlasca to work as a street cleaner. Afte a few weeks he was able to leave for Istanbul and eventually returned to Italy. There, few people would credit his story. "My wife didn’t say outright that she didn’t believe me," he recalled. "But I was sure she was not convinced."

So Perlasca ceased speaking about his exploits in Budapest and lived in relative anonymity.

T he full facts of his extraordinary story did not emerge until the late 1980s, when some Hungarian Jews recalled the events of wartime Budapest at a family gathering.

"Do you remember that Spanish consul?" someone asked.

Several did, and they placed a notice in Budapest’s Jewish newspaper, asking for other testimonials. Gradually Perlasca’s story emerged and the tributes finally began to flow. In 1989 the Hungarian Parliament awarded him its highest honor. A statue was dedicated to him in Budapest. Israel accorded him honorary citizenship and dedicated a tree to him at Yad Vashem in Jerusalem.

As part of its Righteous Among the Nations project, the Raanaan Symphonette Orchestra in Israel commissioned an orchestral piece, His Finest Hour, from composer Mosze Zorman in tribute to Perlasca. The piece had its debut at a concert attended by Perlasca’s son Franco and daughter-in-law Luciana Amadia.

In 1990 he was honored in New York by the Raoul Wallenberg Committee. The Spanish king awarded him the Order of Isabella and a pension.

In Italy he became the subject of a book and a feature film. Like many Holocaust heroes, he downplayed his valor to the end. Deploring the fuss, he asked, “Wouldn’t you have done the same? If you had seen Jewish children being shot in the streets?”

THE ITALIAN WALLENBERG WHO SAVED OVER 5000 HUNGARIAN JEWS

BY OFER ADERET, HAARETZ

About 30 Jewish families from around the world participated in a special commemorative ceremony in Germany for a relative they never met — Karolina Cohn, who was murdered in the Holocaust. A golden pendant was found that bore a July 3, 1929, birthdate with the words "Mazal tov," the city Frankfurt, the Hebrew letter “hei” (standing for God) and stars of David.

Karolina Cohn’s pendant was found at Sobibor by the Israeli archaeologist Yoram Haimi and his Polish colleague Wojciech Mazurek. The two found tens of thousands of items that belonged to Jews murdered at the camp, including jewelry, clothing, personal items and more. "The amount of items we found buried in the earth is inconceivable," Haimi told Haaretz.

Following Haaretz’s report on the discovery of Cohn’s pendant, amateur genealogists, including Chaim Motzen of Israel, began searching for more information about her life. Ultimately about 100 people related to her were found.

"We proved that her name and history have not been erased," Motzen told Haaretz.

Although her pendant was found at Sobibor, it is not clear whether Cohn met her death there. According to Yad Vashem, she was banished from Frankfurt to Minsk, Belarus, on November 11, 1941, after which all trace of her vanished. She may have been murdered there, or survived and been banished to Sobibor in September 1941 when the Minsk ghetto, which had been created after the German invasion of the Soviet Union, was liquidated.

If she did reach Sobibor, it seems she lost her pendant on the way to the gas chambers. If she was murdered in Minsk, it’s possible a family member or friend kept the pendant and lost it at the death camp upon their own murder.

"The ceremony honoring the ‘stumbling stone’ by the entrance to what was her home, was funded by the Claims Conference. Cohn had lived there with her parents and sister, who were also killed in the Holocaust.

JEWISH FAMILIES GATHER IN GERMANY TO REMEMBER A HOLOCAUST VICTIM THEY NEVER KNEW

BY OFER ADERET, HAARETZ

Jews in Argentina have been trying to find clues to the fate of Karolina Cohn and her family at a place where they once lived.

A protracted archival and historical study into people born in Frankfurt on that date concluded that the pendant had belonged to Cohn, who was killed at age 14. Later her relatives were located in Germany, Britain, the U.S., Israel and other countries.

A protracted archival and historical study into people born in Frankfurt on that date concluded that the pendant had belonged to Cohn, who was killed at age 14. Later her relatives were located in Germany, Britain, the U.S., Israel and other countries.

A protracted archival and historical study into people born in Frankfurt on that date concluded that the pendant had belonged to Cohn, who was killed at age 14. Later her relatives were located in Germany, Britain, the U.S., Israel and other countries.

A protracted archival and historical study into people born in Frankfurt on that date concluded that the pendant had belonged to Cohn, who was killed at age 14. Later her relatives were located in Germany, Britain, the U.S., Israel and other countries.

A protracted archival and historical study into people born in Frankfurt on that date concluded that the pendant had belonged to Cohn, who was killed at age 14. Later her relatives were located in Germany, Britain, the U.S., Israel and other countries.

A protracted archival and historical study into people born in Frankfurt on that date concluded that the pendant had belonged to Cohn, who was killed at age 14. Later her relatives were located in Germany, Britain, the U.S., Israel and other countries.

A protracted archival and historical study into people born in Frankfurt on that date concluded that the pendant had belonged to Cohn, who was killed at age 14. Later her relatives were located in Germany, Britain, the U.S., Israel and other countries.

A protracted archival and historical study into people born in Frankfurt on that date concluded that the pendant had belonged to Cohn, who was killed at age 14. Later her relatives were located in Germany, Britain, the U.S., Israel and other countries.

A protracted archival and historical study into people born in Frankfurt on that date concluded that the pendant had belonged to Cohn, who was killed at age 14. Later her relatives were located in Germany, Britain, the U.S., Israel and other countries.

A protracted archival and historical study into people born in Frankfurt on that date concluded that the pendant had belonged to Cohn, who was killed at age 14. Later her relatives were located in Germany, Britain, the U.S., Israel and other countries.
United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres has stressed in his message for the international day dedicated to honoring Holocaust victims that everyone has a responsibility to quickly and decisively resist racism and violence.

Mr. Guterres recalled that the international day, marked annually on 27 January, was created to honor the memory of six million Jewish men, women and children that perished in the Holocaust and countless others who lost their lives as cruelly convulsed the world.

Yet, decades since the Second World War, there is still the persistence of anti-Semitism and an increase in other forms of prejudice.

Citing neo-Nazis and white supremacy groups as among the main purveyors of extreme hatred, the UN chief said that too often, vile views are moving from the margins to the mainstream of societies and politics.

“Whenever and wherever humanity’s values are abandoned, we are all at risk,” stressed the Secretary-General.

“All of us have a responsibility to quickly, clearly and decisively resist racism and violence,” he stated, adding: “Through education and understanding, we can build a future of dignity, human rights and peaceful coexistence for all.”

For his part, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra’ad Al Hussein held the painful day of remembrance for Holocaust victims as forcing us “to contemplate the horrors to which bigotry, racism and discrimination ultimately lead.”

“The sadistic brutality of the atrocities inflicted by the Nazi regime on Jews, Roma, Slavs, disabled people, political dissidents, homosexuals and others was nourished by layer upon layer of propaganda, falsifications and incitement to hatred,” he stated, adding how “few people acted to save a single, mate what happened” in Italy’s consul-general to Buenos Aires.

For hiding and protecting the survivors, Mr. Zeid continued, “we edge the need to prevent anti-Semitism and all forms of hatred and discrimination.”

“In honoring the victims, we must recognize that others as fully equal in rights as we are, and we be able to come together to face many challenges facing us today.”

At the same time, United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres has stressed in his message for the international day dedicated to honoring Holocaust victims that everyone has a responsibility to quickly and decisively resist racism and violence.

Mr. Guterres recalled that the international day, marked annually on 27 January, was created to honor the memory of six million Jewish men, women and children that perished in the Holocaust and countless others who lost their lives as cruelly convulsed the world.

Yet, decades since the Second World War, there is still the persistence of anti-Semitism and an increase in other forms of prejudice.

Citing neo-Nazis and white supremacy groups as among the main purveyors of extreme hatred, the UN chief said that too often, vile views are moving from the margins to the mainstream of societies and politics.

“Whenever and wherever humanity’s values are abandoned, we are all at risk,” stressed the Secretary-General.

“All of us have a responsibility to quickly, clearly and decisively resist racism and violence,” he stated, adding: “Through education and understanding, we can build a future of dignity, human rights and peaceful coexistence for all.”

For his part, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra’ad Al Hussein held the painful day of remembrance for Holocaust victims as forcing us “to contemplate the horrors to which bigotry, racism and discrimination ultimately lead.”

“The sadistic brutality of the atrocities inflicted by the Nazi regime on Jews, Roma, Slavs, disabled people, political dissidents, homosexuals and others was nourished by layer upon layer of propaganda, falsifications and incitement to hatred,” he stated, adding how “few people acted to save a single, mate what happened” in Italy’s consul-general to Buenos Aires.
must also acknowledge the recurrence of forms of racial and religious discrimination today.

The issue of the Holocaust, however, is only if we regard each person’s dignity and rights will we overcome the tragedy of the Holocaust.” He continued.

Audrey Azoulay, the UNESCO Educational, Cultural Organization, on January 27 as a call to humanity,” she continued.

Marek Lesniewski-Laas, honorary consul in Warsaw, was not an option, so they emigrated to Israel and sick. Those people were sent to be beating people they thought were moving too slow. A mother wasn’t moving quick enough. The train suddenly stopped, I heard someone and this was not the last time he ever said to me. I never saw him again.”

Reflecting upon Mr. Appel, who passed away in 2017, Ms. Winter recalled an unsettling story that took place in 1990s that the public became aware of the Bergier Commission on dormant assets in the Holocaust survivors living in Switzerland — most of whom traveled to the country only after the war.

The number of survivors is steadily decreasing. Switzerland — which now presides over the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance that unites governments and experts to strengthen and promote Holocaust education and remembrance globally — sponsored an exhibition on survivors at United Nations Headquarters in New York.

"Portraits of Holocaust Survivors" tells the stories of individuals who are among the last survivors, and how they carried on with their lives in Switzerland after the war. The exhibition is one of several events surrounding the annual observance of the International Day of Remembrance in memory of the victims of the Holocaust.

Anita Winter, President of the Gamaral Foundation, which helps alleviate financial distress of the last survivors, spoke of their experiences, she felt deeply thankful to them for sharing their stories.

According to Ms. Winter, many told her personally that they felt it was their duty to speak on behalf of the six million who can no longer speak for themselves. For her, their resilience is amazing.

Born in 1932, Nina Weil lived in what is today the Czech Republic. In 1942, she was deported to Theresienstadt and later arrived at Auschwitz with her mother, who died at age 38 of exhaustion. Ms. Weil survived a selection by camp doctor Josef Mengele as well as a labor camp.

Ms. Weil shared her distress: "They tattooed me: 71978. I cried a lot. Not because of the pain, but for the number. Because I had lost the name, I was just a number. My mother said, ‘Do not cry, nothing has happened. When we get home, you visit the dance school and get a big bracelet so no one sees the number.’ I never went to dance school and never got the bracelet.”

Ms. Winter recalled an unsettling story that Ms. Weil shared with her about taking a trip to the hospital for blood work, where a young technician mistook the number she had tattooed on her arm for her concentration camp for her phone number.

Eduard Kornfeld survived both Auschwitz and Dachau camps. He grew up in Bratislava, Slovakia, and was arrested in 1944 while hiding with his brother in Hungary. After the war, in which he lost his entire family, he arrived in Davos weighing only 27 kilos, or 60 pounds, weak and sick from exhaustion. There Swiss doctors saved his life.

Klaus Appel was born in 1925 in Berlin. After his father, Paul, and his older brother, Willi, were arrested and sent to Auschwitz, he and his sister came to England in 1941 as part of the Kindertransport humanitarian programs. After the war, Klaus married a Swiss woman, moved to western Switzerland and worked as a watchmaker. He died in April 2017, 10 days before this exhibit was launched in Switzerland.

Mr. Appel explained, "We were at home when the war broke out. We had told my father: ‘If you are Mr. Appel’ they asked him. ‘Then come with us.’ My father just calmly turned to me and said, ‘You are going to school.’ That was the last thing he ever said to me. I never saw him again.”

Born in 1925 in Berlin. After his father, Paul, and his older brother, Willi, were arrested and sent to Auschwitz, he and his sister came to England in 1941 as part of the Kindertransport humanitarian programs. After the war, Klaus married a Swiss woman, moved to western Switzerland and worked as a watchmaker. He died in April 2017, 10 days before this exhibit was launched in Switzerland.

Mr. Appel explained, "We were at home when the war broke out. We had told my father: ‘If you are Mr. Appel’ they asked him. ‘Then come with us.’ My father just calmly turned to me and said, ‘You are going to school.’ That was the last thing he ever said to me. I never saw him again.”

Reflecting upon Mr. Appel, who passed away in 2017, Ms. Winter reminisced how he worked hard to share his experiences with young people, visiting schools and universities.
KIELCE: THE POST-HOLOCAUST POGROM THAT POLAND IS STILL FIGHTING OVER

(Continued from page 4)

The Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany who focus-

on modern Polish Jewish history

and the Holocaust. “That despite what

Jews had endured during the

Holocaust, and despite the fact that

the local Polish population had

observed all that, had witnessed all of

that … Jews cannot feel safe in

Poland.”

Sliwa points out that Kielce was not

the first postwar pogrom against Jews

in Poland; smaller outbreaks of vio-

lence took place the previous year in

Krakow and the town of Rzeszow.

In the years that followed, the Kielce

pogrom — like so many atrocities

committed or abetted by Poles during

the war — became taboo. There were

no memorials. When Bogdan Bialek,

the war — became taboo. There were

committed or abetted by Poles during

pogrom — like so many atrocities

an absence” — that seemed to be

oppression of silence a “disease.”

Sensing a deep guilt or shame among

Bialek’s Journey

in 1970, he sensed immedi-

ately that something was wrong. In

Bogdan’s Journey Bialek remembers

sensing a deep guilt or shame among

residents when it came to talking about

the pogrom. He calls this oppression of silence a “disease.”

Bialek became drawn to the

abscess — what Jewish historian

Michael Bimbaum referred to at the

event as “the looming presence of

absence” — that seemed to be

haunting the town. Over the past 30

years, he has made it his mission to

bring this memory back to life and

generate today’s residents of Kielce in

dialogue through town meetings,

memorials and conversations with

survivors.

Unsurprisingly, he has encountered

pushback. The story of the Kielce

massacre — which the film pieces

Jews with Communism, can turn into

other, the blood libel, and … equating

Jews with Communism, can turn into

mob-like violence.”

In a 2016 television interview, Poland’s education minister Anna

Zalewska appeared to deny Polish responsibility for any involvement in

both of these historical events. When asked directly, “Who murdered

Kielce’s Jews during the town pogrom?” she was unable to answer

the question. She demurred, before finally answering: “Anti-Semitism.”

She did not admit that these anti-Semites were Poles. When controversy

erupted, Zalewska received support from

Foreign Minister Witold

Wszykowski, who said her com-

ments had been “misunderstood.”

“That has to do with the Polish govern-

ment, the effort to in a way rewrite his-

tory,” says Sliwa. “To put more

emphasis on heroism and patriotism

of the Polish nation during the war

and after the war. It seems like it is an

attempt to take hold over, to control,

how the past is named.”

The concern that Poland is rewriting

its history feels more relevant now than ever. Ever since the 2015 victory

of the Law and Justice (Prawo i

Sprawiedliwość) party, the right-wing

populist party led by Jarosław

Kaczyński, the government has pur-

sued what is openly referred to as

polityka historyczna, or “history poli-

cy.” Journalists and historians like

Sliwa, however, call it “politicized his-
NAZI HAVENS IN SOUTH AMERICA

(Continued from page 6)

ecution at home would find a welcoming haven in Argentina. The “Odessa” theory, popularized in the 1972 novel The Odessa File and the 1974 movie of the same name, was that a secret group of former SS officers had banded together and was helping former Nazi officials to escape postwar Europe. While there was no “Odessa” group, the truth was far stranger: some of the most senior officials in governments, the Catholic church and aid organizations actively worked to help Nazis escape justice, often sending them to South America.

P
oron’s key point man in creating a pipeline for Nazis was the Argentinian Cardinal Antonio Caggiano. He passed along Poron’s top-secret message to a cardinal in France, who communicated with Nazis living in France, helping usher them to Argentina. Poron invested considerable manpower in smuggling Nazis to Argentina, even setting up a secret office in Bern to help handle the paperwork. In spring 1946, the first French Nazis began receiving Argentinian tourist visas and setting sail for South America.

Many of these Nazis escaping to South America were aided by Catholic officials. Some merely wanted to help Catholics escape from the rising Communist governments in central Europe. Other officials, however, were actively anti-Semitic and desired to help Nazis elude justice. One of the highest-ranking Catholic officials who aided Nazis criminally was Bishop Alois Hudal, an Austrian-born admirer of Hitler. Bishop Hudal worked in Rome, ministering to Axis POWs, and tirelessly aided war criminals by providing them with false Vatican-issued identity papers allowing them to gain passports from the International Red Cross and travel to South America.

Bishop Hudal worked with a network of officials throughout Europe; it was he, with the aid of a Franciscan friar in Italy, who provided false papers that allowed senior Nazi Adolf Eichmann to sail for Argentina. Hudal’s activities helping “refugees” (many of whom were Nazis evading justice) garnered him much praise and financial support. The American Catholic Bishops Conference even approved a monthly stipend of $200 to Bishop Hudal to help him in his work.

The work of Bishop Hudal and other Catholic officials who helped Nazis flee was an open secret. A 1947 memo sent from the United States’ Italian embassy to the Vatican noted that “The Vatican of course is the largest single organization involved in the illegal movement of emigrants” out of Europe in those years.

Bishop Hudal and other Catholic officials had a willing accomplice in Carl Jacob Burckhardt, president of the International Red Cross in the years after World War II. In his 2011 book Nazis on the Run: How Hitler’s Henchmen Fled Justice, historian Gerald Steinacher chronicles Burckhardt’s anti-Semitism, as well as his penchant for helping Germans, including former Nazis. It’s hard to know just how many former Nazis fled Europe using false Red Cross papers; in 2012, German lawyers, after examining recently declassified archives, estimated that thousands of Nazis were similarly able to obtain false Red Cross passports. About 800 SS members were able to flee to Argentina alone using these false documents.

One Nazi who fled to Argentina was Horst Wagner, who aided in the deportation and murder of at least 350,000 Jews. Wagner’s story would have remained unknown were it not for the efforts of German family therapist turned author Gisela Heidenreich, whose mother Edith met and fell in love with Horst Wagner during the war. In 2012, Ms. Heidenreich published a work documenting Wagner’s escape from justice, Beloved Criminal: A Diplomat in the Service of the Final Solution. After escaping from an Allied-run jail in 1948, Wagner followed a path dubbed the “Kloster Line,” receiving sanctuary in convents and churches in Austria before heading to Rome. There, Bishop Hudal helped him obtain false papers and sail to Argentina.

Franz Stangl, the commander of the extermination camps of Sobibor and Treblinka who oversaw the murder of nearly one and a half million Jews, was another senior Nazi. Ms. Heidenreich uncovered who followed the same path. Stangl was aided by Catholic church officials and eventually fled to Brazil on a false Red Cross passport. Stangl was eventually extradited to Germany in the 1960s and died in jail. Wagner met a different fate: he was never extradited and lived to old age in the Argentinian town of Bariloche, near Patagonia where he celebrated at weekly get-togethers in local beer halls, singing Nazi songs with other SS comrades who called Argentina home.

In addition to being ideologically sympathetic to Nazi ideology, Juan Peron also had a financial motive in encouraging Nazis to find homes in South America. Escaping from an Allied prison in 1947 with the help of the Argentine embassy, Otto Skorzeny moved to Madrid, where he ran an import/export agency that was rumored to be a front for organizing the escape of Nazis to South America. Skorzeny made numerous trips to Argentina, eventually working for a time as a bodyguard to Juan Peron’s wildly popular second wife, Eva, known as Evita.

Evita seems to have been an enthusiastic helper ofNazis in her own right. She was reported to have been romantically involved with Skorzeny, and also might have been active in laundering money from German Nazis. In 2011, Brazilian authors Leandro Narloch and Duda Teixeira wrote, “It is still suspected that among (Evita’s) possessions, there were pieces of Nazi treasure that came from rich Jewish families killed in concentration camps.”

A generation ago, thousands of Nazis eluded justice by fleeing to South America. Today, as a new generation of historians delves into archives and other records, the truth about how so much of South America became a Nazi haven is being uncovered. It’s too late to try most of these Nazi war criminals, but their victims, and all of us, deserve to know the truth about this dark chapter in South America’s past.

HOLocaust SUItcase PACk STORIES OF SURVIVAL

BY RONDA ROBINSON, AISH.COM

Paula Neuman Gris’s 75-year-old blue suitcase is an old friend. It accompanied her from her childhood home in Czernowitz, Romania, to the killing fields of the Holocaust to a displaced persons’ camp in Germany and across the ocean to America.

The suitcase held necessities and secrets. The journey began in 1941 when all the Jews of Czernowitz received the dreaded order to pack two bags and be ready to leave in two hours. It was part of the Romanian government’s directive to “cleanse the land of Jews.”

A year previously, after the Russians had occupied her hometown of Czernowitz, they seized her father, residualized him and sent him to a labor camp. What became of chief laborer. “They arrested my father because he was a capitalist. They had their own political agenda. He was imprisoned. At that time, my mother was pregnant with their second child,” Paula says in an Aish.com interview.

Her mother, Elka Neuman, would leave three-year-old Paula alone every day to visit him in prison and take him food. Then Simon disappeared with 10,000 Jewish men whom the Russians deported to labor camps. What became of him from there is unclear.

Meanwhile, Elka bore their baby. Anti-Jewish laws and a curfew were in force. Jews couldn’t be admitted to public hospitals and weren’t supposed to leave their homes at night. However, Elka went into labor at right, so she risked her life and sneaked out onto the street to reach her mother.

“My memory of that night was she left me alone—probably saying, ‘I love you, I have to leave now.’ She was very brave.”

My memory was standing frozen as a three-year-old little girl, looking at the door, waiting for the door to open. It was symbolically by the beginning of a long period of experiencing terror and fear and the (Continued on page 13)
Rescued children finally identify Irish aid worker who saved them from Auschwitz

BY MICHAEL RIORDAN
THE TIMES OF ISRAEL

Two young boys huddled silently under a blanket in the back of a large black car as it crossed under the gaze of the French prison guards and out the wooden gates of Rivesaltes internment camp. It was September 25, 1942.

Escaping deportation to Auschwitz and certain death in the gas chambers, Rene and Mario Freund, aged two and six years old, were driven high up into the Pyrenees Mountains, a remote village. The boys had already faced danger before, as their father had tried and failed to smuggle them across the border into Switzerland.

After arriving in the hills, they were met by a priest and moved again to a small village further away from Rivesaltes. They were to be enrolled in a Catholic school and hidden by local families.

Decades later Rene and Mario — now named Ronald and Michael Freund — fulfilled a lifelong ambition to identify their heroic liberator, the Irish aid worker Mary Elmes, and nominate her as Righteous Among the Nations.

“I wanted to know who took me out of the camp, and I found a document in the American Friends Service Committee [Quaker] files that identified her,” said retired New York-based Prof. Ronald Friend in a new documentary about Elmes.

“I owe my life to Elmes and I feel very grateful. But I am just one of many who should feel the same,” said brother Michael Freund.

Now, thanks to the quest by the two grateful brothers, the story of her perilous work, bravery and determination can be told.

The film is narrated by Winona Ryder, who herself has relatives murdered in the Holocaust and who was nominated for a Grammy for her audio version of The Diary of Anne Frank.

A DISPLACED PEOPLE

After the fall of France, the collaborationist Vichy government imprisoned thousands of Jews fleeing from the Nazis in the camp near Perpignan.

Enduring appalling conditions, families were in dire need of the assistance given by the Quaker organization with which Elmes was a volunteer. And then the Nazis ordered the transportation of all Jews to the east.

Despite efforts by French officials to convince inmates that they were going to farms and factories, the Jewish prisoners knew the fate that awaited them. Some committed suicide. Parents were separated from their children. Elmes didn’t believe the lie either. Risking being sent to Auschwitz herself, she was determined to save as many children as possible.

Between August and October 1942, nine convoys took 2,300 Jews from Rivesaltes camp to Drancy and on to Auschwitz-Birkenau.

But Elmes saved 200 children, driving many of them through the mountains to Catholic orphanages, and managing to smuggle others across the border into neutral Spain.

Rene and Mario’s father, Hans Freund, approached Elmes in the camp and asked her to take his two boys away. She agreed. The boys never saw their father again.

HISTORY OF A HERO

Elmes was born in the city of Cork in 1908, and graduated from Trinity College Dublin with a degree in literature. Her academic excellence earned her recognition from the London School of Economics, which awarded her a scholarship to pursue international studies.

During the Spanish Civil War, she volunteered to manage a hospital in northern Spain, returning to Ireland after the fall of Barcelona. However, hearing of the plight of the Republican refugees who fled to France, she traveled there to organize aid for them.

Being from neutral Ireland, she was able to stay on in Rivesaltes after World War II began, when others were forced to leave. She was there when the Jewish refugees arrived and began her selfless work soon thereafter.

In the documentary, one of the saved children, George Koltein, recalled escaping from Paris to French-controlled Vichy after police raided their apartment building. However, they were arrested on arrival and sent to Rivesaltes.

Koltein’s father was put into a work gang, but Elmes smuggled the children out of the camp and into the orphanage of Saint Christopher in Perpignan.

The orphanage was run by another woman who has also been recognized by Yad Vashem — Louise Gunden, who sheltered the children among the local orphans where police would not find them.

Elmes drove seven children to Saint Christopher’s that day,” Koltein recalled in his documentary interview.

“Mary Elmes and Lois Gunden together formed a chain of solidarity with the Jews,” he said. “If discovered, anyone attempting to rescue Jewish children would be sent to the death camps with them.”

“I was amazed when I first heard Elmes’s story, how it had remained so unknown for so long,” director Andrew Gallimore told The Times of Israel.

“Elmes did such great work for the refugees,” he said. “But she had to be very careful not to be giving special assistance to the Jews who were the most in need of it.”

Gallimore said he finds the fact that these terrible events happened in France “incredible.”

“Of the inmates, Paul Niedermayer, asked during filming how could this have happened in France — the home of the Enlightenment,” he added.

“When we were working in Perpignan,” said Gallimore, “I felt that the Pyrenees became a metaphor for freedom. The Spanish Republicans crossing one way and the Jews in the opposite direction — much in the same way as the Mediterranean is today.”

Meanwhile, Denis Peschanski of the French National Center for Scientific Research raised in the documentary the terrible moral dilemma that Elmes and other aid workers faced in Rivesaltes.

“They knew the truth about the resistance members and political prisoners,” he said.

She spent six traumatic months there, but after intervention by the Irish Consulate and the International Red Cross, she was released. By the time she was freed, there were no Jews left in Rivesaltes.

After the war Elmes remained in Perpignan, where she married a French man with whom she had two children.

Her story became more widely known following a 1998 Mexican documentary on the Spanish Civil War in which she agreed to be interviewed. She died in 2002.

After her death, Freund discovered her identity and asked her family’s permission to nominate her as Righteous Among the Nations. They agreed, and she was recognized by Yad Vashem in 2013, becoming Ireland’s first recipient.

“My mother never wanted any attention and she did not wish to recall the war,” said her son Patrick Danjou. “She turned down the French government’s offer of the Legion D’Honneur.”

TIRELESS SACRIFICE

Efraim Zuroff of the Simon Wiesenthal Center said the aid workers in Rivesaltes had a unique opportunity to help some of the prisoners who were already designated to be murdered.

“On a daily basis Elmes worked tirelessly, driving long distances scrounging milk and blankets for the children in the camp,” explained historian and founder of the Holocaust Art Restoration Project (HARP) Marc Masurovsky.

“Her superiors, however, who knew of her other activities, warned her not to do too much for fear that their humanitarian work would be halted,” he said.

But Elmes persisted. In 1943, when Vichy was finally taken over by the Nazis, Elmes was arrested by the Gestapo on suspicion of aiding Jews and sent to the notorious prison in Fresnes near Paris, which housed traps,” he said. “But if they left, all of the prisoners would die.”
EVIDENCE OF HANUKKAH IN ITALIAN INTERNMENT CAMP REVEALED

BY YORI YALON, ISRAELI HAYOM

Yad Vashem recently acquired a program detailing a Hanukkah celebration that took place at the Ferramonti internment camp in Italy in December 1944. The booklet’s cover was stamped with the camp’s symbol; above the stamp is a Star of David with a menorah illustrated inside it. The program arrived at Yad Vashem, Israel’s national Holocaust museum, within the framework of the museum’s “Operation Picking up the Pieces” project — a national campaign to save personal items from the Holocaust.

The unique booklet was preserved over the years by Yehudit Yitzhak, who decided to give it to Yad Vashem for future generations. Yitzhak’s parents married in Danzig, where her father worked as a factory manager. In the spring of 1940, when her mother was pregnant, the couple fled Danzig and sought to immigrate to Palestine via the Italian seaport city of Trieste in the country’s northeast.

They arrived in Benghazi, Libya, where they were supposed to board a ship, but they were detained and sent to Naples. Yitzhak was born in Naples in September 1940. After her birth, she was sent along with her parents to the Ferramonti internment camp. The family was held at the camp for nearly four and a half years until 1945, when they finally immigrated to Palestine and settled down in Tel Aviv. Initially, conditions in Ferramonti, located in southern Italy, were tolerable, but they deteriorated gradually along with Italy’s situation in World War II. Jews at the camp, however, were not harmed or deported to death camps in Poland, and were permitted to receive food packages and practice their religion.

The Ferramonti camp was liberat- ed in September 1943, but a large number of Jews stayed there until December 1945. The unique Hanukkah celebration took place on December 10, 1944, after the camp had been liberated by Allied forces. The theme of the program was the move from darkness to light and was a testament to the man- ner in which Jews observed their holi- days even in the most trying of times. Yitzhak, 77, still lives in Tel Aviv. She was 4 years old when the Hanukkah celebration at Ferramonti took place. “I have memories from Ferramonti,” she recounted. “The Italians let the Jews have autonomy. There was a synagogue at the camp, and there were cultural events. With that, the conditions there weren’t easy. There were restrictions and barred-wire fences, and the food wasn’t nourish- ing. The area was malaria-stricken. The treatment was terrible, and it led to the Italian management [of the camp].” In Israel, Yitzhak raised a family with three children and now has six grand-children.

Of her decision to donate the Ferramonti Hanukkah program, she said: “Yad Vashem is the right place for it to be. It’s an important asset that needs to be preserved and stored, so that future generations can understand and appreciate life at the Ferramonti camp.”

The saved Hanukkah program from the Ferramonti internment camp in Italy.
Friedrich Kellner’s account, starting from 1939, about the Nazi regime’s atrocities and the unfolding destruction of European Jewry is being published in English for the first time.

BY MATT LEBOVIC, THE TIMES OF ISRAEL

Half a century after Friedrich Kellner gifted his Nazi-era diary to a grandson in America, the clandestine writings were published in English by Cambridge University Press in January.

A vociferous critic of the Nazis, Kellner used his diary to document the regime’s atrocities beginning in 1939. The small town “justice inspector” wrote 676 entries, drawing from numerous sources and a formidable knowledge of history. In addition to Kellner’s diary, not only directed toward the Nazis but also with regard to his fellow citizens and the world for allowing Hitler to rise.

There is no punishment that would be hard enough to be applied to these Nazi beasts,” wrote Kellner. “Of course, when the retribution comes, the innocent will have to suffer along with them. But because ninety-nine percent of the German population is guilty, directly or indirectly, for the present situation, we can only say that those who travel together will hang together.

With indictments like that, it’s no wonder Kellner’s full diary was not published in Germany until 2011.

Prior to Hitler wrestling power, a veteran of World War I, was a public opponent of Hitler and his movement. A lifelong Social Democratic Party member, he was a public opponent of Hitler and his movement. A lifelong Social Democratic Party member, he was appointed deputy mayor in 1932.

Following the liberation of Germany, Kellner was appointed deputy mayor of Laubach, where he helped with denazification and to revive the Social Democratic Party. He died in 1970, long before his My Opposition diary caught the attention of historians. In 1968, with two years left to live, Friedrich Kellner gave his diary to an American-born grandson, Robert Scott Kellner.

“I could not fight the Nazis in the present, as they had the power to still my voice,” Kellner told his grandson at the time. “So I decided to fight them in the future.”

According to Robert Scott Kellner, a retired English professor, the diary was his grandfather’s attempt to provide future generations with a weapon “against any resurgence of such evil.”

As the book’s translator and editor, Kellner has also worked on a documentary film about his grandfather and several museum exhibitions based on the diary.

For more than 30 years after Friedrich Kellner’s death, few people outside of the family saw the crisply penned pages of My Opposition. The writings got a big break in 2005, when the George Bush Presidential Library exhibited portions of the diary for public viewing. That endorsement helped bring about the German publication of the diary, which Der Spiegel said presented a “challenging” but essential narrative of wartime Germany.

January’s publication of My Opposition in English is another milestone in his grandfather’s legacy, said Kellner. “Seventy-eight years ago, Friedrich Kellner addressed the issue of ‘blaming Jews’ in one of his early diary entries. As was his habit, the activist refuted the regime’s lies and accused his neighbors of complicity.

“To keep the people from directing their rage at their actual oppressors, rulers in every age have used diversionary tactics to shield their own guilt,” wrote Kellner in 1939.

“The entire action against the Jews was no different from throwing down a piece of meat for the beasts. ‘The Jews are our misfortune,’ cry out the Nazis. The correct answers of the people would have been, ‘No, not the Jews, but the Nazis are the misfortune for the German people,’ ” wrote Kellner.

The April 25, 1943, entry in Friedrich Kellner’s wartime diary.

SECRET ANTI-NAZI DIARY GIVES VOICE TO MAN ON THE STREET

By Matt Lebovic

The Times of Israel

The April 25, 1943, entry in Friedrich Kellner’s wartime diary.
NAZI DEATH SQUAD’S SHOCKING SECRETS REVEALED IN BURIED NOTE

BY BEN GRAHAM

Chilling notes from an Auschwitz inmate forced to help the Nazi murder squads have finally been deciphered — almost 75 years after they were written.

Marcel Nadjar, a Greek Jew, was one of 2200 members of the Sonderkommando — Jewish slaves of the SS who had to escort fellow Jews to the gas chambers. They also had to burn the bodies, collect gold fillings and women’s hair, and throw the ashes into a nearby river.

Aged 26, he penned his accounts of life in the infamous death camp in 1944, and only now have they been decoded thanks to digital imaging, according to the BBC.

“Often I thought of going in with the others, to put an end to this. But always revenge prevented me doing so. I wanted and want to live, to avenge the death of Dad, Mum and my dear little sister,” he wrote.

Historians say Nadjar stuffed his 13-page manuscript into a Thermos flask, which he sealed with a plastic top. He then placed the Thermos in a leather pouch and buried it.

“The crematorium is a big building with a wide chimney and 15 ovens. Under a garden there are two enormous cellars. One is where people are undressed and the other is the death chamber. People enter it naked and once about 300 men are inside it, the doors are locked and they are gassed. After six or seven minutes of suffering they die,” he wrote.

His accounts also provide intricate details of the sickening ways the Nazis disguised the gas chambers as showers.

“The gas canisters were always delivered in a German Red Cross vehicle with two SS men. They then dropped the gas through openings — and half an hour later our work began,” he wrote.

“We dragged the bodies of those innocent women and children to the lift, which took them to the ovens.”

According to the BBC, the notes were found by a Polish forestry student during digging at the site — 36 years after they were buried.

Russian historian Pavel Polian said only 10 percent of the notes could be deciphered when they were first found.

The ink had faded over time and the text was virtually impossible to read.

“The inmates were usually cramped so closely together that no one knew how many trains had arrived,” Mr Polian told the BBC.

“Nadjari’s desire for revenge stands out — that’s different from the other accounts. And he pays much more attention to his family. For example, he specifies who he wants to receive his money.”

According to the Institute of Contemporary History in Munich, Nadjar was one of the few inmates to survive Auschwitz. He was then deported to the Mauthausen concentration camp in Austria as the Third Reich collapsed.

After the war, he married and in 1951 moved to New York. He already had a one-year-old son, and in 1957 his wife Rosa gave birth to a girl, whom they named Nelli — after Nadjar’s late sister.

Recently, in 2018, some 17 years after Cohn died at age 85 in Liechtenstein, she was posthumously awarded the “Jewish Rescuers’ Citation” for Jews who helped save fellow Jews during the Shoah.

Cohn’s daughter and son, Evelyne Bermann and Michael Bermann, were presented with the honor during the Amsterdam opening of the exhibit on their mother’s life. So far, 171 women and men from eight countries have been honored by Jewish organization B’nai Brith in Germany.

“There are many people who were able to escape deportation through fake identity cards,” said exhibit curator Annemiek Gringold. “The people who had the skills and the courage to carry out this vital work remain largely unknown until today.”
ELI ZBOROWSKI LEGACY CIRCLE

The American Society for Yad Vashem was founded in 1981 by a group of Holocaust survivors and led by Eli Zborowski, z”l, for more than thirty years. Recently approved by the Board of Directors of the American Society for Yad Vashem, our Legacy Circle is being named in memory of Eli Zborowski, z”l, who was greatly respected for his work and accomplishments on behalf of Yad Vashem and is missed by all who knew him.

The Eli Zborowski Legacy Circle is open to and will recognize anyone who includes Yad Vashem in their estate plans. This can include a bequest by will, funding a Charitable Remainder Trust or Charitable Gift Annuity, donating a paid-up life insurance policy or contributing an interest in an IRA or retirement plan, or making ASYV the beneficiary of a Charitable Lead Trust. Individuals can make gifts of any size, through a broad range of programs and investment vehicles that can accommodate those of modest means, as well as those with substantial wealth.

“I did not find the world desolate when I entered it. As my fathers planted for me before I was born, so do I plant for those who will come after me.”

The Talmud

By including Yad Vashem in your estate plans, you assure a future in which Holocaust remembrance and education will serve as a powerful antidote to denial, hate and indifference. For further information about the Eli Zborowski Legacy Circle, please contact

Robert Christopher Morton, 
Director of Planned Giving at ASYV
212-220-4304; cmorton@YadVashemUSA.org

**Published Bimonthly by the American Society for Yad Vashem, Inc. 500 Fifth Avenue, 42nd Floor New York, NY 10110 (212) 220-4304**