TO HONOR, TO REMEMBER, AND TO NEVER FORGET

BY JILL GOLTZER

This past July, Yad Vashem’s 2018 Generation to Generation Mission — From Austria to Israel at 70 brought together nearly 100 friends from five countries, ages 16 to 97, including four Holocaust survivors and over 40 young leaders. More than 80 participants came from the USA. From Herzl’s home in Vienna to the horrors of Mauthausen and then to Yad Vashem in Jerusalem, our multi-generational journey commemorated the tragedies and celebrated the tri-generational journey commemorated Yad Vashem in Jerusalem, our multi-generational journey commemorated the tragedies and celebrated the trilogy of the Jewish people. When asked about the theme of the Mission, ASYV board member Mark Moskovitz said, “We’re calling it Generation to Generation because L’ador V’dor is one of the things that is so important at Yad Vashem — to communicate, to teach, to disseminate knowledge about the Holocaust to younger generations.

After arriving in Vienna, we got a glimpse of the historic city, including the famous Belvedere Palace, and enjoyed the opening dinner in the beautiful Wiener Rathaus (Vienna Town Hall) with Austrian dignitaries and Lt. Shai Abramson, chief cantor of the IDF, whom we were fortunate to have with us throughout the entire Mission. Welcoming everyone on the start of this journey, Mission chair Adina Burian emphasized how “we need both on an individual level and a communal level to learn about the Holocaust.” These words set the stage for the coming week.

On the first full day of the Mission, participants explored the history of Jews in Vienna and visited sites including the Judenplatz and the Stadttempel, which is the only synagogue in Vienna to survive Kristallnacht and is still in use today. While at the synagogue, Holocaust survivor and Mission participant Felice Z. Stokes gave testimony and shared her story growing up as a Hidden Child in France. In the afternoon, we held a ceremony at Theodor Herzl’s original burial site in the old Jewish cemetery on what happened to be his 114th yahrzeit. Mission participants placed seven stones and seven flowers from the State of Israel on the burial site, representing the seven decades of Israel’s independence. Additionally, an eighth flower was placed to represent our belief in the future of both the State of Israel and the Jewish people.

In the evening, we headed to the Austrian Parliament, where we heard from Martin Engelberg, the first active member of the Jewish community to be a member of Parliament, as well as the president of the Austrian Parliament, Wolfgang Schobitsch. The highlight of the evening was meeting the chancellor of Austria, His Excellency Sebastian Kurz, who recently visited Yad Vashem. The chancellor personally welcomed the group, and especially the survivors, to the city of Vienna and reiterated that “because of our [Austria]’s historical responsibility, we [the people of Austria] have the duty to fight all forms of anti-Semitism.” To top off a day of meaning and exploration, the group gathered for dinner at the Schönbrunn Palace.

Wednesday marked the day that many Mission participants looked upon with both anxious and nervous anticipation. Visiting Mauthausen reminded everyone of the very reason we embarked on this journey. We visited the Mauthausen and Gusen concentration camps, where we heard testimony from Mauthausen survivors Leon Green and Edward Mosberg, and Gusen survivor Naftali Deutsch. This was Leon Green’s first time back to Mauthausen since being a prisoner there. He returned with his daughter, Sally, who was visibly emotional when she explained how her father was always the strongest man she’s ever known. Other members of the second and third generations read aloud the prisoner cards of their parents and grandparents. At Gusen, Jonah Deutsch, IDF soldier and grandson of survivor Nathan, Atzmau, stated his belief that “even after everything that has happened here and the unspoken losses that we have suffered in this place...we have won because we as a people have survived.”

That sense of victory was evermore present during our night in Linz, where we sang and danced in the very city Hitler intended to make the cultural capital of Nazi Germany. As Mark Moskovitz said, “We rocked the Linz Parliament with our rejoicing in a way it had never seen before.” While in Linz, we heard from the speaker of the house of Parliament, the Austrian friends of Yad Vashem, and Mission participant Peter Till. Till aptly described the bond shared by the group when he stated, “We are now locked arm in arm through the common goal of heritage and humanity.” Following a day of solemn reflection, we enjoyed a festive Fourth of July dinner marking the liberation of the Mauthausen camp and subcamps by the American armed forces.

After a long day filled with heavy emotion, the Mission awoke extremely early to depart Vienna for Israel. Just before land-ing, we were warmly welcomed by Shai Abramson singing over the flight’s PA system. Upon arrival, we headed straight to the Kotel for a shehecheyanu ceremony. From the depths of despair and tragedy, the Jewish people returned home to Eretz Israel, and on this day, we retracted those steps and celebrated 70 years of a free and independent state. Rachel Shnay, YLA co-chair, beautifully expressed her love for Israel and her heritage in her speech that first night. In speaking about anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism, Shnay urged us to always stand up and proudly say, “I am a Jew, I am a Zionist, and I am a grandchild of survivors, and I will never be silenced!” On that inspirational note, and despite our exhaustion, we danced the night away with Israeli singer Einat Saruf and lifted our voices to say Am Yisrael Chai!

On Friday, the group headed to Yad Vashem to view the two new temporary exhibits, “Flashes of Memory” (Continued on page 8)

IN THIS ISSUE

To honor, to remember, and to never forget...........................................1,8
Shattered childhood.................................................................3
Sons and soldiers.................................................................9
Austrian silent film is a Holocaust preview...............................5
Invisible Jews: surviving the Holocaust in Poland.....................9
America’s last known Nazi collaborator is deported to Germany.....10
The hidden history of Shanghai’s Jewish quarter.......................11
The only refugee camp in America for Jews fleeing the Nazis........12
The hidden history of Shanghai’s Jewish quarter.......................11
The only refugee camp in America for Jews fleeing the Nazis........12
The secret society that documented truth of the Warsaw ghetto...14
Getting Anne Frank all wrong..................................................15

To honor, to remember, and to never forget...........................................1,8
Shattered childhood........................................................................3
Sons and soldiers...........................................................................9
Austrian silent film is a Holocaust preview...............................5
Invisible Jews: surviving the Holocaust in Poland.....................9
America’s last known Nazi collaborator is deported to Germany.....10
The hidden history of Shanghai’s Jewish quarter.......................11
The only refugee camp in America for Jews fleeing the Nazis........12
The secret society that documented truth of the Warsaw ghetto...14
Getting Anne Frank all wrong......................................................15

October 2018-Tishri/Cheshvan 5779

September/October 2018-Tishri/Cheshvan 5779

Vol. 45-No. 1
ISSN 0892-1571

AMERICAN & INTERNATIONAL SOCIETIES FOR YAD VASHEM

Presenting Sebastian Kurz, the chancellor of Austria, with a gift on behalf of Yad Vashem at the Federal Chancellery in Vienna.

Left to right: Dorit Novak, Yad Vashem director general; Adina Burian, Mission chair; Leonard Wilf, ASYV chairman; H.E. Sebastian Kurz, chancellor of Austria.
“TIME, PLACE AND RELEVANCE”: YAD VASHEM’S 10TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON HOLOCAUST EDUCATION

Over 350 international leaders in Holocaust education, from five continents and 50 countries, gathered the last week of June at Yad Vashem’s International School for Holocaust Studies for its 10th International Conference on Holocaust Education, entitled “Time, Place and Relevance.” The conference presented lectures, panel discussions and interactive workshops by some of the world’s leading Holocaust historians, scholars and educators. Each day of the four-day conference tackled a range of aspects connected to Holocaust education in the 21st century. The mornings were dedicated to plenary sessions, while afternoons included breakout sessions allowing participants to play a more active role in the proceedings. The conference was held in English with simultaneous translation to French, Russian and Spanish.

The conference was "just beneath the surface." He discussed as openly as it is today — it was "just beneath the surface." He applauded the participants for their dedication in educating and keeping the memory of the Holocaust alive and relevant for future generations. Director of Yad Vashem's Visual Center Liat Benhabib gave a fascinating lecture, entitled "From Newsreels to YouTube: Film and the Holocaust." She stated: "Filmmakers try to reconstruct memory — and today, everyone is a filmmaker. Especially as survivors pass away, I believe that film will become even more important in Holocaust remembrance and education."

On the last day of the conference, participants had the opportunity to meet and interact with several Holocaust survivors from a variety of locations and backgrounds. Frieda Kliger, whose image was used on many of the conference materials and posters, was in attendance. One of the only members of her family to survive the Holocaust, Kliger described how after liberation she noticed "only sadness in people’s eyes." She and her late husband were among the first to marry after liberation, putting life into his eyes," she remembers. Kliger now has two children, four grandchildren and three great-grandchildren, some of whom were present at the conference.

The culminating point of the 10th International Conference was a candid conversation between Yad Vashem Chairman Avner Shalev and Director of the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum Piotr M.A. Cywiński. These two institutions represent two aspects of Holocaust remembrance and education: Auschwitz-Birkenau, the authentic site of the murder of over a million Jews during the Holocaust; and Yad Vashem, the World Holocaust Remembrance Center, complete with its world-renowned museum complex, archives and museums, and art and artifacts collection. Each of these institutions contributes and shapes the way the world relates to the Holocaust, remembers it, and teaches it to future generations. During the session, which was moderated by Director of Yad Vashem’s International Institute for Holocaust Research Dr. Iael Nidam-Orvieto, the two shared their perspectives of where Holocaust remembrance and education is headed in an age when there will be no more Holocaust survivors left to tell their stories.

While Shalev explained how Yad Vashem stresses the human experience in its museums as well as in its educational approach and programs, Cywiński stated: "If the Holocaust is only part of history, it isn’t enough. It needs to be part of our history."

Throughout the conference, participants had the opportunity to network with fellow educators from around the world, thus gaining new ideas for effective teaching methods. Concluded one educator from the United States: "The ‘cross-pollination’ exchange of ideas and points of view between people from different backgrounds will only enrich the education of our students."
SHATTERED CHILDHOOD

By Andrew Perez, The Sun

March 14, 1939, started out happily. It was grandmother Klara’s birthday, and the Sax family spent all day celebrating. When evening approached and the festivities wound down, the family hunkered next to the piano to hear music. But instead of soothing melodies, a loud and brash voice rattled the tiny room, warning listeners that thunder was coming.

“They were afraid to play with me. At school, I didn’t have any friends,” she said.

She worked in the children’s garden with her father, a kind friend and nice person. Her parents told her that if she had always been so friendly and nice. But her father always told her that if you worked (around food) you could get into very serious trouble being around me. So, regrettably, I did.”

A couple of days after her father told a customer of his who was not a Jew that if you worked (around food) you could get into very serious trouble being around me. So, regrettably, I did.”

“Life was now much different for 11-year-old Oskar and Erna Goldschmiedova. Sax was the only child of Oskar and Erna Goldschmiedova. The family moved to Brno in 1934, when she was six.

“The driver refused to take us home,” Sax recalled. “not because he hated us like my father’s employer, but because he was afraid. He was afraid that he would be caught giving us a ride. So, he dropped us off at the train station, which still allowed Jews to travel, and we got back home that way.”

Home was no longer home

A s the family rounded the corner of their neighborhood, Sax saw two SS officers with revolvers at their front door. The family stood helpless on the curbside as the officers ran-sacked their home, helping themselves to whatever they wanted, including the keys to their brand-new car.

“The non-Jewish neighborhood children were afraid to avoid me,” she said. “They were afraid to play with me. At the time I couldn’t understand why. I had always been a kind friend and person. My parents told me that if I really cared about my friends I would let them go because they could get into very serious trouble being around me. So, regrettably, I did.”

March 14, 1939, started out happily. It was grandmother Klara’s birthday, and the Sax family spent all day celebrating. When evening approached and the festivities wound down, the family hunkered next to the piano to hear music. But instead of soothing melodies, a loud and brash voice rattled the tiny room, warning listeners that thunder was coming.

“They were afraid to play with me. At school, I didn’t have any friends,” she said.

She worked in the children’s garden with her father, a kind friend and nice person. Her parents told her that if she had always been so friendly and nice. But her father always told her that if you worked (around food) you could get into very serious trouble being around me. So, regrettably, I did.”

A couple of days after her father told a customer of his who was not a Jew that if you worked (around food) you could get into very serious trouble being around me. So, regrettably, I did.”

“Life was now much different for 11-year-old Oskar and Erna Goldschmiedova. Sax was the only child of Oskar and Erna Goldschmiedova. The family moved to Brno in 1934, when she was six.

“The driver refused to take us home,” Sax recalled. “not because he hated us like my father’s employer, but because he was afraid. He was afraid that he would be caught giving us a ride. So, he dropped us off at the train station, which still allowed Jews to travel, and we got back home that way.”

Home was no longer home

A s the family rounded the corner of their neighborhood, Sax saw two SS officers with revolvers at their front door. The family stood helpless on the curbside as the officers ran-sacked their home, helping themselves to whatever they wanted, including the keys to their brand-new car.

“At the train station, train station. Jewish captives were pushed into a different train, filthier and more dilapidated than the last. The ride was even longer, Sax said, taking almost an entire day. Prisoners were consumed with fear, dampened only by exhaustion.

Then the train finally lurched to a stop. Sax trudged into Theresienstadt, where she would spend the next three and a half years fighting to stay alive.

Theresienstadt was a concentration camp located in Terezin in German-occupied Czechoslovakia. It was named for Saint Theresa, “the little flower of Jesus,” but there was nothing divine in the Nazi “showplace” detention area. Theresienstadt would operate for three and a half years, from November 24, 1941, to May 9, 1945.

Theresienstadt was used as a birthing facility in Nazi propaganda as an area of resettlement for elderly Czech Jewish citizens, who they claimed could retire in comfort and safety. In reality Theresienstadt served as a transit ghetto, where the deported Jews were evaluated and sent to other camps based on their perceived usefulness to the Nazi regime as laborers, sex slaves, or subjects of sadistic medical experimentation.

“As soon as we arrived we had to surrender our belongings,” Sax said. “Everything was taken from us. From glasses and jewelry to the gold fillings in our mouths. Then we had to line up for inspection. The Nazis wanted only the best of us. If you were sick, or too young or too old, they took you to the side and shot you. They only wanted 18- to 38-year-olds, so I had to lie about my age in order to stay alive.”

Theresienstadt was composed of five barracks. Sax and her mother lived in the Dreßner Kaserne, while her father had to live in Sudeten Kaserne. Sax would not see her father again for four years.

Sax said conditions at the camp were squalid.

“The camp was in immense disrepair,” she said. “The cots were full of thousands of bedbugs, and you could feel them crawling on you in the night. There was a lack of food and drinkable water. The toilet was simply a cut-out box that was placed over a hole in the floor. It was very unsanitary, to say the least.”

When she arrived in Theresienstadt, Sax ran into her former gym coach, Fredy Hirsch, who gave her and her mother a valuable survival strategy.

“Before the invasion, they had known each other for more than three years,” Sax recalled. “The customer of his who was not a Jew that if you worked (around food) you could get into very serious trouble being around me. So, regrettably, I did.”

“Viktor, who lived across the street from us,” she said. “Before the invasion, they had known each other for more than three years,” Sax recalled. “The customer of his who was not a Jew that if you worked (around food) you could get into very serious trouble being around me. So, regrettably, I did.”

“Viktor, who lived across the street from us,” she said. “Before the invasion, they had known each other for more than three years,” Sax recalled. “The customer of his who was not a Jew that if you worked (around food) you could get into very serious trouble being around me. So, regrettably, I did.”

“He advised us to find a job that worked around food because you could always sneak a bite of what you were working on,” she said. “He told us that if you worked (around food) you could get 600 calories a day, but if you didn’t work, you wouldn’t get 600.”

They followed Hirsch’s counsel. Sax’s mother worked as a potato peeler and smuggled bits of the peeled skin back to her daughter. She worked her way up to a supervi-sory position and got more food privi-leges. Since taking showers was a rare luxury, Erna would save kitchen wash water and Sax would bathe in potato water.

Sax worked in the children’s garden growing vegetables. She was under constant supervision. Anyone caught stealing food would get killed on the spot. Sax faced the wrath of SS offic-ers after attempting to shake an apple out of a tree. She was lucky, she said. Instead of execution she was placed in 24-hour solitary con-finement with no food or water.

While Sax and her mother found ways to survive Theresienstadt, oth-ers in her family did not.

Sax’s grandmother Klara died of cancer in Theresienstadt. Camp offici-als knew she was ill, but gave her only simple pain medication as she wasted away. Her uncle Vilem and his wife wereurance.
ITALY’S HOLOCAUST EXECUTIONERS REVEALED IN “HISTORIOGRAPHICAL COUNTERBLAST”


In his recent book, Simon Levis Sullam, an expert on the Holocaust, offers a comprehensive account of the role of Italian Jews in the war and the resistance. The book is a valuable resource for understanding the contributions of the Rittchen Boys to the Allied cause.

The Rittchen Boys were a group of Jewish soldiers who fought alongside the Allies in World War II. They were known as the Ritchie Boys because they were from the Italian city of Trieste, which was occupied by Italy until 1942. The Ritchie Boys were part of the Italian forces fighting against the Nazis, and they played a significant role in the liberation of Europe.

Levis Sullam’s book provides a detailed account of the Ritchie Boys’ experiences, including their training, their role in the war, and their contributions to the Allied cause. The book also includes interviews with the Ritchie Boys, as well as with Italian and American historians and military officials.

The book is a valuable resource for understanding the contributions of the Rittchen Boys to the Allied cause. It is a must-read for anyone interested in the history of World War II, the Holocaust, and the role of Jews in the war.
RECOVERED IN PARIS FLEA MARKET,
AUSTRIAN SILENT FILM IS A HOLOCAUST PREVIEW

Based on the famous novel and digitally restored, City Without Jews includes stunningly prescient scenes depicting passage of anti-Jewish laws and deportations from Vienna.

BY RENEE GHERT-ZAND, THE TIMES OF ISRAEL

A Jewish man is beaten up on the street. Jewish husbands are separated from their non-Jewish wives and children, and deported on trains. A Jewish community, led by rabbis carrying a Torah scroll, marches down a dark road as it is banished from town.

These snapshots appear to be Holocaust history — but they are not. These are scenes from a silent Austrian film made a decade prior to the enactment of the anti-Jewish Nuremberg laws, and some 15 years before the outbreak of World War II.

The 1924 film City Without Jews is based on a popular 1922 novel by Austrian writer and journalist Hugo Bettauer. It astutely predicted what would come to pass. But only partially.

The film was conceived as a satirical response to the anti-Semitism gaining popular and political strength in Austria during the early interwar period. Its plot depicted the scapegoating of the Jews for the country's problems and their subsequent expulsion.

But unlike in the real Holocaust, these Jews were eventually reinstated when the Austrians realized their country was suffering from the absence of the creative and successful Jewish community. In real life, Austria's Jews were deported beginning in October 1938, and most did not come back. Approximately one-third of Austria's 190,000 Jews were killed, and only 5,000 were in the country by the end of the war.

City Without Jews was originally presumed to have been lost to history. However, a surprise discovery by a collector of a complete and relatively intact copy of the movie in a Paris flea market in 2016 led to a yearlong painstaking analog and digital restoration and preservation project by Film Archiv Austria, the national Austrian film archive. The archive dedicated a team of six to the effort, which cost €202,000, of which more than 40% was raised in a crowdfunding campaign.

To mark the 80th anniversary of the Nazi Anschluss of Austria this year, and next's observance of the centennial of the establishment of the First Austrian Republic, the restored version of City Without Jews is being screened throughout Austria, and in selected European cities.

"We can't celebrate the 100th anniversary of the First Republic without significant variations between the two copies of the film. Although Bettauer's book has characters clearly based on political figures of the day, the film is a bit looser in its characterizations. Yet, it is clear in the film that the Christian Socialists came to power led by the fictional Chancellor Dr. Schwerdtfeger, a fanatical anti-Semitic. Convinced that the Jews are ruining the republic, he has the National Assembly pass a law forcing all Jews to emigrate by the end of the year. The Jews — religious and assimilated alike — leave, taking with them whatever belongings they can carry.

Soon, everything starts to fall apart. Commerce slows down, the cosmopolitan cafes revert to seedy taverns, and the national currency goes into free fall. Realizing the terrible mistake that has been made, the National Assembly decides to pass a law welcoming the Jews back.

The hero of the film, a Jewish artist named Leo Strakosch, sneaks back into Vienna disguised as a non-Jewish Parisian painter. He, along with his non-Jewish fiancée, Lotte, the daughter of a sympathetic member of the National Assembly, schemes to ensure the new law is passed. They kidnap an anti-Semitic member of the assembly and keep him away from the chamber until voting is over.

In the book, the assembly member is committed to an insane asylum. In the film, he is merely knocked out for a while, and is shown dreaming that he is trapped in a disorienting, claustrophobic cell, with Stars of David closing in on him from all directions.

Finally, the Jews are welcomed back with great fanfare — Leo Strakosch, the first among them.

"The French flea market find meant that we could now reconstruct the film in a way that was more political and socially acceptable, when it came to anti-Semitism," said Dr. Patricia Heberer-Rice, senior historian at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C.

"He was trying to warn this leadership that if you remove a significant, flourishing and contributing community like the Jews, you are setting yourself up for failure," she said. According to Heberer-Rice, it's significant that Bettauer set his novel in Vienna, and not Berlin.

"He chose the setting aptly, because it was indicative of the fierce anti-Semitism in Austria. Hitler and Eichmann were from Austria. So many of Eichmann's men were Austrian. Bettauer believed that what he depicted in City Without Jews' was a possibility in Vienna," Heberer-Rice said.

Despite having made City Without Jews, the film's mixed Jewish-Gentile cast and crew did not necessarily heed the film's warning. According to Wostry, they all had different fates. Some emigrated, and some were killed during the war. The film's director went on to join the Nazi party.

Those who made the film — let alone audiences — probably did not grasp just how prophetic it was.

Child cries as her Jewish father parts from her in the restored City Without Jews. Jews read edict of expulsion from Vienna in the restored City Without Jews.
that read near the notorious gateway lettering barked the train and staggered Hitler’s “Final Solution”) and II-Birkenau (a central component of Polish political prisoners), Auschwitz concentration camp designed to hold Auschwitz was built in occupied Poland in 1940. It consisted of three units: Auschwitz I (the original concentration camp designed to hold Polish political prisoners), Auschwitz II-Birkenau (a central component of Hitler’s “Final Solution”) and Auschwitz III-Monowitz (a labor camp). An estimated 1.3 million people were sent to Auschwitz, 1.1 million would die by extermination or starvation.

Sax was sent to Auschwitz I. She remembered that as she disembarked the train and staggered toward the camp, she saw a full orchestra of Jewish musicians playing near the notorious gateway lettering that read Arbeit macht frei (Work will set you free). She recalled the music sounding so beautiful because it had been years since she had heard any form of melody. She learned later that all the talented musicians were killed. Herded through the gates of Auschwitz, Sax was whisked away by a German officer and sent to the intake line. “Everyone was forced to strip and be shaved from head to toe,” she said. “I felt humiliated, having some- one shave my most intimate parts. The Nazis would stare at our bare bodies and snicker and laugh, mock- ing us.”

Sax was then marched single file to stand before a tall man wielding a crop whip. Sax remembered the man’s handsome gap-toothed smile, his neatly parted black hair and his pristine pressed senior Nazi uniform. Sax was face to face with Dr. Josef Mengele, the sadistic “Angel of Auschwitz,” Sax remembered most clearly. “Out of the three camps I was in, Auschwitz was the worst,” she said. “I felt humiliated, having someone shave my most intimate parts. The Nazis would stare at our bare bodies and snicker and laugh, mocking us.”

Sax was then marched single file to stand before a tall man wielding a crop whip. Sax remembered the man’s handsome gap-toothed smile, his neatly parted black hair and his pristine pressed senior Nazi uniform. Sax was face to face with Dr. Josef Mengele, the sadistic “Angel of Auschwitz.”

“Just as Sax’s mother finished applying the improvised makeup, Mengele slithered into the barracks. He ordered everyone to strip and he began what he called his “appeal.” Sax’s mother rushed in to spread ink onto her daughter’s cheeks, which brightened them up considerably and feigned the appearance of a healthy glow. She then took a red wrapper from an imitation coffee product and smoothed the ink onto her sister’s cheeks, which brightened them up considerably and feigned the appearance of a healthy glow.

Just as Sax’s mother finished applying the improvised makeup, Mengele slithered into the barracks. He ordered everyone to strip and he began what he called his “appeal.” Sax’s mother rushed in to spread ink onto her daughter’s cheeks, which brightened them up considerably and feigned the appearance of a healthy glow. She then took a red wrapper from an imitation coffee product and smoothed the ink onto her sister’s cheeks, which brightened them up considerably and feigned the appearance of a healthy glow.

“Out of the three camps I was in, Auschwitz was the worst,” she said. “I felt humiliated, having someone shave my most intimate parts. The Nazis would stare at our bare bodies and snicker and laugh, mocking us.”

Sax was then marched single file to stand before a tall man wielding a crop whip. Sax remembered the man’s handsome gap-toothed smile, his neatly parted black hair and his pristine pressed senior Nazi uniform. Sax was face to face with Dr. Josef Mengele, the sadistic “Angel of Auschwitz.”

“Just as Sax’s mother finished applying the improvised makeup, Mengele slithered into the barracks. He ordered everyone to strip and he began what he called his “appeal.” Sax’s mother rushed in to spread ink onto her daughter’s cheeks, which brightened them up considerably and feigned the appearance of a healthy glow. She then took a red wrapper from an imitation coffee product and smoothed the ink onto her sister’s cheeks, which brightened them up considerably and feigned the appearance of a healthy glow.

Just as Sax’s mother finished applying the improvised makeup, Mengele slithered into the barracks. He ordered everyone to strip and he began what he called his “appeal.” Sax’s mother rushed in to spread ink onto her daughter’s cheeks, which brightened them up considerably and feigned the appearance of a healthy glow. She then took a red wrapper from an imitation coffee product and smoothed the ink onto her sister’s cheeks, which brightened them up considerably and feigned the appearance of a healthy glow.

“Out of the three camps I was in, Auschwitz was the worst,” she said. “I felt humiliated, having someone shave my most intimate parts. The Nazis would stare at our bare bodies and snicker and laugh, mocking us.”

Sax was then marched single file to stand before a tall man wielding a crop whip. Sax remembered the man’s handsome gap-toothed smile, his neatly parted black hair and his pristine pressed senior Nazi uniform. Sax was face to face with Dr. Josef Mengele, the sadistic “Angel of Auschwitz.”

“One particular encounter proved almost fatal for Sax’s aunt Elfie and little cousin Dita. Elfie was not feeling well, and Mengele was on his way to inspect the women’s barracks. Mengele sent ill prisoners to the gas chambers. Sax’s mother was terribly worried and started to slap Elfie’s face in a desper- ate effort to bring color to her cheeks. She then took a red wrapper from an imitation coffee product and winter cold or malnutrition. Others were shot for holding up the line and left to decay on the side of the road. Oskar and three other prisoners (children) died prior to the death march and hid for 24 hours in kettles in the camp kitchen. When they slid the lids off their hiding places, they found the camp entirely empty. After taking some fresh clothes and a few sup- plies, they fled into the mountains, running at night and sleeping by day. After many arduous days on the run, Oskar reunited with his stepbrother Manfred Konka, who had managed to avoid the camps by bribing Nazis and hiding. Konka made a living selling hunting coats, ties and shirts, and was able to barter for supplies. He graciously provided Oskar money, food and lodging.

“Soon the men heard some glorious news. Russian troops had pushed into Eastern Europe and the German’s hellish reign would soon crumble. Oskar had somehow sur- vived the worst cruelty mankind was capable of and the searing hatred Nazis had for the Jewish people. Yet even then he still held out hope that his wife and daughter were still alive.

Meanwhile, Sax and her mother were transferred from Auschwitz to another labor camp, Oederan, in Saxony, Germany. Life at Oederan was less demand- ing and deadly compared to Auschwitz. Prisoners were not tat- tood or forced to wear prison uni- forms. Instead, Jewish prisoners’ clothes were painted with a giant white X andstripe every week. Sax still has the long black dress her mother wore, the huge X and line crudely scrawled in fading white paint. Sax was now 16, and she tried to help older Jewish prisoners at the camp and make a difference in her own way. Her Nazi guards ordered her to work at the camp’s bullet facto- ry. When no one was looking she would commit sabotage by sneaking sand into the bullet machines, making the German ammunition useless. In the winter when electricity was rationed and there was not enough power to warm the whole camp, Sax volunteered to go out into the gnaw- ing winter freeze to lay out electrical cables in the snow.

In the early morning of April 11, 1945, Sax and her mother were roused from sleep by German sol- diers, ordered to grab their belong- ings and sent outside. “I remember as we went outside there was a group of Nazi youth standing there, pointing bayonets at us,” Sax said. “I asked one of them how old he was and he wasn’t much older than I was. After being counted, the prisoners were hosed down and led to trains bound for Flossenberg, an extermina- tion camp.

The way to Flossenberg was in dis- repair. Roads were poached by bomb craters and bridges damaged. Russians had come to liberate the Jewish prisoners. Hitler’s Nazi Reich was in its final days. Most German soldiers went on a great spree that they could and going into hiding. Those left behind dressed in the tat- tered striped pajamas of the prison- ers, hoping to blend in.

Russian soldiers found the train car- rying Sax and about 500 other prison- ers, offering them food, water and medical supplies. She realized their Nazi captivity was over. “The soldiers were nice to me, giv- ing me chocolate,” she said. “Though not all of them were so gentle. Some of the Russians felt that since they had liberated the Jews, they were entitled to some of the women. Many women were raped, but my mother helped me by swaddling me up in a blanket and pretending I was a baby.”

Since the rails were bomed out by the Allied forces, Sax and the rest of the passengers were forced to walk and ride open wagons back to Terezin. The trip took two agonizing weeks. As they rounded the corner to the entrance of the citadel, survivors could hardly contain their joy. Their hopes were quickly dashed. They were not yet free. Everyone was forced into typhoid quarantine, and they would spend the next month a stone’s throw from freedom.

Time crept slowly. There is one day Sax remembered most clearly. “I was in the kitchen working and someone yelled at me, ‘Ruthie, there is someone at the gate who wants to talk to you,’” Sax said. “So I ran to the gate and I saw this really thin, clean- shaven man. At first I didn’t know who he was, but then the man smiled at me and said, ‘Don’t you remember your own father?’ My father had always had a mustache and was very porty, so it fit me a while to recognize him. But when I finally did, I was in shock.

All these years I had thought my father was dead. I ran toward him, standing on the other side of the gate. I wanted to hug him, but the gate was electrified. I ran to my mother yelling,
ITALY’S HOLOCAUST EXECUTIONERS REVEALED IN “HISTORIOGRAPHICAL COUNTERBLAST”

(Continued from page 4)

Jews in hiding, from which the denouncers could profit handsomely. The chapter “Hunting Down Jews in Florence” outlines several rounds up of Jews that took place in November of 1943. The mass arrests were carried out by German military personnel and Italian Fascists, including members of the notorious Carlista gang, “one of the most vicious actors” of the era, according to Levis Sullam. “On the night between November 16 and 17, the infamous gang took part in the raid on the Franciscan convent in the Piazza del Carmine, where numerous Jewish women and their children had taken refuge,” he writes. “They were held prisoner in the convent for four days before being transferred to Verona by truck to the Fossoli [transit] camp was not yet operational — and deported from there to Auschwitz.”

According to survivor accounts, “the Fascists guarding the prisoners subjected the women to sexual molestation and extortion.”

Another Holocaust role performed by at least hundreds of Italians involved posing as ‘guides’ to smuggle Jews across the border to safety. The cottage industry of betraying Jews in this manner fills a chapter called “On the Border: Jews on the Run,” in which Levis Sullam outlines the lethal scam.

“Guides generally demanded between five and ten thousand lire per person to accompany people across the border, although the fee could rise to forty thousand if the route was particularly difficult,” he wrote. “They could double their earnings by betraying their clients: they would pocket the fee as well as the reward for turning them in.”

By the end of the Holocaust, 8,869 Jews had been deported from Italy. Of those individuals, 6,746 were sent to Auschwitz-Birkenau, and nearly all of them were murdered in the gas chambers upon arrival. An additional 303 Jews were killed in massacres committed on Italian soil.

In the assessment of author Levis Sullam, the Italian state has not done enough to atone for the role of thousands of its citizens during the Holocaust. In comparison to Germany, he believes, there has been a lack of “self-critical gestures” recognizing what took place during the war.

“Pervasive denial and unbridled righteousness have always characterized Italian society,” Sullam writes. “In his capacity as a witness to the Holocaust, Mr. Sullam” — and the author isn’t shy about his role as an “advocate” — urges Italy to repent for its crimes and take responsibility for its actions.

In conclusion, the author calls for an end to the “culture of forgetting” and encourages Italian society to “acknowledge the past and learn from it.”

Sullam’s book is available for purchase on Amazon and other retailers.

September/October 2018 - Tishri/Cheshvan 5779 MARTYRDOM & RESISTANCE Page 7
and “They Say There Is a Land.” We heard from Avner Shalev, chairman of the Yad Vashem Directorate, and YLA member Sam Gordon. Gordon thanked Yad Vashem for serving as “the bridge that connected [him] to what happened to [his] grandparents during the Shoah” and for helping him understand that “it is now up to [his] generation to carry on this never-ending, all-important duty to enlighten and educate as many people as possible, both Jews and non-Jews alike.”

On Sunday, we drove south to visit the Ariel Sharon Training Campus in the Negev, Israel’s largest, newest training base and home to the Yad Vashem Educational Center. We heard from Colonel Avi Motola, commander of the training base, and visited both the medical training simulator and the Yad Vashem interactive display, entitled “The Human Image in the Shadow of Death.” Later, we traveled to kibbutz Hatzerim and learned about Netafim, Israel’s innovative and cutting-edge water irrigation system.

Ceremonies were held in the Yad Vashem synagogue to honor Yad Vashem’s newest benefactors, Steven Baral (USA) and Evelyn and Jaime Ellstein (Mexico). Addressing the group, Baral, the son of survivors, stated “Today is one of the happiest days of my life because I am supporting Yad Vashem and because I am here with you on the Mission.” The Ellsteins were on the previous Mission and returned this year with three generations of their family. In the synagogue, we also enjoyed a wonderful and uplifting performance by Yonina before heading to the lively Machane Yehuda Market. Rabbi Yisrael Meir Lau, a Holocaust survivor and the chairman of the Yad Vashem Council, joined us for Shabbat, and Shai Abramson led a beautiful Havdalah service after a relaxing day.

We concluded the day with a delicious dinner at kibbutz Netiv HaLamed-Heh, followed by a performance by Vertigo, one of Israel’s leading dance companies. The group spent Monday morning at the Yad Vashem International School for Holocaust Studies, engaging in workshops on anti-Semitism. We also paid tribute to the Wilf family for their generous donation of the first building of the Shoah Heritage Campus, the Joseph Wilf Curatorial Center, which will be home to all of the museum’s curators and professional staff. In his remarks at the closing dinner in the Square of Hope that evening, ASYV Chairman Leonard Wilf reminded everyone that “there will soon come a time when it will be our responsibility to make the voices of all survivors heard, for us to be their voices and to ensure that the world never forgets.”

This sense of responsibility, which Yad Vashem and its supporters have wholeheartedly taken on, was echoed and applauded by many throughout the evening, including His Excellency Mr. Reuven Rivlin, president of Israel. It is our responsibility and our duty to honor, to remember, and to never forget. To remember and to never forget may sound redundant, but we distinguish the two because it is not enough not to forget — that seems too passive. Now that we are more than a generation removed from the Holocaust, it becomes even clearer that remembering will have to be an active effort. On the first night in Vienna, Professor Dina Porat, chief historian of Yad Vashem and scholar in residence on the Mission, asked everyone to “please remember that just to say we will keep the memory is the very first step on a very difficult journey.” Every single person who participated in the 2018 Yad Vashem Mission took that step and then some. As the sun set on the 2018 Mission, we reflected on our journey from Herzl’s home in Vienna to the Jewish homeland and rejoiced in the extraordinary mishpucha formed over the last eight days.
Eddie Bielawski is probably one of the youngest Holocaust survivors with any memory of the war years. The Bielawski family survived the Holocaust by becoming invisible. Here is the story of one of many miracles.

I was born in the town of Wegrow in northeastern Poland in mid-1938. Not a propitious time and place for a Jewish child to be born. One memory that has been etched indelibly in my mind is the sight of the Nazi army marching toward Russia. Our house was located on the main road leading to the Russian frontier. Day and night they marched - soldiers, trucks, tanks and more soldiers, in a never-ending line — an invincible force. I remember my father, holding me in his arms, saying to my mother, “Who is going to stop them? Certainly not the Russians.”

One night, my father had a dream. He would build a bunker under a house. It would be covered with boards, on top of which would be placed soil and bits of straw which would render it invisible. In order to camouflage the entrance, he would construct a shallow box and fill it with earth and cover it with straw so that it would be indistinguishable from the rest of the earthen floor. Air would be supplied through a drain pipe buried in the earth. This was to be our Noah's Ark that would save us from the initial deluge.

It took my father about three weeks to finish the job. When he was done, he took my mother and sister into the shed and asked them if they could find the trap door. When they could not, he was satisfied.

My mother prepared dry biscuits, jars of jam made out of beets, some tinned goods such as sardines, some sugar and salt. We placed two buckets in the bunker. One bucket was filled with water; the other bucket was empty and would serve as the latrine. We also took down some blankets, a couple of pillows and a “gogel mogel” (a concoction of egg). That, as we all know, was our Noah's Ark that would save us.

Next was the construction of the entrance. To control the cough. If anyone heard, they would know as “Shema Israel” as we all sat still and listened to the black devils' story. The black devils broke the rusty lock and came into the small shed. They looked around and started to bang their rifles on the ground, listening for a hollow sound.

A luck would have it, they stood on the trap door and hit the solid ground all around — but they didn’t actually hit the trap door itself. I remember us just sitting there, helplessly holding our breaths.

The day after Yom Kippur, I remember being yanked out of bed (it was about four in the morning) and rushed down, together with my father, mother and sister, into the bunker that my father had prepared. When the commotion began, my grandmother Gittel came and locked us in from the outside as we had previously arranged, and then she herself led to her own hiding place. Was this another of the many miracles of our survival?

I remember hearing shooting, shouting, screaming and cries of “Shema Israel” as we all sat still and listened to the black devils' story. When the commotion began, my grandmother Gittel came and locked us in from the outside as we had previously arranged, and then she herself led to her own hiding place. Was this another of the many miracles of our survival?

Later that morning, we heard Ukrainian voices. We were more afraid of the Ukrainians than of the Germans on the street. It was their job to round up the Jews, put them in horse-drawn wagons and send them to Treblinka. They were referred to by us as the “black devils” because of the black uniforms they wore, and one could expect no mercy from them.

As luck would have it, they stood on the trap door and hit the solid ground all around — but they didn’t actually hit the trap door itself. I remember us just sitting there, helplessly holding our breaths. When my grandmother Gittel came and ordered her and her husband out. Her husband, Mendel Laufer, refused to leave and was shot on the spot. My grandmother managed to run away and hide in a nearby wheat field for a few days. She then came to check on our situation and stayed with us for a couple of nights.

Our bunker, however, was too small to accommodate all of us. It was crowded with the four of us — five was impossible — so my father sat in the shed above the trap door while everyone else was underground. This endangered all of us. My grandmother realized that with no space, no air and no food, we couldn’t survive. So, after two nights, she said that she was going to stay with a farmer she knew who might be able to hide her.

I believe that my parents knew that she was sacrificing herself so that we would have a chance to survive. She went out and never came back. After the war, we heard that someone had seen her being transported to Treblinka. That, as we all know, was a one-way trip. One story we heard was that as she was being taken to Treblinka, she tried to run away and was shot. We will never know what really happened. My mother carried the burden that her mother had sacrificed herself for us for the rest of her life. She always thought that maybe there could have been another way, but we all know that there really wasn’t.

Time dragged on. Food was running out and we were becoming desperate. To add to our problems, I developed a cough. I could control my voice and not cry, but I could not control the cough. If anyone heard, we were dead. What to do?

My father opened our trap door to let some air in, and lo and behold, a chicken had laid an egg right at that very spot! True, there were chickens in the area, but in all the time that we spent in our bunker, we never saw a chicken and certainly not an egg.

My father took the egg, broke it into a glass, added sugar and made a “gogel mogel” (a concoction of beaten egg and sugar). I drank it and just stopped coughing. It was one of the many miracles of our survival.

Excerpt from Invisible Jews: Surviving the Holocaust in Poland by Eddie Bielawski
The last known Nazi collaborator living in the U.S. was deported to Germany.

Jakiw Palij, 95, had lived in New York City for decades. He served as a guard at a Nazi forced-labor camp during the Second World War.

In a statement released by the White House after Palij landed in Germany, President Donald Trump commended the actions of Immigration and Customs Enforcement for “removing this war criminal from United States soil.”

“Despite a court ordering his deportation in 2004, past administrations were unsuccessful in removing Palij, the statement added. “To protect the promise of freedom for Holocaust survivors and their families, President Trump prioritized the removal of Palij.”

Palij lived quietly in the U.S. for years, as a draftsmen and then as a retiree, until nearly three decades ago when investigators found his name on an old Nazi roster and a fellow former guard spilled the secret that he was “living somewhere in America.”

Members of New York’s Congressional delegation last year urged the Trump administration to deport Palij, whose citizenship was revoked in 2003 based on his wartime activities, human rights abuses and immigration fraud. A federal court also ruled that he had assisted in the persecution of prisoners at the camp, though it stopped short of finding him responsible for deaths.

Palij was born on former Polish territory, an area now located in Ukraine. He immigrated to the U.S. in 1949 and became a citizen in 1957, but concealed his Nazi service, saying that he spent World War II working in a factory on a farm.

Palij told Justice Department investigators who showed up at his door in 1993, “I would never have received my visa if I told the truth. Everyone lied.”

Palij later admitted to officials that he had attended a Nazi SS training camp in Trawniki in German-occupied Poland and then served as an armed guard at its adjacent labor camp.

On November 3, 1943, SS and police units shot to death around 6,000 Jewish inmates at the camp, killing almost all of its prisoners in a single massacre. Palij has said he was forced to be a guard.

“By serving as an armed guard at the Trawniki labor camp and preventing the escape of Jewish prisoners during his Nazi service, Palij played an indispensable role in ensuring that the Trawniki Jewish victims met their horrific fate at the hands of the Nazis,” the White House statement said.

But because Germany, Poland, Ukraine and other countries refused to take him, he continued living in limbo in the two-story, red brick home in Queens he shared with his wife, Maria, now 86. His continued presence there outraged the Jewish community, attracting frequent protests over the years that featured such chants as “your neighbor is a Nazi.”

The White House statement added that the Trump administration conducted extensive negotiations with Germany to secure Palij’s deportation because he never held German citizenship.

Germany’s Foreign Office said its decision to accept Palij showed the country was accepting its “moral responsibility.”

Foreign Minister Heiko Maas told German tabloid Bild that those who “committed the worst crimes on behalf of Germans” would be held accountable.

Germany’s Interior Ministry and Justice Ministry and Chancellor Angela Merkel’s office did not comment on where Palij would be taken in Germany and what would happen to him. Local media reported Palij was transferred by ambulance to a nursing home.

German prosecutors have previously said it does not appear that there’s enough evidence to charge him with wartime crimes.

(Continued from page 6)

On June 15, 1945, after 30 days in quarantine, Sax, her mother and the thousands of other former prisoners were told that they were free to go.

Where to go was the big question. Czechoslovakia was in shambles and supplies scarce. Sax and her family would have to rebuild their lives from scratch. It was years before they were economically stable again.

“Everything we owned was gone,” she said. “The only thing I had was a blanket. My parents and I made our way from Terezin back to Brno. We relied on the hospitality of strangers and what little food and shelter we could get at the Red Cross stations scattered throughout Czechoslovakia.”

When they finally reached Brno, the family’s former home had been converted into offices for the Nazis. Since Sax’s father had gotten a month’s head start, he had managed to procure another apartment with minimal furnishings. Its former occupants had a daughter Sax’s age, and she wore the clothes the girl left behind.

The family would get meals from a local soup kitchen in a hotel basement from the train station. “At first the soup was very bare, just broth,” Sax said. “Then, as the weeks went by and the kitchens got more supplies, the soup grew heartier. Potatoes, leftovers, canned food. It wasn’t much, but food is food.”

Jewish children were eventually allowed to return to school, and Sax completed her primary education. She enrolled in a local design school, where she studied the history and design of clothing. She earned a diploma in clothing design.

“I have always loved clothes and sewing, ever since I was a little girl,” Sax said. “My dream was to live in Paris and follow in my father’s footsteps and work as a tailor. When I came to America I became a factory worker, but I would still always be sewing, creating.”

While Sax was in school, she began to correspond with a second cousin, Kurt Sax. They had played together as children.

Kurt fled Austria at the start of World War II and ended up in Northern Italy.
Two German Jewish refugee women stand behind the counter of the Elite Provision Store (delicatessen) in Shanghai.

To understand the significance of this gesture, it’s important to understand the widely held but mistaken belief that Jews in Nazi-occupied Europe were never, at any point, permitted to leave. Henry Wenkart, a Holocaust survivor featured in the documentary 50 Children: The Rescue Mission of Mr. and Mrs. Kraus, explained this misconception: “What people don’t understand is that at the beginning, you could get out. Everybody could get out. Nobody would let us in!”

In fact, until 1941, when the routes immigrants used to get to Shanghai were closed off by the war and the Germans decreed that Jews could no longer emigrate from the Reich, Jews in occupied Europe were not only allowed to leave, but were pressured to do so through a system of intimidation and force. Although they didn’t make it easy, the Nazis, eager to implement their plan to rid Europe of its Jewish population — to make it judenrein or “cleansed” of Jews — did allow Jews to leave under certain conditions.

“Potential refugees needed to get a variety of papers approved by governmental authorities, including the Gestapo, before they could leave,” writes Steve Hochstadt in an email. Hochstadt is a professor emeritus of history at Illinois College and author of the book Exodus to Shanghai.

“One document was the Unbedenklichkeitsbescheinigung, literally a certificate of harmless-ness,” showing that there were no problems with this person, such as owing taxes. Jews needed to prove that they had registered their valuables with the authorities so they could be properly confiscated. …

Though difficult to obtain, those documents, along with proof of passage to another country and/or a visa for permission to enter another country, were enough to get one out of Europe. Surprisingly, even for those already detained in concentration camps, the door, metaphorically speaking, was open, provided they could prove they would leave Germany once released.

But of course, to walk through the door, one had to have some place to walk to, and that, for most Jews, was their biggest obstacle. Most countries made it either virtually impossible to enter (such as Switzerland, which insisted all German Jews have a red “J” stamped in their passports), imposed untenable conditions on refugees, or just simply wouldn’t issue visas.

Shanghai — already home to a few thousand Jewish immigrants who had started slowly arriving as early as the mid-19th century for business, or later to escape the Russian Revolution — not only did not require visas for entry, but issued them with алкicity to those seeking asylum. In many cases, newly arrived immigrants were not even asked to show passports. It was not until 1939 that restrictions were placed on Jewish immigrants coming into Shanghai, and even then these limitations were decided not by the Chinese, but by the amalgam of foreign powers that controlled the city at the time. This body, made up of both Westerners and Japanese who wanted to restrict the influx of Jews, decided that anyone with a “J” on their passport would now have to apply in advance for landing permission.

A plaque at the Shanghai Jewish Refugees Museum in Hongkou explains the situation perfectly: “No consulate or embassy in Vienna was prepared to grant us immigration visas until, by luck and perseverance I went to the Chinese consulate where, wonder of wonders, I was granted visas for me and my extend-ed family. On the basis of these visas, we were able to obtain shipping accommodation on the Bianco Mano from an Italian Shipping Line [sic] expected to leave in early December 1938 from Genoa, Italy to Shanghai, China — a journey of approximately 30 days.” — Eric Goldstaub, Jewish refugee to Shanghai.

And so, without the luxury of options, and desperate to evade the tightening grip of the Nazis, Jewish refugees by the thousands, as well as a small minority of non-Jews, set sail from Germany and parts of Central and Eastern Europe, settling primarily in the Hongkou neighborhood of Shanghai. Having been stripped of most of their assets upon their departure from Europe, the virtually penniless arrivals found Hongkou much more affordable than the city’s more developed districts.

Although they came in a slow but steady stream from the beginning of Hitler’s rise, it was Kristallnacht in 1938 that catapulted the Jewish population in Shanghai from a few thousand to upwards of 20,000. Over the course of two days, Jewish businesses in Germany, annexed Austria, and what was then known as the Sudetenland (a region in what was then Czechoslovakia with a large German population) were looted, Jewish homes were destroyed, and Jewish men were arrested and taken to concentration camps. The migration that arose out of this traumatic event “… lasted only until August 1939, when all the foreign powers in Shanghai decided to implement restrictions, which severely cut down the number of refugees began, little by little, to create lives in their new country, and before long, the proliferation of Jewish-owned businesses was such that the Hongkou area became known as “Little Vienna.” Like their Chinese neighbors, they did their best to survive in difficult circumstances.

(Continued on page 13)
BY NINA RENATA ARON, TIMELINE

It contains the only Holocaust memo-

ber of Kamhi’s family was in Sarajevo when World War II broke out. The situation for Jewish families turned dire quickly. “First there was the yellow arm bands, you were forbidden to go to public places … and then, little by little, they started taking people away,” he told an interview-

They were friendly, everything was begin-

Kamhi’s family was supposed to have
camped to exterminate millions of human beings.

They were assigned our barracks, there we

Kamhi’s family was among the almost 1,000 refugees who were accepted
to the Fort Ontario Emergency Refugee Shelter, in Oswego, New York, in 1944. The refugees, representing the neediest cases, came from 18 countries, and

They came to New York by boat on the USS Henry Gibbins (a two-week journey) and then to Fort Ontario, built during the Revolutionary War and at the center of the small town of Oswego, close to the Canadian border.

On board the Henry Gibbins was Ruth Gruber, a young journalist then acting as special assistant to the secretary of the interior, who was sent to make the trip with the refugees. “When Dr. Gruber arrived in Naples to meet the refugees, some were sur-

began to sell anything of value they had in exchange for passage out. Kamhi’s family had to pose as the man’s wife, and Kamhi as the others. Kamhi’s mother had to

the SS of the crematoria and gas chambers used in the Nazi death will have a tremendous
dream. Arriving at Fort Ontario as a young boy “was like being on another planet,” he told the interviewer. “The people were so different, the atmos-

the city of New York at Oswego, captures the

The German firm Topf and Sons, a firm founded in the mid-19th century, was at the center of the crime of the crematoria.

At the time, many Jews were trying to get from Sarajevo to Dalmatia, since parts of the Adriatic coast were controlled by Italy and, as Kamhi put it, “the Italians were not anywhere near as rough on the Jews as the Germans.” Kamhi’s uncle and grand-

The company concerned was J.A. Topf and Sons, a firm founded in the late 19th century to engage in the
during World War II. At the time, many Jews were trying to get from Sarajevo to Dalmatia, since parts of the Adriatic coast were controlled by Italy and, as Kamhi put it, “the Italians were not anywhere near as rough on the Jews as the Germans.” Kamhi’s uncle and grand-

Kamhi’s family was among the almost 1,000 refugees who were accepted
to the Fort Ontario Emergency Refugee Shelter, in Oswego, New York, in 1944. The refugees, representing the neediest cases, came from 18 countries, and

began to sell anything of value they had in exchange for passage out. Kamhi’s family had to pose as the man’s wife, and Kamhi as the others. Kamhi’s mother had to

the SS of the crematoria and gas chambers used in the Nazi death will have a tremendous

the ‘human beings.

the ‘human beings.

The city of Erfurt in the federal

state of Thuringia in central Germany has a unique claim to fame. It contains the only Holocaust memo-

The company concerned was J.A. Topf and Sons, a firm founded in the late 19th century to engage in the
during World War II. At the time, many Jews were trying to get from Sarajevo to Dalmatia, since parts of the Adriatic coast were controlled by Italy and, as Kamhi put it, “the Italians were not anywhere near as rough on the Jews as the Germans.” Kamhi’s uncle and grand-

Kamhi’s family was among the almost 1,000 refugees who were accepted
to the Fort Ontario Emergency Refugee Shelter, in Oswego, New York, in 1944. The refugees, representing the neediest cases, came from 18 countries, and

began to sell anything of value they had in exchange for passage out. Kamhi’s family had to pose as the man’s wife, and Kamhi as the others. Kamhi’s mother had to

the SS of the crematoria and gas chambers used in the Nazi death will have a tremendous

The city of Erfurt in the federal

state of Thuringia in central Germany has a unique claim to fame. It contains the only Holocaust memo-

The company concerned was J.A. Topf and Sons, a firm founded in the late 19th century to engage in the
during World War II. At the time, many Jews were trying to get from Sarajevo to Dalmatia, since parts of the Adriatic coast were controlled by Italy and, as Kamhi put it, “the Italians were not anywhere near as rough on the Jews as the Germans.” Kamhi’s uncle and grand-

Kamhi’s family was among the almost 1,000 refugees who were accepted
to the Fort Ontario Emergency Refugee Shelter, in Oswego, New York, in 1944. The refugees, representing the neediest cases, came from 18 countries, and

began to sell anything of value they had in exchange for passage out. Kamhi’s family had to pose as the man’s wife, and Kamhi as the others. Kamhi’s mother had to
**BY MATT LEBOVIC, THE TIMES OF ISRAEL**

**AT FORMER NAZI DEATH CAMP SOBIBOR, A POST-HOLocaust CONSTRUCTION BOOM**

*For the first time since SS men dismantled and plowed over Sobibor in 1943, significant construction is under way in the most sensitive parts of the former Nazi-built death camp, where up to 250,000 Jews were murdered during the Holocaust. On the heels of a decade-long archeological dig, ground was broken this spring on a long-anticipated museum and visitor center. The structure is emerging atop former barracks that held thousands of Jews during the Holocaust. The sprawling complex, where as many as 10,000 people were killed each day, will host a permanent exhibit dedicated to the victims of Sobibor.*

*The unprecedented precise map of Sobibor's Holocaust-era features was based on new research. The mass graves of Sobibor were not covered by concrete or earth, but rather lay exposed to the elements and were visible from the air. The archeologists at the memorial site excavated at — for instance — the area of "the ramp," where victims were delivered to the disguised "transit camp." In the months ahead, workers will erect a pavilion around the gas chamber ruins that never saw a single victim. The memorial will contain an exhibition that will touch on the whole story of the Second World War. The"overground" project, which is expected to take place without survivors of the former death camp, will be a major construction project in what is now a relatively peaceful region.*

**THE HIDDEN HISTORY OF SHANGHAI'S JEWISH QUARTER**

(Continued from page 11)

**T**hey established newspapers, synagogues, retail businesses, restaurants, schools, cemeteries, guilds, social clubs and even beauty parlors. They practiced medicine, started hospitals, got married, had babies and held bar and bat mitzvahs. They learned to cook in coal-burning ovens and to haggle with street vendors.

One Hongkou resident remembers the time and place with great fondness. The artist Peter Max, who would later become famous for his signature "psychedelic" works of art, came to Shanghai with his parents after fleeing Berlin. Like many of the Jewish families who immigrated to the city, Max's father started a business: in this case, a store that sold Western-style suits. It was, Max recalls, an auspicious choice, as the city of its Jewish population by starvation, overwork or medical experiments. Meisinger Plan," a scheme to rid the city of its Jewish population by starvation, overwork or medical experiments. Although the Japanese ultimately required. Food rations were implemented. It was not uncommon for 30 to 40 people to sleep in the same room (reports of up to 200 people in one room exist) and "bathroom" facilities in general consisted of little else than literal pots emptied by local laborers each morning. Still, refugees bolstered themselves by remembering that, in spite of these conditions, in Shanghai, they were the one thing they could not be in Europe: safe.

**B**etween the dismantling of the now-abandoned, semi-ruined city and the beginning of the Chinese Communist Revolution in 1949, the city's population fluctuated, but by the time the museum opens in 2019, personal artifacts will play a larger role than ever in supplementing the testimony of eyewitnesses, of whom fewer remain alive each day.

Jews living there today. Eager to return to Europe or start new lives on other continents, most Jewish refugees left Shanghai at the end of World War II and with their departure began the dismantling of the culture and lives they had established in China. Even before the war, the accommodation that once housed both European Jews and Chinese alike are still in use, given Shanghai's current construction boom, it's not unthinkable that these monuments, too, could soon meet the wrecking ball. The White Horse Inn, a Hongkou café opened by Viennese refugees in 1939 that became not just a meeting place but something of a symbol of normalcy for the displaced Europeans, was demolished almost ten years ago for a road widening project. Other businesses of the era, once so crucial to the Jewish experience in Shanghai, are now represented only by rescued signage that hangs in the courtyard of the neighborhood's Shanghai Jewish Refugees Museum. The museum, which includes the Ohei Moishe synagogue, a center of Jewish life and worship for the Hongkou refugees, has become something of a touchstone of this extraordinary chapter in history, but between the exodus of the original Jewish population after the war and the ongoing work of preserving this chapter of its past, one has to wonder if it will soon be the last monument to it standing.

**From left:** Jewish refugees Harry Fiedler and Heim Leiter pose next to a potato vendor in Shanghai; a Jewish refugee poses on Tongshan Road in Shanghai. **A “Palestine” pendant that belonged to a Jewish victim murdered at the Nazi death camp Sobibor, unearthed during excavations.**

**Under the supervision of rabbinical authorities, the graves were covered with permeable geotextile and a layer of white crushed marble. Surrounding the jagged-edged necropolis, a border of larger, dark-colored stones was added to demarcate graves that were extensively pillaged after 1945. In contrast to the former Nazi death camps at Belzec and Treblinka, the mass graves of Sobibor were not covered in layers of asphalt, concrete or earth, but rather lay exposed to the elements and were visible from the air. The archeological dig, ground was broken this spring on a long-anticipated museum and visitor center. The structure is emerging atop former barracks that held thousands of Jews during the Holocaust. The sprawling complex, where as many as 10,000 people were killed each day, will host a permanent exhibit dedicated to the victims of Sobibor.**

**With the exception of a rotund “ash mound” monument, the relative barrenness of the “extermination area” helped Poland’s Wojciech Mazurek and Israel’s Yoram Haimi — lead archeologists at Sobibor — since 2007 — uncover artifacts and information about the crematoria on which more than 200,000 corpses were “eliminated” in the open air. Sobibor has been relatively slow to add modern facilities, including a parking lot for buses. Close to the Bug River and Poland’s border with Ukraine, it is a drive of several hours from both Warsaw and Krakow. Planners hope their efforts will make coming to Sobibor more convenient, and engaging, for both Poles and international tourists. Among museum highlights will be victims’ belongings unearthed by the Polish-Israeli excavation team, including children’s metal nameplates, jewelry with Hebrew inscriptions, and a ceramic mug fragment featuring Mickey Mouse.**

**Even with construction taking place at Sobibor during the next two years, archeologists hope to keep excavating at — for instance — the site of a prisoner-built escape tunnel, and in the area of “the ramp,” where victims were delivered to the disguised “transit camp.” In the months ahead, workers will erect a pavilion around the gas chamber ruins never seen a single victim. The memorial will contain an exhibition that will touch on the whole story of the Second World War. The "overground" project, which is expected to take place without survivors of the former death camp, will be a major construction project in what is now a relatively peaceful region.**

**In October, Sobibor will host a gathering to mark the 75th anniversary of the prisoner revolt. The commemoration may be the first of its kind to take place without survivors of the former death camp. By the time the museum opens in 2019, personal artifacts will play a larger role than ever in supplementing the testimony of eyewitnesses, of whom few remain alive each day.**

**They learned to cook in coal-burning ovens and to haggle with street vendors. They practiced medicine, started hospitals, got married, had babies and held bar and bat mitzvahs.**

**Although the Japanese ultimately required. Food rations were implemented. It was not uncommon for 30 to 40 people to sleep in the same room (reports of up to 200 people in one room exist) and "bathroom" facilities in general consisted of little else than literal pots emptied by local laborers each morning. Still, refugees bolstered themselves by remembering that, in spite of these conditions, in Shanghai, they were the one thing they could not be in Europe: safe.**

**Between the dismantling of the now-abandoned, semi-ruined city and the beginning of the Chinese Communist Revolution in 1949, the city's population fluctuated, but by the time the museum opens in 2019, personal artifacts will play a larger role than ever in supplementing the testimony of eyewitnesses, of whom fewer remain alive each day.**

**Eager to return to Europe or start new lives on other continents, most Jewish refugees left Shanghai at the end of World War II and with their departure began the dismantling of the culture and lives they had established in China. Even before the war, the accommodation that once housed both European Jews and Chinese alike are still in use, given Shanghai's current construction boom, it's not unthinkable that these monuments, too, could soon meet the wrecking ball. The White Horse Inn, a Hongkou café opened by Viennese refugees in 1939 that became not just a meeting place but something of a symbol of normalcy for the displaced Europeans, was demolished almost ten years ago for a road widening project. Other businesses of the era, once so crucial to the Jewish experience in Shanghai, are now represented only by rescued signage that hangs in the courtyard of the neighborhood's Shanghai Jewish Refugees Museum.**

**The museum, which includes the Ohei Moishe synagogue, a center of Jewish life and worship for the Hongkou refugees, has become something of a touchstone of this extraordinary chapter in history, but between the exodus of the original Jewish population after the war and the ongoing work of preserving this chapter of its past, one has to wonder if it will soon be the last monument to it standing.**

*The other major change to take place at Sobibor in recent months was at the mass graves area, where corpses were burned and the ashes buried in pits. Until this spring's transformation of the site, small human bone fragments rose to the surface whenever the ground thawed, dismaying visitors.**
THE SECRET SOCIETY THAT DOCUMENTED THE TRUTH OF THE WARSAW GHETTO

BY ROB GLOSTER, J. WEEKLY

T he 13,000 Jews who fought to the death in the Warsaw ghetto uprising are celebrated 75 years later as heroes who refused to surrender to the overwhelming firepower of the Nazi SS. But another group of Jews in Warsaw also carried on a heroic struggle, without guns or Molotov cocktails. Using pens, typewriters and paper as their weapons, they secretly chronicled life in the ghetto — and those hidden memories became the basis for much of what we now know about life within the ghetto’s walls.

The 60-member group, led by historian Emanual Ringelblum, met on Saturday mornings and called itself “Oyneg Shabes,” Yiddish for “Joys of Saturday mornings and called itself” to hide its true intent. “Oyneg Shabes,” Yiddish for “Joys of Saturday mornings and called itself” to hide its true intent.

Members collected more than 35,000 pages of diaries, letters, photos and newspapers, as well as items such as food ration cards and Nazi-mandated armbands, burying them in metal boxes and milk cans — many of which were recovered after the war.

Oyneg Shabes members were determined to tell the world what life was really like in the ghetto, and not to allow Nazi propaganda films — which depicted the Jews as dirty caricatures of lice and typhus — to tell their story. And when they became aware of the mass murder of Jews in concentration camps, the group also took reenactments by professional actors, includes the final thoughts and prayers of people who knew they were doomed.

“We hope to expand what Ringelblum set out to do, which is to let the Jewish people incarcerated in the ghetto and ultimately murdered in Treblinka speak for themselves,” said Roberta Grossman, the film’s director and founding partner of Katalin Productions, an L.A.- and Berkeley-based nonprofit documentary production company that produced this film as well as her previous films, including Above and Beyond (The Birth of the Israeli Air Force) and Hava Nagila (The Movie). “It was also a way for people to make some sense of what their experiences were, and to make some meaning of their suffering,” said Grossman.

T he executive producer was Nancy Spielberg, who told J. that her understanding of the Holocaust only really began when her filmmaker brother, Steven Spielberg, made Schindler’s List. She said the story of everyday life for the half-million Jews crammed into the ghetto and dealing with hunger, disease and Nazi brutality.

Grossman said she realizes many viewers glazed over when they encounter “another film about the Holocaust,” but said Ringelblum’s story is unique. “I believe this is the most important unknown story of the Holocaust. There is nothing that compares to the Oyneg Shabes,” she said. “Ringelblum made sure there were all different perspectives, so there are stories about brutal Jewish police and Jewish prostitutes and people who turned in family members for small favors from the Gestapo.”

Grossman made several trips to Warsaw to read through the archive in the basement of the Jewish Historical Institute (JHI), where the diaries and other documents were kept until a permanent exhibit opened there last November. That exhibit includes some of the original pages, as well as one of the milk cans stashed beneath the basement of a school.

The movie is told from the perspective of Rachel Auerbach, one of only three members of Oyneg Shabes to survive the Holocaust. She spent years leading the effort to search for the archive, parts of which were unearthed in 1946 and in 1950.

A uerbach, a journalist who went on to oversee witness testimony at Israel’s Yad Vashem from 1954 to 1968, was assigned by Ringelblum — who led the Jewish social service agency in the ghetto — to run a soup kitchen. Her obser-

HOW A BEER COMPANY HELPED THE NAZIS BUILD CREMATORIUM

(Continued from page 12) engineering division in a wholly immoral enterprise infected the firm. Fritz Sander, a long-standing and highly respected Topf employee, was manager of the furnace construction division. Jealous of Prüfer’s obvious success in developing ever more efficient methods of corpse disposal, he decided to apply his own mind to the problem, and dreamed up a stomach-churning “corporate incineration oven for mass operation” and applied for a patent.

Interrogated by the Soviet authori- ties after the war — for, with the exception of one of the Topf brothers, who committed suicide, the leading Topf managers stood trial — Sander explained that his crematoria were designed “on the conveyor belt princi- ple, with bodies carried into the ovens continuously by mechanical means.”

No such crematorium was ever con- structed, but by 1943 Prüfer was already hard at work planning the expansion of the Auschwitz death fac- tory. His design for a sixth crematori- um was based on continuous combi- nation industrial ring ovens, using a central fuel source and reducing costs by up to 70%. By the time the fires might have been ready to put the proj- ect into effect, Germany had its back to the wall, and the Nazi genocide project had run out of time.

T he first investigation into the Topf company’s involvement in the Holocaust was conducted by the US Counter Intelligence Corps the day after the liberation of Buchenwald in April 1945. US officers had seen the Topf logo displayed prominently on the ovens. In July, the city of Erfurt was transferred from American to Soviet control, and subsequently three Topf managers were indicted for their participation in the horrific acts of the Hitlerites in the concentration camps,” and subject to rigorous investigation by the Russian judicial system. Excuses, justifications, evasions and untruths were swept aside. All three confessed to the charges laid against them and were found guilty without even standing trial. All were sentenced to 25 years of hard labor. Prüfer died in prison in 1952. The other two were released after nine years.

In Architects of Death, Bartlett describes in fascinating detail how a perfectly ordinary manufacturing firm came to ignore the total immorality of its business it sought, engaged in and encouraged. In parts, it does not make for a pleasant read, but it is undoubtedly a salutary one.
the European refugee situation had been slow. In fact, the U.S. had drastically cut immigration during the war years. Many have argued that President Roosevelt didn't feel motivated to help the imperiled Jews because he'd already won the Jewish vote. That all changed when Josiah E. Dubois, a U.S. Treasury Department lawyer from New Jersey, blew the whistle on the widespread obstruction of American visas for Jewish refugees. In a document titled Report to the Secretary on the Acquiescence in This Government in the Murder of the Jews, Dubois shamed the State Department for conspicuous inaction in some cases and outright obstruction in others. (Dubois's frustration was born of the failed release of 70,000 Jews from Romania — the U.S. had been poised to buy their freedom for a $170,000 bribe. It would have been a significant intervention shortly thereafter. The board also worked to secure safe havens in other countries, including Switzerland and Sweden, and began to work in earnest to help. They sent 300,000 food packages (disguised in Red Cross boxes) into concentration camps and urged the media to detail for the American public the horrors of Auschwitz and other camps. Four million Jews had died by 1944, but the efforts of the War Refugee Board saved tens of thousands of lives.

The creation of the Fort Ontario Emergency Refugee Shelter was intended to signal Roosevelt's intention to turn the tide of the American response — he even visited the camp, though many living there — but it was also a stopgap measure. A news report from 1944, which can be heard in Hava from the Holocaust, an hour-long radio program, sums up the refugee predicament. "To save their lives, they have been admitted to the United States," a female broadcaster says dourly. "Legally, it's dubious whether they are here at all. Though they are our friends, they are not enjoying American freedoms. They cannot move outside a restricted area. When hostilities cease, they must go back to Europe."

This idea may have been convenient for the U.S., but, as it happened, more than 1,000 refugees in Oswego had immigration cases pending by the time the war ended. As strange and novel as the experience had been, most were keen to stay and make a life in the country that had taken them in, rather than return to the devastation at home. When the shelter finally closed after the war, many were granted temporary or permanent status. Some went to live with American relatives. Those without them vaguely began American lives on their own.

While Fort Ontario is remembered as a special place, a symbol of eventual reckoning, it only barely offset the overwhelming human toll extracted by the Nazis. Even those spared in Oswego would have to reconcile their own fates with those of the millions killed during the war.

GETTING ANNE FRANK ALL WRONG

BY RAFAEL MEDOFF

Teenage Holocaust diarist Anne Frank died in Bergen-Belsen a month earlier than was previously known, according to researchers at the Anne Frank House in Amsterdam. They say their new finding is significant because it dispels the widespread notion that Anne lived almost nothing of the even more extreme disaster: their bad luck that the Allies arrived at a few weeks too late.

The Frank family, like many Jewish families, fled their native Germany shortly after Adolf Hitler’s rise to power. They settled in neighboring Holland. In 1939, with world war looming on the horizon and Hitler’s persecution of Jews intensifying, the Franks began thinking about moving to America. But the Roosevelt administration was in no mood to take them in.

"America, I looked out at the rest of the world and I saw normal people with everyday lives, and I felt deceived," former Fort Ontario resident Walter Greenberg told the New York Times in 2004. The camp was established in June 1944, but it almost didn't exist at all. The American response to Jewish refugees arriving at Fort Ontario, Oswego, New York, on August 5, 1944.

After World War I, Congress had enacted restrictive immigration quotas. The combined quota for Germany and Austria was 27,370 annually — far fewer than the hundreds of thousands of German and Austrian Jews seeking haven from Hitler. Sadly, the administration went above and beyond the existing law, to ensure that even those meager quota allotments were almost always underfilled. American consular officials abroad made sure to "postpone and postpone and postpone the granting of the visas" to refugees, as one senior State Department official put it. They created a bureaucratic maze to keep refugees like the Franks far from America's shores.

Otto Frank, Anne's father, dutifully filled out the sm sm all mountain of required application forms and obtained supporting affidavits from the family's relatives in Massachusetts. But that was not enough for those who zealously guarded America's gates against refugees. In fact, in 1941, the Roosevelt administration even added a new restriction: no refugee with close relatives in Europe could come to the U.S., on the grounds that the Nazis might hold their relatives hostage in order to force the refugee to undertake espionage for Hitler.

That's right: Anne Frank, Nazi spy. During the period of the Nazis' mass murder of the Jews, from late 1941 until early 1945, barely ten percent of the quotas from Germany and Avis-controlled European countries were actually used. A total of near 190,000 quota places sat unused — representing almost 190,000 lives that could have been saved, even within the existing quota system.

That same year, refugee advocates in Congress introduced the Wagner-Rogers bill, which would have admitted 20,000 refugee children from Germany outside the quota system. Anne Frank and her sister Margot, as German citizens, could have been among those children. Even though there was no danger that the children would take jobs away from American citizens, nativists and isolationists lobbied against the bill. President Franklin Roosevelt's cousin, Laura Delano Houghteling, remarked at a dinner party that "20,000 charming children would all too soon grow up into 20,000 ugly adults." FDR himself refused to support the bill.

Anne and Margot Frank, and thousands of other German Jewish refugee children, were kept out because they were considered undesirable. One year later, however, President Roosevelt opened our country's doors to several thousand British children to keep them safe from the German blitz. And an appeal by Pets magazine in 1940 resulted in several thousand offers to take in British purebred puppies endangered by the war. But there was no room for Jewish children.

The reason why Jewish children, including Anne and Margot Frank, did not survive was not just because of their bad luck that the Allies arrived at Bergen-Belsen a few weeks too late. It was also because of a conscious decision by the Roosevelt administration to prevent all but a small number of European refugees from finding haven in America.
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.

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.

“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

For further information about the Eli Zborowski Legacy Circle, please contact

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