BY JILL GOLTZER

On Sunday, November 11, 2018, the American Society for Yad Vashem (ASYV) gathered at the Plaza Hotel in New York City for its Annual Tribute Dinner, honoring Celina and Marvin Zborowski and Adina and Lawrence Burian. Over 700 people attended, including more than 150 members of the younger generation, by far the most in our organization’s history. Esteemed guests included Dr. Ari Berman (president of Yeshiva University), Malcolm Hoenlein (EVP of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations), our own Mark Wilf (chairman of JFNA), Andrew Lustgarten (president of MSG), Andrea Greenberg (president and CEO of MSG Networks), Hank Ratner (former president and CEO of MSG Networks), Titi Ayenaw (Miss Israel 2013), and Ambassador Danny Danon (Israel’s permanent representative to the UN).

The theme for the evening was “From Holocaust to Rebirth,” which, as Dinner Chair Mark Moskowitz explained, “follows the modern historical arc of the Jewish people, taking us from the depth of the horrors of the Holocaust to the exhilaration of the establishment of the State of Israel 70 years ago.” The presence of so many members of our Young Leadership Associates (YLA) is a testament to the notion of “rebirth.” Our YLA was heavily involved in the evening’s program, beginning with Halle Wilf and Jonathan Friedman, co-chairs of the YLA Tribute Dinner Committee, leading our guests in the motzi. Award-winning a cappella group Six13 then shared stories about his personal connection to the Holocaust, specifically Kristallnacht (“Night of Broken Glass”).

This evening fell exactly 80 years after the events of Kristallnacht, and a mere two weeks after the violent anti-Semitic attack that took place on October 27th in a Pittsburgh synagogue. Dr. Meier reminded us that as we try to make sense of something that is entirely senseless, what is certain is that Yad Vashem’s sacred mission is as relevant today as it was 65 years ago when its gates first opened in Jerusalem. The shooting in Pittsburgh was the deadliest attack on the Jewish people in American history, and as Ambassador Danon aptly stated, “it was anti-Semitism in its classic and cruellest form.”

Following a video message from Yad Vashem Chairman Avner Shalev, Jill Martin invited YLA members Laura Epstein to say a few words about her experience on the 2018 Yad Vashem Generation to Generation Mission this past summer. Epstein talked about the four survivors on the trip — Felice Stokes, Edward Mosberg, Naftali Deutsch, and Leon Green, z”l. These four individuals “opened their hearts to us and reinforced the idea of MeShoah LeTekumah — that even after living through the atrocities of the Holocaust, rebirth was not only a possibility, but in fact a reality.”

We were very fortunate to be joined by some of our esteemed Holocaust survivors. ASYV Chairman Leonard Wilf invited all the survivors in the room to stand and be recognized, and then asked everyone to join them as “we all stand as ONE!”

Mr. Wilf thanked Dinner Chair Mark Moskowitz as well as board members Rita Levy and Marilyn Rubenstein for the tremendous work they put into planning this year’s dinner. He then presented the Yad Vashem Remembrance Award to Celina and Marvin Zborowski, who were joined by their sons Mark and Ziggy on stage. “It gives me enormous nachas that my children and grandchildren have followed in my footsteps and that they are also involved in the organization and the young leadership,” Marvin said. Celina and Marvin are both founding members of ASYV and are Guardians of the Valley of the Communities at Yad Vashem. Looking out into the audience, Marvin stated, “I will continue to do whatever I can to perpetuate our memories, so the world could never forget.”

Following the moving tribute to the Zborowski family, Jill Martin invited board member David Halpern, son of Sam, z”l, and Gladys Halpern, to preside over the dinner. ASYV Chairman Avner Shalev, Jill Martin invited YLA member Laura Epstein to say a few words, and then asked everyone to stand and be recognized, and then asked everyone to join them as “we all stand as ONE!”

Mr. Wilf thanked Dinner Chair Mark Moskowitz as well as board members Rita Levy and Marilyn Rubenstein for the tremendous work they put into planning this year’s dinner. He then presented the Yad Vashem Remembrance Award to Celina and Marvin Zborowski, who were joined by their sons Mark and Ziggy on stage. “It gives me enormous nachas that my children and grandchildren have followed in my footsteps and that they are also involved in the organization and the young leadership,” Marvin said. Celina and Marvin are both founding members of ASYV and are Guardians of the Valley of the Communities at Yad Vashem. Looking out into the audience, Marvin stated, “I will continue to do whatever I can to perpetuate our memories, so the world could never forget.”

Following the moving tribute to the Zborowski family, Jill Martin invited board member David Halpern, son of Sam, z”l, and Gladys Halpern, to preside over this year’s In Memoriam. Together we honored the memories of those members of our Yad Vashem family (Continued on page 2)
FROM HOLOCAUST TO REBIRTH

(Continued from page 1) who have passed on since the last time we gathered. Eleven YLA members then solemnly stepped onto the stage carrying yahrzeit candles. Each recited the name of one of the eleven victims of the recent shooting at the Elz Chaim synagogue in Pittsburgh. Surrounded by her young leaders, singer and songwriter Arianna Afasar performed a beautiful rendition of “Somewhere over the Rainbow” in honor of those who were murdered just because they were Jewish.

Dinner Chair Mark Moskowitz introduced Adina and Lawrence Burian and presented them with the Yad Vashem Leadership Award. Adina and Lawrence were both founding members of the YLA and are now extremely active members of the ASYV board. They were joined that night by their parents, siblings and four beautiful children. Their eldest son, Jonah, expressed the immense pride he and his siblings have for their parents. “Seeing my parents and their commitment and passion for working with Yad Vashem…inspires both me and my siblings to continue that legacy as we grow older, to want to participate, and to get involved as much as we can.”

In accepting this well-deserved honor, Lawrence talked about working with his father, Holocaust survivor Andrew Burian, and Yad Vashem to publish a book about his father’s experience during the war. For Lawrence, this was one of his greatest satisfactions. He and Adina “feel privileged to be part of an organization that so wholeheartedly preserves our past while treasureing the foundation of our future; an organization which welcomes and honors people of all backgrounds and of all faiths.”

The evening’s program ended with an uplifting medley of Hebrew songs performed by award-winning a cappella group Six13. The night, our wonderful honorees, Celina and Marvin Zborowski and Adina and Lawrence Burian, inspired everyone with their lifelong commitment to Holocaust remembrance and their unwavering dedication to the ASYV. Guests sang and danced into the night, celebrating the sanctity of life, the miracle of rebirth, and hope for the future.

FRIEND OF THE JEWS: HOW DR. ADÉLAÏDE HAUTVAL DEFIED THE NAZIS AND SAVED JEWISH LIVES

BY MENCHUA CHANA LEVIN, AISH.COM

Dr. Adelaïde Hautval was a psychiatrist who lived in a Vichy-controlled area of southern France. In April 1942, Hautval was told of the death of her mother, who had lived in occupied Paris. In order to attend the funeral, she applied for a pass to cross the demarcation line. Although her request was rejected, Adèlaïde attempted to cross over. She was arrested and taken to the Bourges train station for an identity check. While waiting on the platform, she noticed some Germans mistreating a Jewish family. Speaking calmly to them in German, she told them to leave the family alone.

“Don’t you see that they are only Jews?” asked the German.

“So what? They are people like the others, leave them alone,” Adelaïde bravely insisted. Her answer landed her in the Bourges prison, where she would witness further cruelty toward Jews.

“A Jewish woman was placed in our cell, and I discovered that she was wearing a Tyrolean hat and boots. To attract the attention of the Gestapo, I attached a piece of paper to my clothing,” Adelaïde explained. It stated, “Friend of the Jews.” Whenever she could, she boldly defended her friends.

When Adelaïde was being interrogated, the Germans offered her a compromise: “Deny what you said about the Jews and you will be released.”

“But how can I say something else? Jews are like other people,” Adelaïde insisted.

“So you defend them? You will share their fate!” the Germans harshly informed her. Because of Hautval’s refusal to change her attitudes, the Gestapo compelled her to stitch a Star of David on her coat along with a cloth band marked “A friend of the Jews.”

Dr. Hautval was sent to the Birkenau death camp together with other French prisoners. A devout Protestant and daughter of a pastor, she was housed with 500 Jewish women, who called her “the saint.” Utilizing her medical knowledge to treat Jewish prisoners suffering from typhus, she secluded them in a separate part of the camp to prevent contagion. By not reporting the prisoners’ illness, she saved them from the gas chambers.

In April 1943, Adelaïde was sent to Block 10 of the main camp of Auschwitz, where sadistic experiments took place, including the sterilization of women by injection of caustic products. She was supposed to assist with the “medical experiments” performed on Jewish women prisoners without anesthesia by German doctors. With great courage, she refused to perform such procedures.

In April 1945, she continued to treat the patients who were too ill to be moved. Adelaïde was repatriated only in June 1945, with the last French patients. Because she was not part of a resistance organization or network, she had difficulty obtaining a resistance deportee card.

After the war, although her health was impaired by her bout with typhus and malnutrition, Adelaïde resumed her medical practice in France. She was awarded the Legion of Honor in December 1945 for her dedication to her fellow inmates in the brutality of the concentration camps.

Dr. Hautval with naval cadets and high school students at Yad Vashem in Jerusalem, 1965.

In 1965, Dr. Adelaïde Hautval was awarded the title of Righteous Among the Nations by Yad Vashem and traveled to Israel to receive her medal. Her positive attitude toward the Jewish people remained as strong as ever:

“The return of the people of Israel to their own country is an accomplishment concerning not only itself but the world at large. Israel has always played a gestative, fermentative role, due to which it was hated or respected. Its mission in the world continues. May God continue to keep it safe to the end of the ages. The entire history of the Jewish people demonstrates the primacy of spiritual forces. Hence, its undertakings cannot but be successful,” she stated.

In October, 1988, after discovering the signs of Parkinson’s disease, Dr. Hautval sadly chose to end her life. The hospital where she worked was renamed Adélaiide Hautval Villiers-le-Bel in her honor.
TO AUSCHWITZ AND BACK

BY TAKIS WÖRGER
SPEZIAL ONLINE

The morning in June, with the smell of an approaching thunderstorm in the air, an elderly man, his hair carefully parted to one side and wearing a fresh white shirt, rings the doorbell of a farmhouse in the Bohemian Forest, a low mountain range in the Czech Republic. He has a long journey behind him, across two international borders and hundreds of kilometers, the last few hundred meters of which lead down an alley lined with pear trees. The man knows this farmhouse and the dark brown, weathered barn at the end of the gravel road. He has been here before, here in the Czech village of Brnírov. He has returned because he wants to fulfill his promise.

A wrinkled woman in a cotton dress covered by an apron peers out of the open door with her narrowed, blue eyes. She sees the man and immediately envelops him in a warm embrace, her smile so broad that you can see where the molars are missing from her dentures. The two launch into a breathless conversation in Czech.

"There you are. I've baked a cherry cake," the woman says. "There you are.

She has been expecting him. She knew that he would return. She knows his story — and has known it for longer than she has known him.

The man is Josef Salomonovic, the little Jew from the barn. He presents the farmer's wife, whom he calls "Frau Anna," with two bars of chocolate, a bottle of Australian wine from the supermarket and a package of Merci pralines. He eats a piece of cherry cake, praising its moistness — and Frau Anna is so overcome with nervous excitement that she spoons cocoa powder into the cups instead of instant coffee. Salomonovic smiles and nods, joining the woman's grandson for a tour of the chicken coop and the new outbuilding. Then he asks: "Is the crooked tree still standing?"

Before Josef Salomonovic packed his suitcases and embarked on this journey shortly before his 80th birthday, he told me his life story in Vienna. Here is a version.

"ONLY SAD STORIES"

Several months later, at the kitchen table of his apartment in Vienna's 10th District, he is gazing at the bits of memorabilia with which he wants to illustrate his story: a spoon, a miniature airplane and a letter with Adolf Hitler's profile on the stamp. In the middle of 1944, Josef found himself sitting on the bed in their ghetto apartment and watching as his parents packed their things. Once again, they would be taking a trip at the behest of the Germans. The journey was short and they had reached their destination after just a few hours: Auschwitz. Josef could hear people banging on the outside of the cattle car he was in, and when he got out, he saw emaciated figures in blue-and-white striped suits who yelled: "Leave everything in the cars. Men to the right, women to the left." It was the arrival platform at Birkenau.

Josef's father knew a lot of people in the ghetto because he would repair their valuables. On one occasion, he managed to piece back together a Chinese vase belonging to an SS guard. Then he managed to convince a fireman he knew to come with a ladder and pry open a hole in the ceiling, into which Josef and his mother crawled. He clearly remembers the wide gaps between the ladder's rungs.

"You can't cry, no noise at all," his mother told him. He didn't understand what the difference was between a Jew and a non-Jew, but he did understand the fear in his mother's voice, and he stayed quiet.

The Germans in the Lodz ghetto combed through the apartments, searching for children that had been hidden. Lying behind the hole in the ceiling, Josef could hear the screams as the Germans found them one by one.

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Josef's father took his brother Michal by the hand, bent down and said something that Josef can no longer remember, and gave him a kiss. Then he left. Josef never saw him again. His mother took him into a low building.

"Take everything off," a female guard yelled.

Josef could not see any other children, just women. He watched as a prisoner shaved off all the hair on their bodies. His mother held his hand tightly; someone was constantly crying and screaming. And then Josef let go of his mother's hand, took a couple of steps and saw people beating other people, and then he found naked women with no hair. He had lost his mother.

A guard stopped in front of him, a kapo, a prisoner working for the SS.

(Continued on page 5)
VEIT HARLAN: THE LIFE AND WORK OF A NAZI FILMMAKER


REVIEWED BY DR. DIANE CYPKIN

T he claim persists that because of Riefenstahl and especially Harlan, a medium [film] lost its innocence and, in the case of Jud Süß, became a weapon of mass murder.

According to author Frank Noack in his well-researched and thought-provoking volume entitled Veit Harlan: The Life and Work of a Nazi Filmmaker, Joseph Goebbels, “appointed minister of popular enlightenment and propaganda on March 13, 1933, six weeks after Hitler became the nation’s leader, had . . . plans for the film industry.” First off, he intended to “purge it of all Jews.” Then, no less important to Goebbels, was the need to find “artists . . . who, instead of just appearing in propaganda plays and films, were also ready to show their colors more explicitly by committing to Nazi Germany.” Veit Harlan was just such an artist — or at least appeared to be. The evidence: In May 1933, an interview with Harlan published in the Völkischer Beobachter presented him as supportive of the new regime. Then, most especially, there was his film, Jud Süß, an exceptionally well-made picture whose central motif was anti-Semitism. Indeed, the film was so “good” that Heinrich Himmler would “order” the “entire SS and police force” to watch it. Himmler was convinced that the film would vividly clarify to his men just what they were fighting . . . the cunning Jew, ready to take everything from them, including their women! For that matter, “in 1963, former Waffen Schutzstaffel (SS) member Stefan Baretzki [would] insist” at his trial “that he had abused and killed Jewish concentration camp inmates only after watching Jud Süß . . .”

So the question is, Was Veit Harlan really an early supporter of the Nazis? Or did the interviewer from the Völkischer Beobachter “twist his words,” as Harlan would later claim? Was he “ordered” by Goebbels to film Jud Süß and make it as anti-Semitic as possible? Or was he just an opportunistic tuner to work and support his family? Should Harlan be blamed for Jud Süß being a well-crafted film? Or are we simply dealing here with an “enthusiastic” artist who couldn’t help but harness all his artistic abilities for the production of any film he did? Finally, the reader can’t help but wonder if a film really has the power to motivate people to murder. Interestingly, the author of this volume, doesn’t give us his verdict. Instead, Noack, labeling himself a “curious investigator,” simply presents Harlan’s entire story, letting the reader judge the man. We thus learn about Harlan, the ambitious German stage actor and director, characterized by reviewers in both arenas as “provocative,” “daring” and always “lively.” We learn about his work in German film as an actor, and later, because of Goebbels’s “purges” in 1939, his work in the Waffen SS as a film director and screenwriter.

The book goes on to detail the many comedies, melodramas and more he directed. And then we read, too, about Goebbels’s growing interest in him, especially with the release of his 1937 film Der Herrscher (The Ruler), where Harlan “for the first time” combined melodrama with [Nazi] propaganda.

A ccording to Noack, Goebbels “approached” Harlan regarding the direction of Jud Süß around November 10, 1939.” Once he “decided to accept the offer (or order) to direct this film, Harlan did his best,” as regards “improving” the script and filming it. For example, while many writers had already worked on creating the anti-Semitic script, Harlan’s additions “enhanced” this aspect, making it impossible to sympathize with the lead character, Süss. In fact, as Noack notes, Harlan would create an “economic,” tact script “driven by a purpose” — proving the Jew evil incarnate. Since Harlan was concerned with making the film “authentic,” he went to Lublin, Poland, to do “research” on the Jewish community. He watched Yiddish films like Joseph Green’s Yitl mitn Fidl (1936) and Michal Waszynski’s Dyubuk (1937). He went to Prague to shoot the synagogues in the film using “real” Jews. In sum, as regards the entire filming process, he brought all his accumulated and, at this point, substantial talents to the production. (Noack frequently compares Harlan’s career to Alfred Hitchcock’s.) The result: Goebbels would write that Jud Süß was “a very great work of art.”

Not surprisingly then, Harlan become Goebbels’s “favorite director,” and was given even more work. He received awards from the German government. The Italian government presented him with the “Mussolini Cup” for Best Foreign Picture. Yes, things were very good for him . . . till the war started. At that point, however, he was faced with “denazification” issues alongside increasing questions about his work and support of the Nazi regime. That would lead to a number of trials . . . and even more questions.

Needless to say, Noack’s volume leaves one thinking . . . There is no doubt that students of the Holocaust and cinema alike will find this book unique and fascinating! P.S. Regarding a film’s capacity to incite violence, that, to this day, remains a debatable point . . . but certainly not the kind made matters worse for Europe’s persecuted Jews!

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

SEEKING THE TRUTH ABOUT A NAZI WAR CRIMINAL

BY ROBERT PHILPOT, THE TIMES OF ISRAEL

T here’s a lot going on in Lemberg.” Otto von Wächter wrote breezily to his wife, Charlotte, in the spring of 1942.

For the recently installed Nazi governor of Galicia, they were indeed busy times.

His promotion to oversee the newly conquered territory — then part of Poland, now part of Ukraine — came in the same month the Wannsee Conference approved the greatest crime in human history, the attempted annihilation of European Jewry.

Over the next 18 months, on Wächter’s watch, the Nazis deported and murdered almost every Jew in Lemberg — modern-day Lviv — and the surrounding countryside. In total, an estimated 500,000 Jews were slaughtered in Galicia.

Wächter’s responsibility is of special interest to the British attorney, academic and international law expert Philippe Sands, whose grandfather’s family — some 80 men, women and children — perished in the city.


Wächter’s story is of particular interest to the British attorney, academic and international law expert Philippe Sands, whose grandfather’s family — some 80 men, women and children — perished in the city.

But this is no ordinary investigation of the atrocious acts of a man who, as Sands concedes in the first of 10 gripping episodes, many people have never heard of. Instead, much of the drama turns on the extraordinary relationship between Sands and his accomplish, Wächter’s 79-year-old son.

Living alone in Schloss Haggenberg, a 17th-century baroque castle one hour’s drive from Vienna, Horst Wächter is surrounded by books, letters and documents and recordings which, he believes, will prove that his father was a good and decent man who did his best in tragic and difficult circumstances.

He is also convinced that Wächtner’s death in 1949 — indicted for war crimes in 1946, he hid for three years here in the Vatican before being handed over to Rome, where he was assisted by a highly placed Catholic bishop — was no accident, but took place on the orders of Josef Stalin.

As the programs unfold, Horst clings grimly to the hope that he can convince Sands that Otto von Wächter is not the man which the evidence overwhelmingly shows him to be.

“The Ratline,” described by one P.S. as "the hunt for the monstrous Nazi that’s got the nation hooked," has proven to be something of a hit. After the podcast was launched, it swiftly soared to No. 1 in Britain’s daily iTunes chart and then remained in the top five. One critic deemed it “scholarly, revelatory, dramatic and intriguing.”

Its popularity is unsurprising. Aside from the UK’s seemingly insatiable appetite for stories related to World War II, Wächter’s tale is one of love, betrayal, unspeakable crimes and denial. It takes listeners from Austrian castles to Alpine hideaway (Continued on page 6)
Flossenbürg Concentration Camp Memorial, whose network of satellite camps included the forced labor factories in Dresden. He heads into the chapel, even though he has decided that there can be no God, and also goes into the small brick building located at the entrance to an area labeled on the map as the “Valley of Death.” Inside the structure is an oven about as tall as a person.

“Crematorium. No explanation needed,” said Salomonovic.

Salomonovic leaves the memorial, strands of hair are stuck to his face and he has dark shadows under his eyes. Salomonovic says that he is beyond comprehension. “It’s not the kind of place where prisoners could make demands. Still, the day after Josef’s mother had seen the ash-covered expanse that was black with ash on some days.

In talking about Auschwitz, Josef Salomonovic pauses and says: “It’s beyond comprehension.”

The guard led him into the barracks with the naked women, but he still couldn’t see his mother. All the women were shaved and they were all dressed and put something in his mouth. It was sweet and melted on his tongue. It was the first time of ever had tasted chocolate. The woman took him by the hand and led him into the barracks, where the shivering women were waiting. His shoelaces were untied. In the ghetto, his mother had tied them for him every morning.

Six-year-old Josef had arrived at a place where the guards would lead some of the children into the gas chambers and give chocolate to others. There was an orchestra that played Chopin and a doctor who had an eye collection. In the commandant’s garden, there were two turtles named Dilla and Jumbo and a river that was black with ash on some days. It was sweet and melted on his tongue. It was the first time of ever had tasted chocolate. The woman took him by the hand and led him into the barracks, where the shivering women were waiting. His shoelaces were untied. In the ghetto, his mother had tied them for him every morning.

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outs, from the bloodlands of Eastern Europe to the beautiful piazzas of Rome. Moreover, thanks to Horst’s willingness to open his family’s archives to Sands, listeners get to eavesdrop on the relationship between Wächter and his wife. Their huge cache of letters provides a shocking insight into the mentality of a cold-blooded killer who signed documents consigning hundreds of thousands of people to their deaths — and who never appeared to evince any sign of doubt, regret or contrition for his terrible actions. Sands first met Horst when he was researching the origins of international criminal law. That interest was both academic and personal: Lemberg was not only the home of Sands’s grandfather, but also of two of the lawyers who played a critical role at the Nuremberg trials. Hersch Lauterpacht introduced the notion of “crimes against humanity” into the Nuremberg Charter, while Ralph Lemkin invented the term “genocide.” Sands was also interested in another lawyer — Hans Frank, the governor-general of occupied Poland who was tried, convicted and executed at Nuremberg for war crimes and crimes against humanity. Through Frank’s son, Niklas, who in 1987 published an excoriating biography of his father, Sands was introduced to Horst. “Horst takes a rather different attitude to mine,” Frank warned the barrister. Sands, Niklas and Horst later joined together for the 2015 BBC documentary, My Nazi Legacy, a My Nazi Legacy, a...
AN EXTRA LOAF OF BREAD

It is a sentence that sounds a bit like a Steven Spielberg film, a sentence that seems completely implausible in reality. Just as implausible, perhaps, as a place where 1.3 million people were worked to death because they were Jews.

When Salomonovic asks at the barn if the crooked tree is still standing, the farm woman’s grandson nods and leads him into the garden. It is an apple tree, perhaps the most crooked tree in all of the Bohemian Forest, with the trunk winding close to the ground a couple of times before heading upward.

When Salomonovic returned to the barn for the first time, shortly after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the daughter of the farmer who had hidden him at the end of the war was still alive. She was an old woman, but she remembered those days. She said that her father had come to her and told her to bake an extra loaf of bread. She didn’t want to, but he insisted. Later, she said, the loaf disappeared — and that is when she realized that they were also feeding someone in hiding.

Salomonovic visited the woman on several occasions. Frau Anna, the woman said, was the blue-eyed person who opened the door to Salomonovic, is her daughter. There is a bond between this family and Salomonovic that you can only truly understand if you have saved someone’s life — or been saved. When the old woman lay on her deathbed a few years ago, he went there and sat with her.

“The crooked tree in the garden,” the woman said, and Salomonovic didn’t know at first what she was talking about. “The apple tree. They want to cut it down. When I’m gone, look for that tree first.”

“Oh, of course I’ll keep an eye on the tree,” Salomonovic answered.

On the night table next to the bed was a small box with four eggs in it along with an apple from the tree. “For the journey,” the old woman said.

Salomonovic kissed her on the cheek when he left.

Since then, he has been coming back regularly, even if the trip is becoming more difficult for him and he suffers from arthritis. He is taking care of the tree.

Before he heads back home, Josef Salomonovic once again goes through the door to the barn and climbs the ladder to the hayloft. The floorboards squeak under his weight. Salomonovic bends down, lifts up a handful of hay and then lets it fall again.

“Seventy-three years,” he says. “The Germans stole his childhood from him. It is nowhere to be found — and isn’t in the hayloft either.”

After the war, Josef, Michal and their mother moved back to Ostrava. Josef learned what a peach tastes like and what a football is. Within just a few months, his teeth grew in. But for quite some time, he continued hiding a hunk of bread under his bed.

Even now, he still eats standing up when he is alone. Because, he says, nobody was allowed to sit down during the death March.

In his early 30s, Josef Salomonovic fell in love with Elisabeth from Vienna, a slight woman with black hair and a twinkle in her eyes. He told his mother that he was getting married. She went into the kitchen, turned on the gas oven and stuck her head into it, but Salomonovic saved her before anything happened. He got married, moved to Vienna and took a job with an engineering manufacturer.

TO AUSCHWITZ AND BACK

(RIGHTEOUS AMONG THE NATIONS HONORED IN VANCOUVER)

BY MATTHEW GINDIN, PACIFIC CORRESPONDENT

The Consulate General of Israel in Toronto and the Canadian Society for Yad Vashem held a special ceremony to honor some of the righteous individuals and their families, including Katya after the woman in Auschwitz and a woman in Munich.

Josef Salomonovic checks on the crooked tree, he drinks a Pilsner Urquell (“fantastic,” he says) and heads back to Vienna. Elisabeth is expecting him with stuffed peppers, her favorite dish. He then calls his grown daughter on the phone to tell her that he is fine. He named her Cathya after the woman in Auschwitz who saved his life.

Salomonovic will eat his dinner, unpack his suitcase and go into his room. There, on the wall above the right of his bed, hangs a picture of his mother. He says she speaks with him in his thoughts every day in a language that only he knows.

Wim Kalkman remembered being questioned by Nazis about anyone being hidden in the house, while they stood directly above the hidden men and in front of Tanta Ina, who was seated with the rest of the family on the couch: Wim Kalkman’s sister, who was also in the room, had diabetes, which frightened the soldiers, making them rushed and sloppy. They left without finding anyone and, as a result, the Kalkman family and their endangered friends survived.

“They have named me the right of their house,” says Katya. “I am regarded as one of these courageous individuals and their acts of human decency and mercy as most sacred.”

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RIGHTEOUS AMONG THE NATIONS HONORED IN VANCOUVER

Kalkman told the rapt crowd the story of their righteous grandparents. Peter Kalkman’s father, Wim (Dirk’s son), had long wished that his parent’s heroism be recognized, but he died in 2013, before he could see his dream come true. Matthew Kalkman under-
PHOTO HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE ANNUAL TRIBUTE DINNER

Robert A. Book, Chairman of the ASYV; Leonard Wilf, Israeli ambassador to the UN Danny Danon, and Mark Wilf.

Dinner Chair Mark Moskowitz.

Honorees Celina and Marvin Zborowski.

Honorees Adina and Lawrence Burian.

Jack and Paula Gora with grandsons Sam (l) and Jonathan (r).

Celebrating life.
numbers and it’s hard to get hold of powder for the tennis court.”

In the last years of her life, Charlotte began a great effort — echoing the operation against Nazi rings led him to leave for Italy in the new year. Emboldened, the couple and some of their children spent an idyllic month together in the summer of 1949. But, hours after enjoying lunch and a swim in Lake Albano with a man he identified to Charlotte as “an old comrade,” Wächter fell desperately ill. He died in the arms of Hudal days later, telling the bishop he had been poisoned. Charlotte arrived in Rome to find her dead husband’s blackened body, “all burnt inside, he was like a Negro.”

Sands unmasksthe “old comrade” as Karl Hass, one of the ringleaders of the notorious 1944 Ardeatine massacre. With the help of declassified CIA files, he further reveals that Hass was, by 1949, the chief source for an American spy ring — Project Los Angeles which used former Nazis, Vatican officials and neo-Fascists to gather information on the then-growing Communist threat in Italy. Another of its sources was Hudal. Hass apparently made an offer at their lunch which Wächter refused. It seems unlikely that Wächter — a virulent anti-Communist — would have turned down an offer to work for the Americans. CIA files offer a tantalizing clue: Hass was also suspected by some “close acquaintances” of being a Soviet double agent.

The tapes underline Charlotte’s desperate but futile attempt to cast Wächter’s actions in a more heroic light. “He always took pleasure in doing what he thought was the right thing to do,” she attests. “Until the very end he refused to compromise his conscience but sometimes he just couldn’t do what he thought was right.”

“Everyone has light and dark sides.” Wächter’s wife suggests at another point. “We should only see the good things in everyone.”

These words might carry an ounce more weight if Charlotte’s diaries did not expose her as an unrepentant Nazi. After watching TV coverage of the 40th anniversary of the Anschluss in March 1976, she writes: “I’m glad and thankful to God that I was able to live through this time.”

Central to Charlotte’s effort is the notion that Wächter was murdered. It is this to which, perhaps more than anything else, Horst hangs on doggedly throughout the programs. It is possible, as Horst appears to believe, that Hass poisoned Wächter, perhaps after he turned down an approach to join him in his plans. It is possible, the thriller writer John le Carré tells Sands, that Jewish “vengeance teams” tracked down and murdered Wächter. Le Carré, who was a British intelligence officer in Austria after the war, admits that he “admired” such efforts to exact the justice so many had escaped. A further explanation offered by a UK-based lawyer specialist, who Wächter succumbed to a fatal bout of Weil’s disease after swimming in the filthy waters of the Tiber, does not disprove Horst’s desire for his father to have met a rather more meaningful and heroic end. But this detective story palies beside the great mystery: What kind of man does Horst really believe his father was? Buried — probably unintentionally — among the family papers he allows Sands to rifle through, there is a 2007 email from Horst to his new nephew: “Attached are the two letters from your grandfather that I’ve compared with Himmler’s diary. They incriminate him more than any other documents I have encountered. There is no use. He knew everything. Saw everything. And agreed in principle. A sad uncle Horst.”

Confronted by Sands, Horst clams up and mutters, “I wouldn’t say that my father killed 800,000 Jews or something like that.”

All of which leaves his English friend, whose grandfather’s family was murdered seven decades ago in Lemberg, to wonder: How many is too many?
Hidden for 70 years, a new invaluable contribution to Holocaust literature — the diary of Renia Spiegel — was rediscovered inside a desk in New York.

BY ROBIN SHULMAN
SMITHSONIAN.COM

On January 31, 1939, a 15-year-old Jewish girl sat down with a school notebook in a cramped apartment in a provincial town in Poland and began writing about her life. She missed her mother, who lived far away in Warsaw. She missed her father, who was ensconced on the farm where her family once lived. She missed that home, where she had spent the happiest days of her life.

The girl’s name was Renia Spiegel, and she and her sister, Ariana, were staying with their grandparents in Zaleszczyki, a small city in southern Poland about 150 miles east of Krakow.

Her spellings are delicate, with loops at the feet of the capital letters and sweetly curving lines to cross the T’s. Renia’s handwriting, which readers will naturally contrast to the jagged script in her father’s entry in his own diary, reminds us that each of the Holocaust’s millions of victims had a unique and dramatic experience. At a time when the victims had a unique and dramatic firsthand accounts reminds us that in seclusion. Reading such different poetry as well as in prose. She was sophisticated, writing frequently in

Renia during harvest time with Ariana and Zelinski, 1936.

Her script is delicate, with loops at the feet of the capital letters and sweetly curving lines to cross the T’s. Readers will naturally contrast Renia’s diary with Anne Frank’s. Renia was a little older and more sophisticated, writing frequently in poetry as well as in prose. She was sophisticated, writing frequently in

The notebook pages, blue-lined and torn at the edges, are as finely wrinkled as the face of the old woman the girl might have become.

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by the end of the war, a series of bold and fantasitcal moves — including a romance with a Wehrmacht officer — Maria found herself working for the Americans in Austria. Almost every Jew she knew was dead: Renia, her parents, her husband, her friends and neighbors. One of her sole surviving relatives was a brother who had settled in France and married a socialite. He invited Maria and Elzbieta to join him there — and even sent a car to fetch them. Instead, Maria proceeded for herself and her child to have a fresh start in the United States.

After burying so much of their identities, it was difficult to know which pieces to resurrect. Maria felt Catholicism had saved her life, and she clung to it. “They don’t like Jews too much here either,” their sponsor told them when they landed in New York. Ariana-cum-Elzbieta, now known as Elizabeth, enrolled in a Polish convent boarding school in Pennsylvania, where she took none of her many friends that she was born a Jew. Maria remarried to an American, a man who was prone to making anti-Semitic comments, and she never told her new husband about her true identity, her daughter later recalled. When she died, she was buried in a Catholic cemetery in upstate New York.

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NAZI COLLABORATOR OR NATIONAL HERO? A TEST FOR LITHUANIA

BY ANDREW HIGGINS, THE NEW YORK TIMES

For the tiny village of Sukioniai in western Lithuania, the exploits of General Storozh, a local anti-Communist hero executed by the Soviet secret police in 1947, have long been a source of pride. The village school is named after him, and his struggles against the Soviet Union are also honored with a memorial carved from stone near the farm where he was born.

All along, though, there have been persistent whispers that General Storozh, whose real name was Jonas Noreika, also helped the Nazis kill Jews. But these were largely discounted as the work of ill-willed outsiders serving a well-orchestrated campaign by Moscow to tar its foes as Fascists.

Blaming Russian propaganda, however, has suddenly become a lot more difficult thanks to Ms. Noreika’s own granddaughter, Silvia Foti, a Lithuanian-American from Chicago where he was born.

“Whatever someone says or does, so long as they are against Russia they are heroes,” Mr. Fridberg said. “When a group of prominent public figures in Lithuania signed a petition in 2015 demanding the removal of the plaque honoring Mr. Noreika on the library in Vilnius, the Genocide and Resistance Research Center protested that ‘the contempt being shown for Lithuanian patriots is organized by neighbors from the East.’ In other words, Russians.

Portraitng opponents of Moscow as Fascists has been a feature of Russian propaganda for decades. After the end of World War II in 1945, Lithuanians, Latvians, Estonians and Ukrainians who resisted their incorporation into the Soviet Union were invariably tarred by Moscow as Nazi collaborators or their ideological heirs, no matter their record or views. President Vladimir Putin has further stoked this narrative, repeatedly smearing Russia’s opponents at home and abroad as Fascists as he establishes reverence for Russia’s huge role in defeating Hitler at the center of his campaign to revive national pride and his country’s status as a great power.

Dovid Katz, an American authority on Yiddish who lives in Vilnius, said the best response to Russian propaganda would be for countries like Lithuania and Ukraine to draw a clear line between heroes and criminals in their accounts of the war. Instead, he said, they have often gone into a self-defeating defensive crouch.

“Just because Russia says something for the wrong reasons does not mean it is automatically wrong,” said...

A monument for Jonas Noreika in Sukioniai, Lithuania, the town where he was born.

A carved log depicting Moses with the Ten Commandments on a hill in Plačelis, Lithuania, that was the site of the mass murder of Jewish men during World War II.

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HOW AN ASTONISHING HOLOCAUST DIARY RESURFACED IN AMERICA

(Continued from page 10)

Elizabeth grew up to become a schoolteacher. She met her husband-to-be, George Frank, at a teachers’ union party, and she was drawn to him partly because he too was a Jew who had fled the Nazi takeover of Europe — in his case, Austria. But for a long time, Elizabeth didn’t tell George what they had in common. The fear of exposure was a part of her now. She baptized her two children and didn’t tell even them her secret. She began to forget some of the details herself.

B ut her past was not finished with her. When Elizabeth and her mother were living in a studio apartment on Manhattan’s West 90th Street, Zygmunt Schwarzer shipped up the stairs, Elizabeth recalls. He had also survived the war and was resettled in New York City, and he was as handsome and charming as ever, calling Elizabeth by her childhood nick-name — “Arianka.” He carried with him something precious: Renia’s diary. There it was, the pale blue-lined notebook, containing her sister’s words, her intelligence and sensitivity, and her growing understanding of love and violence — delivered to this new life in America. Elizabeth could not bring herself to read it.

No one alive today seems to be able to explain the mystery of how, precisely, Renia’s diary had made its way from Poland to the United States. George Frank, Elizabeth’s husband, was a prominent scholar of the Holocaust. Perhaps Zygmunt Schwarzer had handed it down to his non-Jewish neighbor for safekeeping back in Poland; perhaps someone discovered it in a hiding spot and sent it to the International Red Cross for routing to the owner. After the war, photos, personal items and documents reached survivors in all sorts of circuitous ways.

What’s known is that by the time Schwarzer appeared with the diary, he’d survived Auschwitz-Birkenau, Landsberg and other camps. In a testimony recorded in 1986, now on file at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Schwarzer said that Josef Mengele, the famous death camp doctor, personally examined him — and decided to let him live. But as he gained more distance from the past, his internal life grew darker. By the 1980s, he often wondered aloud why Mengele had allowed him to live. “What did he see in me?” he asked Mitchell. “Why did this man save my life?”

The night her diary was printed, Elizabeth retrieved her sister’s journal and stashed it away, eventually in a safe deposit box at the Chase Manhattan. It was both her dearest possession and unopenable, like the closely guarded secret of her Jewishness. Her French uncle had always told her: “Forget the past.”

One day, when her youngest child, Alexandra, was about 12 years old, she said something casually derogatory toward Jews. Elizabeth decided it was time Alexandra and her brother, Andrew, knew the truth. “I told them I was born Jewish,” Elizabeth said.

By the time Alexandra grew up, she wanted to know more about the diary. “I had to know what it said,” said Alexandra. In 2012, she scanned the pages and emailed them, 20 at a time, to a student in Poland for translation. When they came back, she was finally able to read her dead aunt’s words. “It was heart-wrenching,” Mitchell said.

In early 2014, Alexandra and Elizabeth went to the Polish consulate in New York to see a documentary about a Polish Jewish animator who had survived the Holocaust. Elizabeth asked the filmmaker, Tomasz Magierski, if he wanted to read her sister’s wartime diary. Out of politeness, Magierski said yes. “Then I read this book — and I couldn’t stop reading it,” he said. “I read it over three or four nights. It was so powerful.”

Magierski was born 15 years after the war’s end, in southern Poland, in a town, like most every other Polish town, that had been emptied of Jews. Poland had been the country where most of Europe’s Jews lived, and it was also the site of all the major Nazi death camps. At school, Magierski had learned about the Holocaust, but no one seemed to talk about the missing people, whether bystanders, rescuers or victims. Official suppression or a reluctance to dredge up the miserable past. It seemed wrong to Magierski that not only the people were gone, but so were their stories. “I fell in love with Renia,” he says, in his gentle voice, explaining why he decided to make a film about her. “There are hundreds of thousands of young people and children who disappeared and were killed, and their stories will never be told.” This one felt like his responsibility: “I have to bring this thing to life.” He began visiting town archives, old cemeteries, newspaper records and the people of Przemysl, turning up information even Elizabeth had not known or remembered.

He also created a poetry competition in Renia’s name and wrote a play based on Renia’s diary. Actors from Przemysl played her story in Przemysl and Warsaw in 2016. The lead actress, 18-year-old Ola Bernatek, had never before heard stories of the Jews of her town. Now, she said, “I see her house every day when I go to school.”

For Renia’s family, though, the goal was publishing her journal. The book was published in Polish in 2016. It was not widely reviewed in Poland — where the topic of Jewish Holocaust experience is still a kind of taboo — but readers acknowledged its power and rarity: “She was clearly a talented writer,” Eva Hoffman, a London-based Polish Jewish writer and academic, said of Renia. “Like Anne Frank, she had a gift for transposing herself onto the page and for bringing great emotional intensity as well as wit to her writing.”

The night her diary was printed, Magierski stayed in the print shop the whole night, watching. “There was a moment before I became cold,” he said. “She’s going to exist. She’s back.”
The Kahal Shalom synagogue in Rhodes.

The Germans occupied Rhodes and the rest of the Aegean Islands in September 1943 after Italy stopped fighting alongside Hitler. For months, the Germans did nothing to the local Jews. There were no public humiliations, they weren’t forced to wear yellow Stars of David on their clothing, and they weren’t shepherded into a ghetto, as the Jews of Thessaloníki were. The relative quiet, which wasn’t disturbed until the British began bombarding the island (killing some of the Jews who remained), kept the local community ignorant of the fate that awaited them. A year ago, Habib discovered that in April 1944, the Italian police on Rhodes handed lists of the Jewish population over to the Germans. The lists themselves were discovered in the synagogue two years ago. Habib’s workers did not see them as important, and only when they were carefully reviewed did they turn out to be a detailed registry prepared in 1938 — including heads of households “belonging to the Jewish race,” along with the families’ addresses and the number of people living in each home.

On July 18, 1944, the local newspaper reported that all Jewish men aged 16 and over would be required to appear the next day at a building used as the headquarters of the Italian air force. The paper reported that they would be assigned work duties. The men obeyed. A day later, women were instructed to appear to “receive instructions.” The women who arrived at the building were given bitter news — if they did not return the next day with their children and valuables, their male relatives would be executed. Habib’s mother wrote that they were not given a choice: “We were only women and girls, and we went directly to our deaths.”

The women and children joined the men, and everyone was held in the air force building for three days. At 2 p.m. on July 23, the Germans set off the island’s air raid sirens. The residents, as expected, ran for shelter, leaving no witnesses. The Germans led the Jews to the port of Rhodes and loaded them onto huge transport barges to start their journey to Auschwitz.

The ships that would take them the rest of the way were waiting at the island of Samos because the efficiency-minded Germans wanted to add a transport of Jews from Kos. On July 31, the vessels docked in Athens, and the Jews were moved to the Haidari concentration camp. The men were separated. On August 3, the infamous cattle cars pulled up, and the Jews of the Aegean Islands began the last stage of their awful journey, a 13-day trip to the largest industrialized death machine in history.

One of Habib’s grandfathers died in the suffocating car. The rest got off the train at Auschwitz. Some 600 youths were taken away for labor, and the rest were killed within the space of three hours. Fewer than 200 Rhodian Jews survived the camps. After the war, Habib’s mother wrote a memoir of what she experienced and sent it to an acquaintance in Italy. She never told her family or children what she endured, but years later her memoir was found.

That is how Habib learned about his mother’s torturous experiences, which included Dachau and Bergen-Belsen. The terrible story of the end of the Jews of Rhodes is not lacking in stories of rescue. The Turkish consul on the island, Selahettin Ulkumen, saved 42 Jews, claiming that they were Turkish citizens. Ulkumen did not hesitate to approach the Gestapo and use Turkey’s neutrality to demand that the Jews be given a clear building where they were being held. The Germans complied. One of the lucky 42, a year-old baby at the time, came from Rhodes. He was one of the few infants to escape on board the Pentcho, which sailed from Thessaloníki.

After three months at sea, the ship’s heater exploded, and it was wrecked on the boulders offshore of the small Aegean island of Chamili. Some 10 days after the wreck, and an Italian patrol plane spotted survivors, whose food and water was nearly gone, and carried them out to Rhodes. The Jewish refugees from Europe were put up in tents erected on a soccer field. Some perished because of the cold and the harsh conditions. Two others died while trying to reach Palestine, and the rest were eventually transferred to a concentration camp in southern Italy. The possibility of being sent to Italy, which was Germany’s ally, seemed a death sentence. So when the Pann family was sent there, they were happy to accept the invitation to stay. Sadly, the Europeans deported to Italy were unharmed, but the Pann family was sent to Auschwitz with the rest of the island’s Jews and were killed there. A miraculous rescue wound up leading to their destruction. Jewish communities with roots on Rhodes exist throughout the world, and in some surprising places — including the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where Jews of Greek descent were born and raised. At its height, that community numbered some 2,000, but as the years went by, nearly all the Jews left. Bit by bit, most Jews of Rhodian descent seem to be making their way to Israel. Habib sees his future here. “Rhodean Jews hold dear their island’s history,” he says, gazing at the ancient synagogue.

They are often past, happy and sad. But the past is gone ... and now all that remains is to be happy that we’ve started to control the fate of the Jews. In Israel, of course.
THE DAY THE RABBIS MARCHED

BY RAFAEL MEDOFF,
THE ALGEMEINER

In an era that has seen more than 400,000 people take part in a Women's March on Washington, it may not sound very impressive that 400 rabbis marched in the nation's capital in 1943. But numbers alone don't always tell the whole story.

The rabbis' march took place three days before Yom Kippur in 1943. The ten days between Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur are among the most hectic periods for a pulpia rabbi, who has major sermons to prepare and countless logistics to arrange for the most well-attended services of the year.

So there was no small inconvenience involved for the rabbis who answered the call of the political action committee known as the Bergson Group and the Orthodox rescue advocates of the Va'ad ha-Hatzala to come to Washington to plead for the rescue of Europe's Jews.

And their journey was likely made more than a little jittery by the fact that, just one month earlier, a new high-speed train on its way from New York City to Washington had derailed and killed 79 passengers.

Nevertheless, more than 400 rabbis put down their books, left their communities and congregations, and headed for Washington. Most came from the New York City area, but others traveled from as far away as Chicago, Cleveland, Cincinnati, Pittsburgh, and Worcester, Massachusetts.

As the station master shouted, “Clear the way for those rabbis!” the protesters emerged from Washington Union Station and made their way toward the cluster of buildings known as the Capitol.

“Put down your books, left your communities and congregations, and head for Washington. Most came from the New York City area, but others traveled from as far away as Chicago, Cleveland, Cincinnati, Pittsburgh, and Worcester, Massachusetts.”

The rabbis were greeted on the steps of the Capitol by Vice President Henry Wallace and members of Congress. After brief remarks, the rabbis proceeded to the Lincoln Memorial to recite prayers and sing the national anthem.

Then they marched to the White House. While most of the rabbis waited outside the building, their leaders approached the gates of the White House to ask if President Roosevelt could “accord a few minutes of his most precious time. They wanted to present him with a petition calling for the creation of 'a special agency to rescue the remainder of the Jewish nation in Europe.'”

A White House staffer informed the rabbis that the president was unavail able “because of the pressure of other business.” Actually, FDR’s schedule was clear that afternoon. But a presidential meeting would have conferred legitimacy on the protesters’ pleas for US action. And Roosevelt’s policy was that there was nothing that could be done to help the Jews, except to win the war.

That move backfired. “Rabbis Report ‘Cold Welcome’ at the White House,” declared a Washington Times-Herald headline the next morning. A leading Jewish newspaper columnist angrily asked: “Would a similar delegation of 500 Catholic priests and布置 75 missionaries have been thus treated?” The editors of the daily Forverts (Forward) reported signs of a new mood among some American Jews: “In open comment it is voiced that Roosevelt has betrayed the Jews”—a shocking sentiment in a community that repeatedly cast 90% of its ballots for FDR.

The publicity from the march helped galvanize a Congressional resolution urging the creation of a rescue agency. A Roosevelt administration official gave wildly misleading testimony at the hearings on the resolution. The embarrassing publicity that followed, combined with behind-the-scenes pressure from Treasury Secretary Henry Morgenthau, Jr., and his aides, convinced President Roosevelt to establish the War Refugee Board.

Although handicapped by the small size of its staff and the measly level of funding it received from the Roosevelt administration (private Jewish groups supplied 90% of its budget), the War Refugee Board accomplished near-miracles in its brief existence. It provided funds to hide Jewish refugees, bribe Nazi officials and move tens of thousands of Jews out of the way of the retreating German armies. It also recruited Raoul Wallenberg to go to Nazi-occupied Budapest and financed his rescue missions there. Historians calculate that the Board played a crucial role in saving the lives of some 200,000 Jews in Europe during the final 15 months of the war.

There is no straight line from the rabbis’ march to Raoul Wallenberg pulling Jews off trains headed for Auschwitz. But the march was an important part of the series of events that eventually led to that outcome. Some 50 years ago, the rabbis proved that you don’t always need 400,000 people in the streets of Washington to have an impact—sometimes 400 will do the trick.

NAZI COLLABORATOR OR NATIONAL HERO? A TEST FOR LITHUANIA

(Continued from page 12)

After regainign its independence with the breakup of the Soviet Union, Lithuania canceled the conviction and declared Mr. Noreika a heroic martyr, ignoring his role as an official under Nazi occupation, which resulted in the slaughter of about 95 percent of the more than 200,000 Jews living in Lithuania when Hitler invaded.

Today the country is dotted with Holocaust museums and memorials. One of the biggest stands in a forest outside the western town of Plunge, where Mr. Noreika served as commander of the Lithuanian Activist Front, an openly anti-Semitic group that was fiercely hostile to an initial Soviet occupation in 1940 and cheered the Nazis as liberators the following year.

Plunge’s entire Jewish population of more than 1,800 was murdered within days of the invasion, mostly by local people.

Eugenius Bunka, the son of a pre-war Jewish resident who survived “because he fled to the Soviet Union, said Mr. Noreika probably didn’t kill Jews himself but still bore responsibility as an administrator who signed orders seizing their property and ordering their “isolation.”

“I hear all these people shouting about defending our patriots, but the people who have another view are all silent,” he said, pointing to one of the pits where Plunge’s Jewish residents were buried after being shot or beaten to death by their neighbors.

When Ms. Foti started researching her book on her grandfather 18 years ago, she expected to produce a glowing tribute.

“My grandfather was going to be the white knight in shining armor, a pure hero from beginning to end,” she said. “I had always heard how he had done so much for Lithuania and had died at the early age of 36 at the hands of the K.G.B.”

Instead, after digging up wartime documents with her grandfather’s signature relating to the treatment of Jews and talking to relatives and others during research trips to Lithuania, she realized that he had been an accomplice in mass murder. Mr. Noreika, she said, did not pull the trigger himself but was a “desk killer.”

She said he oversaw the slaughter in Plunge, where his family moved into a handsome home seized from its Jewish owners, and also in the nearby town of Siauliai, where he served as county chief under the Nazis starting in late 1941 — and where the main government building now has a plaque in his honor. “Lithuanians have been raped three times — by the Communists twice and by the Nazis once,” Ms. Foti said. “All they know is that they were raped, that they are the victims. They have no more room in their psyche for any other victims.”
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