

MARTYRDOM & RESISTANCE



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“THE ART OF REMEMBRANCE” ASYV’S 2021 GALA

The American Society for Yad Vashem held a most successful 2021 national gala Sunday, November 14. Approximately 500 people came together virtually to experience the program, entitled “The Art of Remembrance,” hosted by Noa Tishby, Israeli-American actress, producer, writer and activist, and honoring Rochelle Etingin, Doreen and Neil Davidowitz, and Orli Etingin and Jonathan Silver.

we lost lives on.”

The co-chairs of the American Society for Yad Vashem, Adina Burian and Mark Moskowitz, explained that the annual ASYV national gala raises much-needed funds to support the efforts of Yad Vashem to safeguard the memory of the victims and events of the *Shoah* period and to keep the memory of the Holocaust relevant today and for future generations. The team at ASYV partners with its colleagues in Israel

foot ditch underground, together with his parents and brother, by a righteous Christian farmer. Following liberation, Maks and his family emigrated to the US, where he met Rochelle and built a successful business and a beautiful family spanning four generations.

The leadership of ASYV is deeply grateful to the Etingin family for their continuing support, and for their generous offer to match any new or increased gifts leading up to the dinner, up to \$250,000 — undoubtedly a contributing factor in this year’s gala successfully meeting its fundraising goal of \$2.5 million.

The moving program included dramatic stories of Holocaust artifacts that are kept at Yad Vashem and in some instances still used today. These stories served to underscore that only an institution like Yad Vashem, with its commitment to maintaining rich archives, restoring precious artifacts and researching and documenting in-depth personal stories, could present a program like this. One of the stories shared was that of Motale Shlain, a young orphan who joined the partisans during the war, who sadly did not survive, but his violin did. After the war, a fellow partisan donated Motale’s violin to Yad Vashem with the request that the violin continue to be played for future generations, as proof that the Nazis did not succeed in silencing the soulful melodies of Motale’s violin. This instrument is now part of Yad Vashem’s Artifacts Collection and is on permanent display in the Holocaust History Museum.

Other highlights of the program included powerful works developed for a “Keeping the Memory Alive” poster design competition on Holocaust themes, and a beautiful and emotional tribute by Executive Board Member and Development Committee Co-Chair David Halpern to the survivors lost during the past year. The program truly was a stirring and meaningful way to keep the memories and the lessons of the *Shoah* alive.



The Etingin family.

Abbi and Jeremy Halpern, board members and chairs of the 2021 gala, said, “The Art of Remembrance’ was a unique opportunity to focus on the arts and culture of the *Shoah* as a way of shining a light on the human spirit that lifted Jewish victims during periods of extreme pain and suffering. Yad Vashem curated distinctive pieces of visual art and music from the *Shoah* period which showcased how creativity allowed individuals to retain their humanity during this dark and tragic era. Some of the works featured were developed after the *Shoah*, and help us remember and document what our people endured. Through these creative pieces, the memory of those

to advance Yad Vashem’s mission of Holocaust education, research, documentation and commemoration, by offering programming designed to engage a broad community of caring individuals to learn about the Holocaust and keep its memory and lessons alive.

Rochelle Etingin and her children, Doreen and Neil Davidowitz and Orli Etingin and Jonathan Silver, were guests of honor at this year’s gala. The Etingin family are loyal supporters of ASYV and Benefactors of Yad Vashem in Jerusalem. The family’s patriarch, Maks Etingin, z”l, was a child during World War II and miraculously survived by being hidden in a six-

DEUTSCHE BANK HOLDS SPECIAL EVENT FEATURING AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR YAD VASHEM

Given recent disturbing news about the lack of knowledge among Millennials and Gen Z of the realities of the Holocaust, the American Society for Yad Vashem was recently invited by Deutsche Bank to participate in a very special event. On November 3, Deutsche Bank's NextGen Network, the generationally themed Employee Resource Group in the Americas, invited the American Society for Yad Vashem to participate in an event focusing on history, the Holocaust, and the importance of sharing knowledge and experience across generations to keep the past alive so that it is never repeated.

Participating in this special program were Joe Salama, Deutsche Bank's Global Head of Anti-Financial Crime; Adina Burian, co-chair of the board of the American Society for Yad Vashem; and Abraham Foxman, former national director of the Anti-Defamation League, ASYV Advisory board member of the American Society for Yad Vashem, and a childhood survivor of the Holocaust.

Foxman shared that during the Holocaust, his parents made the heart-wrenching choice of giving him up to his Polish Catholic nanny, who baptized him and

raised him as a Catholic during the war years. "I managed by the intercession of one special person's kindness, courage, compassion, decency and likely several miracles to survive," said Foxman. Thankfully he and his parents survived the war, and he was reunited with them four years later after the fall of the Nazi regime. Sadly, 14 members of his family did not survive.

To this day, Foxman has many unanswered questions, such as "Why did the

Holocaust happen to the Jewish people? Why did over 1.5 million Jewish children perish? Why was the world silent?" — and "Why me? Why me and not them?" — questions that have only served to strengthen his resolve and commitment to ensuring a better future for us all.

With over 1100 global bank employees participating in the online event, reactions were deeply supportive of the program. Some comments included: "Thank you for bringing forward this idea and opportunity. It is an incredibly timely topic and we must continue to speak out. I am deeply moved today," as well as "This was really a very special and very interesting session today! I must say very emotional also, it brought tears to my eyes several times.... I wish everyone had the same learnings from history and would try to make this a better place. And it would be great if more people would get the chance to hear directly from a survivor, like we did today. A very rare, unique and extremely special experience."

The American Society for Yad Vashem is deeply appreciative of having been offered this opportunity and is most grateful to Deutsche Bank for being invited to be a part of this forum. It looks forward to participating in similar events in the future.



Abraham Foxman, advisory board member of the American Society for Yad Vashem and a childhood survivor of the Holocaust; Adina Burian, co-chair of the board of the American Society for Yad Vashem.

Make your gift
before the year ends.

Yad Vashem: A Singular Focus. A Sacred Mission.

The logo of the American Society for Yad Vashem, featuring a stylized menorah flame above the Hebrew word 'יד ושם' (Yad Vashem), with the text 'AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR' and 'YAD VASHEM' in a circular arrangement.

“JEWS ON ICE”

In the latest addition to Yad Vashem's Survivor Testimony Film Series, Peter Rosenfeld Span relates the incredible story of survival of his mother, his siblings and himself.

From mid-May 1944, trains packed with Hungarian Jews headed to Auschwitz-Birkenau; some 430,000 Jews were deported in only eight weeks. Shortly after arrival, the Jews underwent a selection and 80 to 90 percent of them were sent to the gas chambers. Nevertheless, during the last days of June 1944, not all the deportees aboard the trains that left the Szeged train station in southern Hungary reached the infamous death camp. On June 27, one of the trains had some of its rear wagons detached and attached to another train. Those in the front carriages of the train arrived at Auschwitz-Birkenau as originally intended, but those in the rear wagons found themselves at a transit camp in Austria. Among them were Elisabeth Rosenfeld Span with her three children, Ivan (12), Pablo (9) and Peter (6). They, together with other Jews from *Subotica*, a town in the

so as to keep up their education and development.

But the question remains: Why were the young children and the elderly among the deportees from *Bácsalmás* allowed to remain with their family members? Why send them to forced labor camps instead of the usual process of selection and deportation to the death camps of those “unfit for work”?

In the year 2000, Peter's oldest brother Ivan came to Yad Vashem to try to unearth some clues to his family's unusual history. It turns out that the answer probably lies in the negotiations between the Nazis and the Hungarian Zionist leader Rezső (Israel) Kasztner, founder of the Relief and Rescue Committee of Budapest.

In the spring of 1944, the head of the *Niederdonau* region in Nazi Germany had made a request to receive Hungarian Jewish workers to labor mainly in agriculture and in the war industry. Thus, at the end of May, the first batch of Hungarian Jews were sent to the region as forced laborers.

With this precedent, on June 7, the mayor of Vienna, SS *Brigadeführer* Hanns Blaschke, wrote to Ernst Kaltenbrunner, head of the Central Reich Security Office, requesting slave laborers as well. Kaltenbrunner agreed to the request of Blaschke to send Jewish forced laborers to Vienna and its environs. Understanding that they were likely

losing the war, the German leadership probably saw this as an opportunity to demonstrate “good will” by supplying the much-needed labor force and keep prospects of future negotiations with the Allies open. These prisoners were colloquially known as being “laid on ice” — i.e., their ultimate murder was put on hold for the time being.

At this point, Kasztner was aware of the approaching Allies and with them the hope for the end of the war. He and his fellow committee members understood the efficiency and urgency with which the Nazis were operating in Hungary and, following the presumed success of the “Working Group” in Bratislava in bribing the Germans, began to believe that the best way to save Hungarian Jewry was to negotiate with the German authorities.

As part of this plan, Kasztner came in contact with SS officers, including Adolf Eichmann. On June 14, Eichmann offered Kasztner the lives of 30,000 Hungarian



Elisabeth Rosenfeld Span with her husband Ignac and three children: Ivan, Pablo and Peter (age one), *Dubrovnik*, June 1939.



Peter Rosenfeld Span telling his story for the Yad Vashem Survivor Testimony Film Series.

northeast of Yugoslavia that had been annexed by Hungary, had boarded a train at *Bácsalmás*. They were not aware that their carriages had been redirected, but after their arrival at *Strasshof*, they and their fellow prisoners were sent to work as forced laborers in different places across Austria.

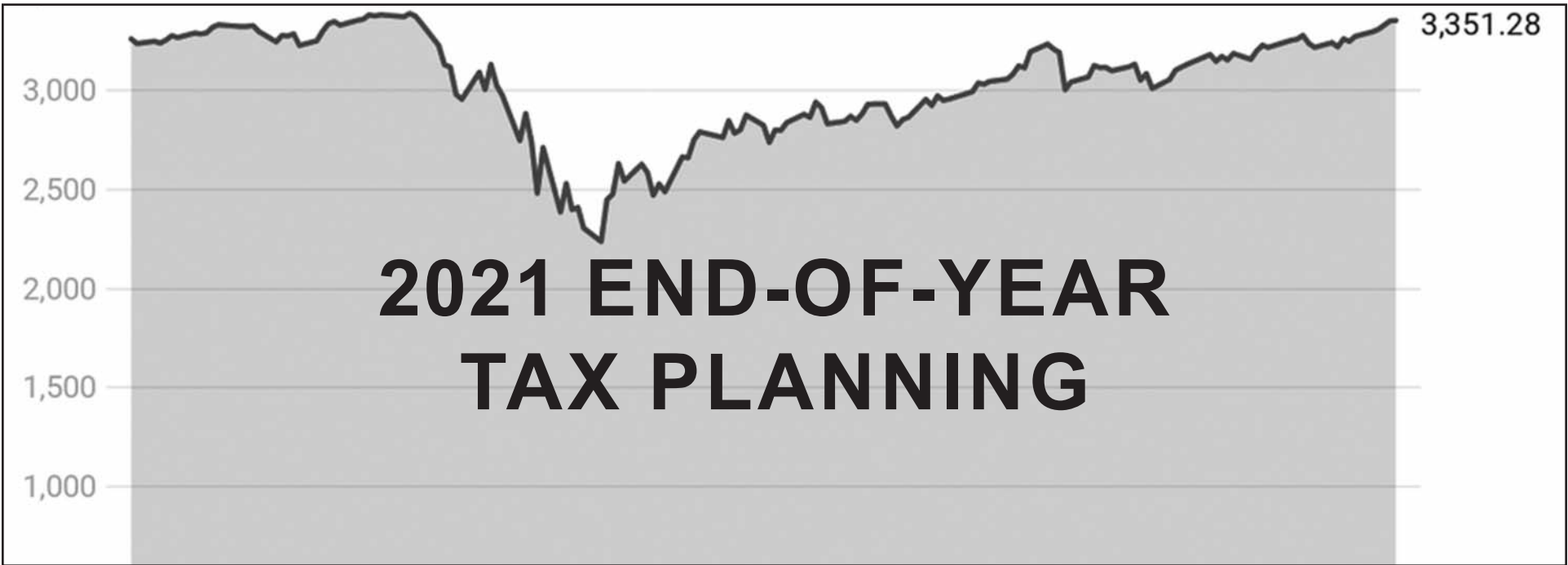
In the documentary film, Peter Rosenfeld Span describes his terrifying experiences on the cattle car and when he was separated from his mother in *Strasshof*. A few days later, the family was sent on to *Ulrichskirchen*, to a slave labor camp based on a farm. Each morning, he and the other children were made to carry water from a source some 200 meters away to the kitchen, and afterward were free to play on the farm. In the evenings, exhausted from laboring in a field 1.5 kilometers away, his elder cousin Eva would teach the children

Jews — 15,000 from the provinces and 15,000 from Budapest — who would be sent to work in Austria, in exchange for money. (Deportations from Hungary were halted in early July by Miklós Horthy, and the Jews from Budapest were ultimately not included.) Arriving at *Strasshof*, these Jews did not go through a selection process.

Based on Peter Rosenfeld Span's eyewitness report as well as other testimonies, it may be surmised that Kasztner requested that those sent to Austria in exchange for money would include the children and the elderly. It is estimated that around 70 to 80 percent of these “Jews on Ice” survived. An academic paper is currently being prepared on the topic.

Yad Vashem's Survivor Testimony Film series currently comprises over 60 films in which survivors recount their life stories at the locations in which the events transpired, or interviewed at their homes. The series, select films of which are available in up to 15 languages, has been viewed by hundreds of thousands of people worldwide, including educators, students and public officials.

BY SANDRA ROSENFELD KATZ



Listed below are several tax planning ideas for you to consider in charitable planning for the end of the year.

IRA ROLLOVER

If you are actually over the age of 70½ (if born on or before June 30, 1949) or 72 (if born on July 1, 1949, or later), you can make a qualified charitable distribution (QCD) of up to \$100,000 annually from your individual IRA (traditional or Roth) to the American Society for Yad Vashem (ASYV) before the end of the calendar year. This type of gift is also commonly called the IRA charitable rollover. Many charities are recommending this option for donors over the age of 70½ or 72, especially toward the end of the calendar year.

DETAILS

A donor older than 70½ or 72 (see above description) can individually distribute up to \$100,000 each year from his or her IRA (through its administrator) to the American Society for Yad Vashem without having to recognize the distribution as income to the donor. This distribution can be used to satisfy the RMD (required minimum distribution) for the year the distribution has been made. Please note that the gift must be completed by December 31 (check cashed by ASYV) in order to qualify and no benefit may be received by the donor from the charity.

As the American Society for Yad Vashem is a public charity, it falls within the permitted charitable recipients of an IRA charitable rollover. The donor must notify the administrator of the IRA to make a direct distribution to the charitable beneficiary in order to qualify. This giving opportunity was made permanent by the passing of the PATH (Protecting Americans from Tax Hikes) Act in December 2015 by Congress.

TAX CUTS AND JOBS ACT OF 2017

The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017 made a number of significant changes regarding

income taxes for individuals and families. The most important is that there are now a total of seven income tax brackets, lowering taxes for some and raising taxes for others. We are living with the impact of the 2017 law, as it has simplified tax preparation for many, but significantly increased taxes for individuals living in states where there are high state income taxes, such as New York, New Jersey, Connecticut and California.

DETAILS

This coming tax season again will produce much angst for individuals and families domiciled in states that have state income taxes, as the final version of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017 maintained the deductibility of state taxes, but limited the total deductible amount to \$10,000, which includes income, sales and property taxes. This limitation on deductibility has been quite significant for most upper-income individuals and families. There was an expectation that this limitation might be eliminated in 2020 by Congress, but it has not come to pass. Also included in the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act was an increase in the deductibility of cash gifts from 50% to 60% of AGI (adjusted gross income). The 2020 CARES Act raises the limit to 100% of AGI for 2020 and 2021. This deductibility does not apply to donations to donor-advised funds or support organizations.

In addition, the standard deduction for individuals will be \$12,550; for heads of household it will be \$18,800, and for married couples filing jointly and widows will be \$25,100. Some additional consequential income tax deductions were eliminated by Congress as a part of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017, a few of which are listed here: most insurance casualty and theft losses; tax preparation charges; moving expenses; and employee expenses not reimbursed by the employer. Many more individuals and families utilized the standard deduction in 2020 than in past years. The federal estate tax ex-

clusion has increased to \$11.7 million in 2021.

DONATING APPRECIATED SECURITIES TO CHARITY

One tried and true option is to utilize appreciated (increased in value) publicly traded securities as a method of donation to a charity such as ASYV. If the stock has been held for one year by the donor, the donor is entitled to deduct the fair market value of the security (based on the average of the high and low on the date of transfer to the charity) and avoid paying capital gains on the increase in value of the security or securities transferred. This is a wonderful way to maximize the value of the donation.

A PEEK INTO THE CRYSTAL BALL

President Biden has proposed a number of tax changes, but no legislation has been passed as of the date of drafting this article. Among them are an increase in the corporate tax rate from 21% to 28%, an increase in the income tax rate back to 39.6% for the highest-earning individuals and families, and the elimination of the capital gains tax on earners of \$1 million and over. Possible changes may also include a reduction in the federal estate tax exclusion down to \$5 million per person and a two-year elimination of the SALT (state and local taxes) limitation of \$10,000. It is not clear what will be passed by Congress and when the legislation will take effect.

Remember, it is always wise to check with your accountant or tax advisor as part of your annual review process. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me by telephone at 212-220-4304 extension 213, or by e-mail at cmorton@yad-vashemusa.org.

Happy holidays!

BY ROBERT CHRISTOPHER MORTON,
Director of Planned Giving
American Society for Yad Vashem

“ACTIVE PARTICIPANTS IN THEIR DESTINY”

On August 5, 2021, a ceremony was held at Yad Vashem in recognition of the Zborowski family’s continued support of the Diana and Eli Zborowski Center for the Study of the Aftermath of the Holocaust.

The recognition ceremony took place in the Museum of Holocaust Art, with the participation of former Yad Vashem Chairman Avner Shalev, Zborowski Center Director Dr. Sharon Kangisser Cohen, current and past Managing Directors of the International Relations Division Dr. Haim Gertner and Shaya Ben Yehuda, Director of the US Desk in the International Relations Division Jeremy Weiss, Art Department Director Eliad Moreh-Rosenberg, and Yad Vashem Guardians Lilly Zborowski Naveh and Murry Zborowski.

At the ceremony, Lilly Zborowski Naveh recalled her late father Eli Zborowski’s passion for telling the story of the rebirth of Holocaust survivors, and their remarkable contribution to postwar societies around the world. “The modern world in particular talks about ‘trauma’... but let’s look at the people who went through the trauma [of the Holocaust] that cannot be compared to anything else and what they did with their lives afterwards. I know that is what drove my father to establish and fund this Center, and I appreciate and acknowledge its important accomplishments.”

Murry Zborowski concurred with his sister’s remarks, stating: “My parents never forgot what happened to them [during the war], but they were ingrained with joie de vivre. They had a moral understanding of how to live, how to contribute, how to connect Jews to one another.... You, the ones who carry out Yad Vashem’s work, take what we have felt and known throughout our lives and pass it on to other people — people who did not live through the Holocaust, people who aren’t Jewish, people who don’t know — in order that they can understand, ‘Who is this nation? What have we learned?’”

Following the ceremony, Dr. Kangisser Cohen gave an interview to Yad Vashem Jerusalem, in which she looked back at the Center’s formative years, its achievements so far and the challenges that lie ahead.

When and why was the Zborowski Center established?

Eli Zborowski, a survivor of the Holocaust, was a lifelong supporter of Yad Vashem and founded the American Society for Yad Vashem. While involved with Yad Vashem’s physical development — the Valley of the Communities and the building of the new Museum Complex, to name a few initiatives — he was particularly interested in researching and commemorating how survivors rebuilt their lives after the war. Thus, in honor of his late beloved wife Diana, also a Holocaust survivor, Eli decided to support the establishment of this important center at Yad Vashem’s International Institute for Holocaust Research in 2008.

Dr. Zeev Mankowitz, who was an expert in the area of *She’arit Hapleta* and who published *Life Between Memory and Hope: The Survivors of the Holocaust in Occupied Germany*, was appointed as first director of the Center — a position he

cumb to their feelings of despair, debilities and psychic wounds born of unendurable suffering. He did not portray them as sainted victims, but rather as ordinary people who, in the main, got on with their lives to the degree that their difficult circumstances allowed, planned for the future, and preserved their humanity intact. At the same time, they evinced amazingly energetic organizational, social and cultural initiatives. In his words, “They envisaged themselves as the living bridge between destruction and rebirth, the last remnant of a world destroyed and the active agents of its return to life.”

What do you think are the major landmarks of the Zborowski Center over the past decade?

The Center is unique in that its approach to the study of the early postwar period is interdisciplinary. Hence it attracts scholars from a vast array of academic fields and from all over the world. As a result, the Center often hosts scholars who have not previously worked with Yad Vashem, and during the workshops are also introduced to its vast and valuable collections.

One of the most important activities is the Center’s collaboration with other research institutes and universities. Presently it is working together with the George and Irina Schaeffer Center for the Study of Genocide, Human Rights and Conflict Prevention at the American University in Paris in the publication of an edited volume of scholarly articles relating to the

emotional journey of survivors in the postwar years. The publication is the result of a two-day workshop that was held via Zoom in 2020.

Undoubtedly, one of the most significant projects of the Center was the publication of a series of articles on how survivors regarded Europe after the war, edited by Dr. Zeev Mankowitz, David Weinberg and myself. In this publication, scholars analyzed how some of the more well-known survivors — including Leo Baeck, Aharon Appelfeld, Elie Wiesel, Paul Celan and Marek Edelman — related to the continent of their childhood and victimization. This was followed by another Hebrew-language volume

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Yad Vashem Guardians Lilly Zborowski Naveh and Murry Zborowski unveil a plaque marking their family’s continued support of the Diana and Eli Zborowski Center for the Study of the Aftermath of the Holocaust.

held until his passing in 2015. In a memorial piece published in *Yad Vashem Studies* 43:1 (2015), Professor Gidon Shimoni wrote: “The major significance of this work lay in its illumination of a salutary corrective to the prevailing view that the survivors were wretchedly helpless and passive people, wholly dependent on the humanitarian care of others and on the broader political concerns, even manipulations, of others. Mankowitz showed that the public that came to be known collectively as *She’arit Hapleta* was as much a ‘saving remnant’ as it was a ‘saved remnant.’” Dr. Mankowitz’s research into the inner history of the survivors indeed revealed that by and large they did not suc-

“OUR BELOVED IOZEFSON FAMILY IS NO MORE”

FORMER NEIGHBORS NOTIFYING SURVIVORS OF THE FATE OF THEIR LOVED ONES

The role of neighbors as a source of information in Eastern Europe — and in particular in the Soviet Union — owing to the mass murder campaigns in the area is of great significance. Those Jews that survived, mostly as a result of evacuations deep into Soviet territory or service in the Red Army, learned through the letters of former neighbors about the fate of their loved ones and communities. Among the documentary materials recently received by the Yad Vashem Archives, a number of such letters stand out.

Recently, during a Yad Vashem “Gathering the Fragments” collection day in Raanana in central Israel, Vera Shteinberg brought three letters that were written in *Poltava*, Ukraine, in October 1943, a few weeks after the city was liberated. In the letters, the non-Jewish writers, Tatiana Kulinichenko and Yevgenia Miroshnichenko, separately addressed Shteinberg’s aunt, Sofia Yoffe (née Iozefson),

they also sought to restore family possessions deposited in their hands on the eve of the murder of the Jews of *Poltava*, including the documents of ownership of the family home, which remained intact.

Renewed contact such as this was challenged by the uneasy task of sharing information about wartime atrocities. How does one approach the task of informing a correspondent of the murder of loved ones — through a letter? Kulinichenko writes to Sofia:

“Our dear Iozefson family is no more. [...] It is almost two years since Mina [the oldest sister] is gone, and it is just as painful. Every time I think of her, I am

in tears. Although they once came to search [my house] for Jude [sic] — I was accused of helping Jews — I did not hide Mina’s photo; she was always in front of my eyes. I sent a detailed letter to the Pinkusevich family [other Jewish neighbors] and asked them to forward it to you, because I could not write such a letter again.”

Kulinichenko’s statement that she would not be able to go through writing such a letter again demonstrates her experience of her account as an act of testimony. Because of the emotional strain, such testimony could only be given once. Scholars have pointed out the potentially traumatic experience of testimony bearing for those who, like Kulinichenko, have themselves stood witness to discrimination and violence toward their Jewish neighbors and endured the difficult years of war and occupation.

The murder of the Jews of *Poltava* was carried out through two massive *aktionen*, in September and November 1941. On November 23, 1941, between 1,500 and 3,000 Jews were slain on the outskirts of the city. In her letter, Kulinichenko notes that she accompanied the members of the Iozefson family on their

final journey. The group included four generations of family members: Grandpa Zakhar Iozefson, mother Ida Iozefson, sister Fenia Iozefson, and with them, Eduard Slutsky and Vladimir Fedoseev — the sons of sisters Mina and Tila. Kulinichenko adds



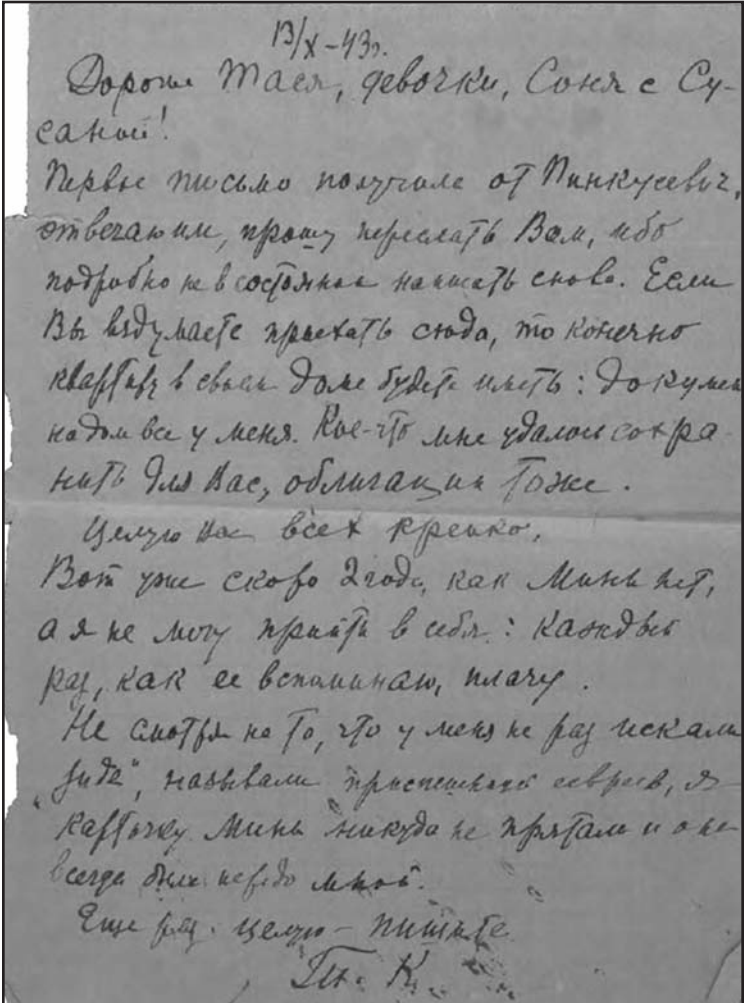
Khaim and Tzilya Itzekzon during World War II.

that Tila had previously been taken to forced labor, never to return, while Mina, who was terminally ill, never recovered from the news of her sister’s disappearance and had died a week beforehand. “What a relief that Mina passed before this horror took place,” remarks Miroshnichenko in the last of the three letters, which reached Sofia a few days after Kulinichenko’s.

Another set of neighborly letters — this time from *Kamenets-Podolsk*, Ukraine — was submitted to Yad Vashem by Raisa Itzekzon. Between August 26 and 29, 1941, an estimated 23,600 Jews were murdered in *Kamenets-Podolsk*. Raisa’s parents, Khaim and Tzilya Itzekzon, were married in the city in May 1941. After the German invasion, they managed to escape to the east — when the workers of the local factory where Khaim was employed were evacuated — and thus their lives were saved.

Many of their relatives remained in *Kamenets-Podolsk* and were murdered there. As early as 1942, the couple conducted extensive correspondence in search of their relatives, including a letter to their former neighbor Vera Jablonski. In July 1943, Jablonski answered, and in

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Letter sent by Tatiana Kulinichenko to her former Jewish neighbor Sofia Iosephson, informing her of the fate of her family.

seeking to tell her about the fate of her family. Of the four Iozefson sisters — Mina, Fenia, Matilda (Tila) and Sofia — Sofia, who fled to Kyrgyzstan, was the only one who survived the war. The role of the neighbors’ letters was not only informative;

SYLVIA MOSKOVITZ:

“A DREAM COME TRUE”

The American Society for Yad Vashem is proud to announce the hiring of Sylvia Moskovitz as its Western Region director. Over the course of her 35-year career in the nonprofit world, Sylvia has managed all aspects of development and fundraising in addition to focusing on organizational management and marketing and communications. Her most recent position was as chief development officer for OUR HOUSE Grief Support Center in Los Angeles, helping raise millions of dollars to support grieving children, teens and adults. Sylvia’s previous work experience was with a variety of different communal organizations operating on a local, national or international level, among them Vista Del Mar Child and Family Services, the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation, the Jewish Federations of Greater Los Angeles and Greater Dallas, Children’s Institute International and the University of Southern California.

Asked about her recent appointment to

the development team at the American Society for Yad Vashem, Sylvia remarked “starting my new position as Western Re-



Sylvia Moskovitz.

gional director for ASYV truly feels like I have reached the apex of my professional life. Working for an organization as mean-

ingful, respected and enduring as Yad Vashem is truly a dream come true. Looking at my children and grandchildren who on their father’s side are third- and fourth-generation survivors makes this position especially significant, and I am so grateful for the opportunity to support and serve this organization and its mission.”

Sylvia came to the nonprofit world after training to be a lawyer. She holds a BA in social welfare from the University of Southern California and a Juris Doctor degree from Whittier College School of Law, where she was the research editor for the *Law Review*.

When not working, Sylvia can usually be found spending time with her two children and three grandchildren. She splits her time between West Los Angeles and Lake Arrowhead, California, and enjoys making hand-knitted and crocheted items, as well as reading. She loves hiking and on most fall Sundays can be found cheering on her beloved Dallas Cowboys.

“ACTIVE PARTICIPANTS IN THEIR DESTINY”

(Continued from page 5)
examining how survivors of the Holocaust encountered and related to Israel when they arrived, edited by Professor Dalia Ofer.

Another central project of the Center is the publication of the diaries written by Holocaust survivor and renowned artist Yehuda Bacon. The teenage survivor began to write a diary two months after his liberation and has continued until today. This rare document traces the emotional and physical rehabilitation of a child survivor throughout his life.

What are the challenges of this kind of research?

Language is always a challenge — to find researchers who are equipped with the languages necessary to work with the original source materials — as well as the accessibility of the archival materials themselves. There are many collections that are still in archives around the world which have not been catalogued and therefore remain unavailable to researchers.

Furthermore, there has been a tendency toward a pathologization of the survivors;

and this has been a critique regarding the field. We must be cognizant that while there were emotional challenges and vulnerabilities that survivors carried and con-



Zborowski Center Director Dr. Sharon Kangisser Cohen.

tinue to carry, there were also surprising resilience and a fierce determination to become self-sufficient and establish independent lives.

In which direction do you see research in this field leading in the next decade?

The Zborowski Center will continue its

long-term project of the publication of the Yehuda Bacon diaries. The goal is to publish those diaries that date up until the establishment of the State of Israel.

During the last 18 months, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Center has hosted online scholarly lectures with researchers from around the world. This has increased the exposure of the Center and its activities, as well as providing an important forum for scholars to reach diverse global audiences. In view of this success, we will continue to organize these Zoom lectures in the coming year and possibly beyond.

In 2022, we will be hosting a research seminar together with Yad Vashem’s Museums Division on the subject of artwork in the postwar period. I am also hopeful that the Center will continue to support emerging scholars who are interested in this fascinating area of human history, and will forge ahead with strengthening relationships and collaborative projects with relevant research centers around the world.

BY LEAH GOLDSTEIN

CHAIRMAN OF THE YAD VASHEM AT ASYV

Dani Dayan, newly appointed chairman of the Yad Vashem, recently visited the New York area and spent time with friends of the American Society for Yad Vashem. In addition to a number of public speaking engagements and private meetings, Dani had the opportunity to meet with some of the lay and professional leadership of the American Society for Yad Vashem.



Dani Dayan presenting an award to Rochelle Etingin, honoree at ASYV’s 2021 Gala, together with her family.



Dr. Haim Gertner, director of Yad Vashem International Relations Division; Mark Moskowitz, ASYV co-chair; Dani Dayan, chairman, Yad Vashem; Adina Burian, ASYV co-chair; Stanley H. Stone, ASYV executive director.



Dani Dayan (center), chairman, Yad Vashem; and YLA board members.



Loren Weiss, ASYV Tri-State Region chair; Dani Dayan, chairman, Yad Vashem.



Yael Ribner, deputy director of Yad Vashem International Relations Division; Amy Cooper, ASYV National Campaign director; Dr. Haim Gertner, director of Yad Vashem International Relations Division; Stanley H. Stone, ASYV executive director; David Halpern, ASYV board member and development co-chair; Dani Dayan, chairman, Yad Vashem; Jeremy Halpern, ASYV board member; Josef Paradis and Gonen Paradis, ASYV leaders.



Dr. Haim Gertner, director of Yad Vashem International Relations Division.

HIDDEN FROM THE NAZIS

Fearful that the occupying Nazi forces in Prague could confiscate a lifetime's worth of artwork, Jewish painter Gertrud Kauders decided in 1939 to hide her vast array of paintings and drawings.

Nearly 80 years later, in the summer of 2018, Michal Ulvr was leading a demolition team tearing down a decrepit house south of Prague when "about 30 paintings tumbled out and fell onto my head," he told RFE/RL.

When Jakub Sedlacek, the owner of the house, was alerted to the strange discovery, he realized immediately what had been uncovered. Sedlacek had been raised on stories of exquisite art hidden inside the family home he recently inherited. A close inspection of the canvases confirmed the family legend was real — many of the paintings were signed "Gertrud Kauders."

Kauders was born in 1883 in Prague, one of two children in a well-to-do Jewish home. After the Nazis rose to power in neighboring Germany and began a step-by-step takeover of Czechoslovakia, most of Kauders' family fled the country and urged her to do the same. But Kauders, whose first language was German, refused to believe the Nazis would hurt someone as harmless as her, and she chose to stay.

But as the full horror of the German plans for Europe's Jews was slowly laid bare, Kauders turned to a close friend, Natalie Jahudkova, for the favor of a lifetime.

Jahudkova was an elegant Russian woman born in 1895 in a small town north of Moscow. She had emigrated to Czechoslovakia in 1920 after catching the eye of one of the Czechoslovak Legionnaires — volunteer soldiers fighting for their homeland during World War I. The legion famously battled its way across Siberia after being caught up in Russia's civil war.

Kauders and Jahudkova met while students at Prague's Academy of Fine Arts. The two became close while taking weeks-long trips with their professor, noted artist Otakar Nejedly, to paint the landscapes and cities of France and Italy.

By 1939, those carefree days of summer painting trips abroad with their famous professor were a distant memory as Nazi bureaucrats and their jackbooted enforcers were busy making life impossible for Czechoslovak Jews. With time running out, Kauders untacked her canvases from their frames and smuggled her entire life's work to Jahudkova's house in the southern Prague suburb of *Zbraslav*.

At enormous risk to herself, Jahudkova — probably helped by Kauders — hid some 700 artworks throughout the struc-

ture of her house. Jahudkova's new home was still under construction, making the hammering and labor of the two friends' secret project relatively inconspicuous.

Soon after the artwork was safely embedded in the *Zbraslav* house, Kauders was snagged in the nightmarish machinery of the Nazi state. After being identified as Jewish, records show she was arrested and transported to the *Theresienstadt* concentration camp in May 1942. Kauders was held briefly among the starv-

ers' behalf, Sedlacek eventually met with its journalists at his home in a quiet Prague suburb.

Then, on September 25, Sedlacek allowed Kauders' entire collection of some 700 paintings and sketches, laid out like giant packs of playing cards in a Prague storeroom, to be photographed by RFE/RL.

Sedlacek said that before knowing Gertrud Kauders had living descendants, he was thinking about monetizing what he knew was a historic art discovery — perhaps through exhibitions.

But after RFE/RL showed documentation proving Gertrud Kauders had living heirs, he said he "wouldn't be able to live with [himself]" knowing that there were descendants of Gertrud Kauders unhappy with what he was doing with the art.

Sedlacek said he is ready to donate the art to a Czech museum if Gertrud Kauders' descendants give him the power of attorney to do so. Miriam Kauders has also said she would be willing to bestow the art but reserved the right for her and her siblings to keep some portraits of her long-deceased relatives — including their father — for their own walls.

Miriam Kauders said her father was known as a humorous boy who was nicknamed "clown" in his school years. But she said his personality darkened after the war and he "never recovered" from the

Holocaust, largely because of what the Nazis did to his beloved aunt. He remembered Gertrud Kauders as a kind, gentle woman with an unusually quiet life and "no interest in men."

When photos of Gertrud Kauders' artwork were shown to Michaela Sidenburg, the chief curator of Prague's Jewish Museum, she called the discovery "unique in the context of the history of art within the Czech lands" because of the number of paintings and the fact that it seems to represent nearly the entire life's work of a significant artist who largely kept her art to herself.

Sidenberg applauded Sedlacek's decision to go public with the entire discovery.

"I can imagine all kinds of horrible scenarios where the art was destroyed, or sold in secret, so Mr. Sedlacek absolutely deserves credit for coming forward with this," she said.

BY AMOS CHAPPLE,
DANA KATHARINA VASKOVA,
Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty



A self-portrait of Gertrud Kauders.

ing and sickly prisoners in the camp north of Prague, then transported some 600 kilometers east to *Majdanek*, an extermination camp in *Lublin*, Poland.

Sometime after May 17, 1942, Kauders was killed in the camp and her body burned in ovens built for the industrial-scale murders that would come to be known as the Holocaust.

Both Kauders and Jahudkova were childless, but Kauders' brother had a son, Cornelius, who fled Czechoslovakia for New Zealand in 1939. He had five children, including Miriam Kauders.

Miriam Kauders learned about the 2018 discovery and made repeated inquiries from her home in New Zealand into the whereabouts of what she thought were 30 paintings and sketches by her great-aunt.

Though early reports of the find indicated the paintings would be donated to the Jewish Museum in Prague, Miriam Kauders learned the museum had not received the art.

After RFE/RL inquired on Miriam Kaud-

NAZI CAMPS AND THEIR NEIGHBOURING COMMUNITIES

Nazi Camps and their Neighbouring Communities: History, Memory, and Memorialization.

By Helen J. Whatmore-Thomson. Oxford University Press: New York, N.Y., 2020. 289 pp. \$67.20 hardcover.

While reading *Nazi Camps and their Neighbouring Communities: History, Memory and Memorialization* by Helen J. Whatmore-Thomson, this reviewer was reminded of a parable her father told her. A rabbi, wanting to teach his son about evil, directed his little boy to hammer a nail into a piece of wood each time he (the son) did something wrong. At the end of the month, with quite a few nails hammered into the wood, the rabbi instructed his boy to remove the nails. The son did so but was soon complaining about the holes still there. “Yes,” said the rabbi, “those holes will always remain, for the consequences of evil remain.”

In her book Whatmore-Thomson approaches the story of three Nazi camps from a unique and thought-provoking perspective. As in most historical works, she begins by chronicling the creation and operation of each of them. But then she moves on to underline the interrelationships each had with its respective surrounding communities while they were run by the Nazis and imprisoned thousands, and after liberation. The result: because of the evil perpetrated at these camps, the sites frequently remain sources of contention for the communities forever in their shadow.

For example, we read how in 1938 *Nuengamme*, located near *Hamburg*, began as a satellite of *Sachsenhausen*. The “SS owned company, *Deutsche Erd-und Steinwerke* (German Earth and Stone Works, DEST) bought a disused brickworks” from the city authorities and, utilizing slave labor, made it operational. A year later a “bigger and more modern brickworks [*Klinkerwerk*]” was built, along with a new “independent” camp that would house thousands of prisoners. From the start, “trading networks” with the villagers were set up. “On-site industrial workshops run by civilian firms” used prisoners. “Prisoners worked outside the camp,” at times “commandeered by the *Hamburg* city authorities.” Finally, countless prisoners laboring under especially inhumane conditions dredged the *Dove Elbe*

river and built a canal, while “a small number of civilians worked in the commandos, mostly operating the machinery.” In short, the community surrounding the camp, “not unsympathetic toward Nazism,” knew what was going on there — all the misery, abuse, even the deaths — and often profited from its existence.

In the early 1940s *Struthof-Natzweiler* was built by slave laborers in the Alsatian section of the *Vosges* mountains, “a tourist destination once beloved for its skiing.” Indeed, the camp included the *Struthof Hotel*, “renowned” for its “hospitality.” Now

threatening them with guns, and setting dogs on them.”

Interestingly, the story of *Kamp Vught*, built in the Netherlands, is quite different. True, some locals helped build the camp in the early 1940s, but it appears they didn’t know what it would be used for. Moreover, once the camp was built, while the “local police were closely involved with [camp] logistics,” including “chaperoning convoys of prisoners” to and from the railway station, still locals did not work inside the camp. In fact, once a substantial number of villagers realized the suffering of *Vught’s* prison population, they wanted to do something about it. Thus food and medicine were left for prisoners where they could find them. Villagers “picked up the little pieces of paper that prisoners dropped en route to the camp scrawled with names and addresses, and wrote to tell family members of their whereabouts.” And since, sadly, many Jews knew *Vught* as a transit camp leading to *Westerbork*, destined for *Sobibor*, we read how in June 1944, “in a remarkable instance of local solidarity,” members of the *Vught* community came to do what they could for a convoy of Jewish children at their rail station . . .

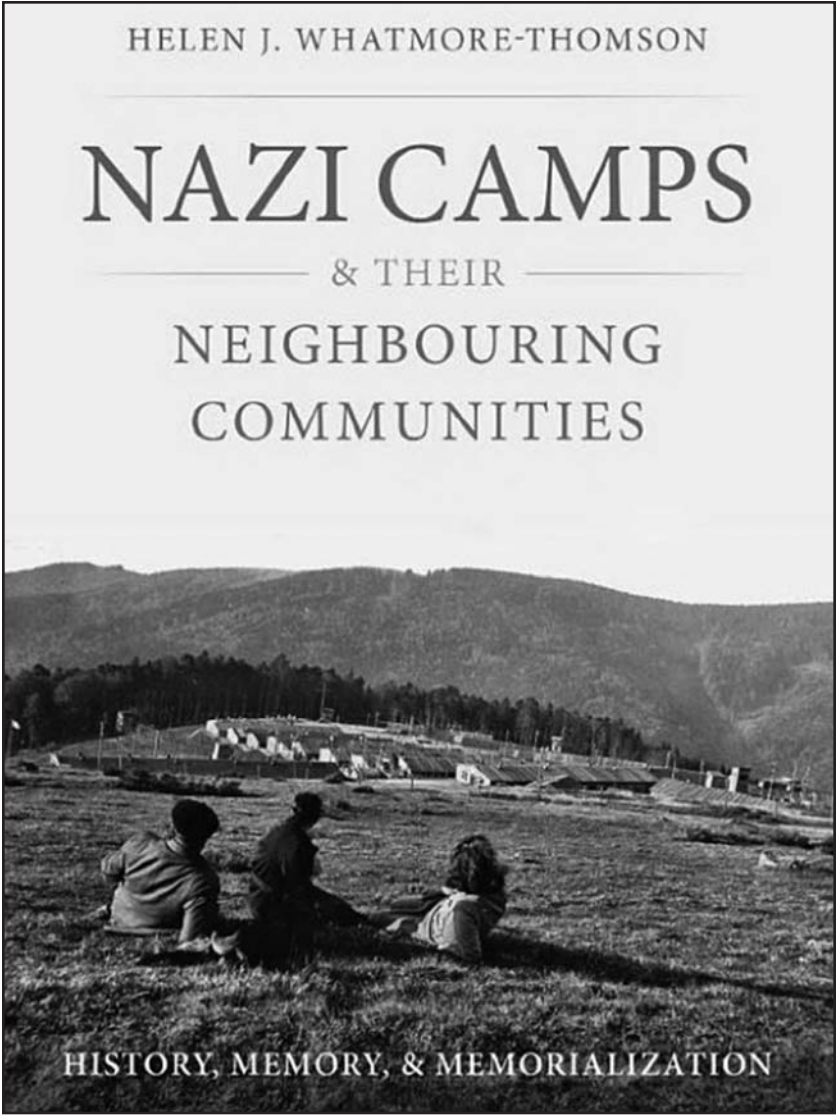
What happened to these sites after the war? Throughout the years some surrounding communities tried their best to ignore them; some couldn’t, some didn’t. Some turned them into prisons, detention centers, or reception centers for immigrants. Some communities tried to reclaim as much land as possible, leaving little of the site. All memorialized these sites sooner or, when interest developed especially among young people, later.

Interestingly, the *Vught* community has been most consistent when it comes to remembering.

Of particular interest to readers of *Martyrdom & Resistance* is the memorial plaque that was put up at the railway station and “simply reads: ‘From this spot in 1943–1944 14,000 Jewish men and women along with 1,800 children were taken away to extermination camps.’”

Needless to say, *Nazi Camps and their Neighbouring Communities* is an important addition to Holocaust documentation.

REVIEWED BY DR. DIANE CYPKIN
Professor of Media, Communication, and Visual Arts at Pace University



the hotel served as SS headquarters for the labor camp further up the mountain crammed with thousands of prisoners. Most of them slaved in the nearby quarry digging for the “rare pink granite” that was one of the main reasons the Nazis created the camp. Much as in *Nuengamme*, *Natzweiler* leased the land to the Nazis, considering their needs. Additionally, Whatmore-Thomson notes how pleased *Natzweilers* were for the opportunity of “steady and fairly lucrative” employment at the camp, where “300 to 350 civilians” alone worked at the quarry as foremen and supervisors. And all this, even as “local inhabitants saw the SS guards jostling the prisoners, hitting them, yelling at them,

POLAND'S CONDEMNATION OF AN ANTI-SEMITIC RALLY SIGNALS HOPE

Recently, a blatant and distressing anti-Semitic event in the city of *Kalisz* marred Poland's Independence Day celebrations. At the same time, this incident was also an opportunity for the current nationalist government to make clear that anti-Semitism will not be tolerated in Poland. Amid chants of "Death to Jews," extreme nationalists burned a book that represented a 13th-century Polish edict that legalized the Jewish presence in Poland and conveyed a measure of security against anti-Semitism.

This incident reminds us of both the best and worst of Poland's history toward its Jewish population.

There have been times in Poland's history when it was a welcome home to Jews. In the 13th and 14th centuries, Jews began to move from Western Europe to Eastern Europe, largely because of anti-Semitism. In 1290, the Jews of England were officially expelled, and within years, Jews were also expelled from France and many German protectorates. In fact, for centuries after that, Jewish life in Western Europe was highly limited if it existed at all.

But over in Eastern Europe, Jews were developing a level of autonomy that, if not completely devoid of anti-Semitism, gave them a level of stability that had been largely lost in Western Europe. The Statute of *Kalisz* symbolized that spirit, and the Polin Museum in Warsaw describes a thousand years of Jewish life in Poland, the vast majority of which was peaceful and tolerant.

That era came to a brutal end during World War II, when Poland was occupied by Nazi Germany and the Nazis murdered three million Polish Jews, about 90 percent of the Polish Jewish community. During and

after the war, Polish Jews were also targeted by their own Polish neighbors. In the village of *Jedwabne* in 1941, at least 350 Jews were burned to death by their neighbors. And in *Kielce* in 1946, a malicious blood libel led to the murder of 42 Jews, and another 40 were wounded.

Even today, we know that anti-Semitic attitudes are pervasive among the Polish population. ADL's Global 100 survey found that



A woman passes by a window bearing a swastika tag on the building of the Citizens of Poland (Obywatele RP) movement in Warsaw.

more than four out of 10 Poles agreed with the majority of anti-Semitic statements we tested. Polish acceptance of anti-Semitic attitudes is roughly 50 percent higher than in Western Europe. More specifically, 57 percent believe that Polish Jews are more loyal to Israel than to Poland, and the same percent believe that Jews have too much power in the business world.

And now the burning of the Statute of *Kalicz*. A leading observer of anti-Semitism in Poland, Prof. Rafal Pankowski of the Never Again Association, said recently that he had never seen anything like the *Kalisz* incident in his 25 years of monitoring anti-Semitism in Poland. He likened it to the infamous book burnings that took place early

in the Nazi regime.

The question facing Poland today is whether the nationalist Polish government sees *Kalisz* or *Jedwabne* as its model. Are Jews to be welcomed and protected or alienated and attacked?

The situation is promising. Having monitored the nationalist Polish government's reactions to anti-Semitism since it took office in 2015, we can say that the reaction to the *Kalisz* incident was among its best. The first condemnations came from both the Minister of Interior Mateusz Kaminski and the spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Soon after, Polish President Andrzej Duda added his condemnation on behalf of all of Poland. Importantly, local leaders of every Christian church in *Kalisz* signed a joint letter, condemning the anti-Semitic event.

Kalisz can be an inflection point for Poland. It can be a moment to recommit to the fight against anti-Semitism or it can be a milestone for "defining deviancy down" and excusing blatant anti-Semitic behavior with unconvincing arguments.

Let us hope that the early signs are indicative that Polish authorities and Polish society make the right choice and tell the world that Poland will not be complacent about contemporary anti-Semitism, which contradicts its illustrious past as a welcome home to Jews.

Let *Kalisz* reclaim its heritage and become a symbol of hope, not hate; of living together, not living in fear. That choice is for the Polish government to make.

BY JONATHAN A. GREENBLATT,
CEO and National Director, ADL,
Newsweek

LIST OF THOUSANDS OF NAZI WAR CRIMINALS UNCOVERED IN ARGENTINA

A list of 12,000 Nazi officers who fled to Argentina has been uncovered by an Argentine investigator. A Swiss bank is believed to hold the bank accounts of some.

A list of 12,000 Nazi officers who fled to Argentina following the defeat of the Third Reich was uncovered at the former Nazi headquarters in Buenos Aires by Argentine investigator Pedro Filipuzzi.

The documents revealed that most of the officers had bank accounts in Switzerland.

The Simon Wiesenthal Center in the US has asked the Zurich-based Credit Suisse investment bank to identify the inactive accounts that have remained since, claiming

many of the center's funds were stolen from these bank accounts.

"We believe that these accounts, which have been dormant for a long time, hold money looted from Jewish victims," the Wiesenthal Center stated. In a letter addressed to Credit Suisse bank manager Christian Küng, Wiesenthal Center officials said, "We believe that it's highly likely that these dormant accounts hold funds looted from Jewish victims under the Nuremberg Laws of the 1930s."

"We are aware that you have already been sued by ex-Nazi heirs who are alleged to be on the now-discovered lists," the letter continued.

The Wiesenthal Center claims that

many of the Nazis whose names appear in the newly unveiled documents owned accounts in one or more bank accounts in a Swiss bank which later became Credit Suisse.

Nazi Germany began to plunder Jewish property shortly after the enactment of the Nuremberg Laws in 1935, when huge sums of money were looted from European Jews. Much of the money was transferred to Nazi accounts at the Swiss bank. Swiss bank chiefs said that in 1997–1999 they carried out an investigation into claims that the Nazis held bank accounts in Switzerland, but following the new disclosure, they promised to "reexamine this affair."

NEW EXHIBITIONS ONLINE

Yad Vashem has recently uploaded new and updated online exhibitions marking events that took place over the summer months.

**“Mother, Forgive Me”:
Hannah Szenes — Zionist, Paratrooper
and Poet**

Marking 100 years since the birth of Hannah Szenes, Yad Vashem uploaded to its website a new mini-exhibition telling the story of the Yishuv paratrooper. The narrative is unfolded through survivor testimonies housed in Yad Vashem’s Documents Archive — survivors whose paths crossed with Szenes’s during her service. One testimony in particular is



Paratrooper and poet Hannah Szenes.

especially moving: that of Katrina Szenes, Hannah’s mother, which describes her encounter with her beloved daughter in the prison in Budapest.

“On the morning of 17 June 1944, a man in civilian garb knocked on the door.... He had a warrant for my arrest... They interrogated me.... They asked about the children, especially about Hannah. The investigator asked me where Hannah was, and smiling, I answered that she was in an agricultural settlement near *Haifa*. He shook his head and said: ‘She is here, in the next room.’ The door opened. I was dumbstruck. Aniko [Hannah] was standing in the doorway, held by four men. Her disheveled hair did not conceal the blue contusions above her eyes. She escaped their grip and jumped on me, sobbing: ‘Mother, forgive me.’”

The exhibition, which was created in English, Hebrew, German and Spanish, contains photographs of Hannah Szenes, her family and her friends from Yad

Vashem’s Photo Archives. On July 17, 2021, Szenes’ one-hundredth birthday, her story was shared on various social media platforms in a number of languages, garnering great interest and a number of emotional responses. “She gave up her life to save others,” wrote Edna Bodiam in response to the post on Yad Vashem’s Facebook page. “She is a hero and will never be forgotten for her bravery and dedication against the enemy.” Juan Mónico added: “These are the women the world needs.”

**Jews and Sport Before the Holocaust:
A Visual Retrospective**

In advance of the Tokyo Olympic Games in July 2021, the online exhibition “Jews and Sport Before the Holocaust” underwent a facelift in both form and content. The exhibition brings stories of Jewish sport from the perspective of Jewish cultural life before the Holocaust — stories of Jews in different sporting fields in the countries in which they lived, as both professional and amateur players, coaches, sportswriters, investors and spectators.

Among other narratives are those of Jewish Olympic champions who brought great honor to their countries — honor

time that women competed in this branch of sport at the Olympic Games. The team won the gold medal, and its members became heroes in the Netherlands. Of the 12 team members, five were Jewish: Helena Nordheim, Anna Polak, Estella Agsteribbe, Judik Simons and Elka de Levie. Four of the five team members, as well as their Jewish coach, Gerrit Kleerekoper, were murdered during the Holocaust.

**Jews from Kiev and the Surrounding
Areas Murdered at Babi Yar**

At the end of September 2021, a new exhibition was launched on the Yad Vashem website to mark the 80th anniversary of the murder of the Jews of Kiev and its environs in Babi Yar. Within two days, on 29–30 September (on the eve of Yom Kippur), 33,771 Jews were murdered in Babi Yar by *Einsatzgruppe C* soldiers assisted by their Ukrainian collaborators. Those who managed to escape the massacre in September and were discovered in the following months were taken to Babi Yar and murdered.

The exhibition features 80 photographs of Jews — men, women and chil-



The Dutch Olympic women’s gymnastics team at the Amsterdam Olympics, 1928.

and achievements that held no water for them during the *Shoah*. One example brought in the exhibition is Victor Perez, who was born in French Tunisia and became the World Flyweight Champion in 1931 and 1932. Perez was arrested in Paris in September 1943 and detained in the *Drancy* internment camp. In October 1943 he was deported to Auschwitz on convoy 60. He was killed on January 22, 1945, on a death march.

The exhibition also showcases the Dutch women’s gymnastics team in the 1928 Amsterdam Olympics — the first

dren — murdered in Babi Yar, given to Yad Vashem along with the testimonies bearing their names for eternal remembrance: silent testimony to the persecution of an entire Jewish community, its rabbis and supporters, teachers and students, merchants and manual workers, intellectuals and scientists. Sometimes four generations — parents and children, brothers and sisters, grandchildren and great-grandchildren — entire branches of Jewish families became extinct in the space of two days, and in many cases left nobody to remember their very existence.

RECOGNIZING JEWISH RESCUERS OF JEWS DURING THE HOLOCAUST

Memorial institutions are finally working to redress an imbalance in the numbers of Jews versus non-Jews hailed for their heroism in defense of victims of the Shoah.

Ouvre de secours aux enfants (OSE), the Jewish children's welfare organization, was founded in Russia in 1912 by a group of young doctors committed to offering sanitary protection and health benefits to poor Jews. The organization moved in 1917 to Berlin, where Albert Einstein was its honorary president. In 1933, it moved to Paris, and in 1940, once again to escape the Nazis, it moved to *Montpellier* in the nonoccupied south of France.

With its 280 official employees, OSE became the principal Jewish organization concerned with the welfare of foreign Jews in French internment camps. In November 1941, there were more than 28,000 internees in these camps, roughly 5,000 of whom were children under the age of 18. The camps were entirely run and staffed by

children in the still-unoccupied zone. With headquarters in *Lyon*, over the next 12 months, thanks to about three dozen workers — most of whom were Jewish women employed by the OSE — the Garel Network would hide over 1,600 Jewish children in various parts of France.

What happened in France took place in every occupied country. Thousands of Jews, many of them very young, labored individually and in Jewish and non-Jewish organizations to save their endangered brethren. Many could have fled but chose to remain in order to rescue others. With great heroism, they employed subterfuge, forgery of documents, smuggling, concealment, and escape into foreign countries such as Spain, Switzerland, Sweden and Turkey. Together with their non-Jewish companions, these courageous persons rescued between 150,000 and 300,000 persons who might otherwise have perished.

One OSE fieldworker named Madeleine Dreyfus brought Jewish children to *Le Chambon-sur-Lignon*. Born Madeleine Kahn in 1909, the future Madeleine Dreyfus received her baccalaureate degree in Paris in 1927. She married Raymond Dreyfus in March 1933 on the day Hitler came to power. Her sons, Michel and Jacques, were born in 1934 and 1937, respectively, during the period when she began studying psychology intensely with Sophie Lazareff, a student and disciple of Alfred Adler. In October 1941, when her husband lost

his job in Paris because of the recently invoked anti-Semitic laws, the family passed into the unoccupied zone and settled in *Lyon*.

Madeleine began working for OSE as a psychologist in late 1941, giving educational and psychological consultations to troubled Parisian students whose families had taken refuge in *Lyon*. As of August 1942, under the constant menace of the enthusiastically collaborationist Vichy police force, and, especially after November 1942, when the Germans officially occupied all of France, Madeleine assumed responsibility for the *Lyon/Le Chambon-sur-Lignon* area link in the Garel Network and sought places of refuge in this mostly Protestant countryside for Jewish children.

Several times a month, accompanied by

a small group of children (aged anywhere from 18 months to 16 years), Madeleine would take the train from *Lyon* to *Saint-Etienne*, where she would transfer to the local steam engine to *Le Chambon-sur-Lignon*. Sometimes these children had been given to her by their parents. Just as often, they had managed to escape or hide at the time of their parents' arrest and were then rescued by the network.

These trips to the countryside were extremely dangerous ventures in which Madeleine continuously risked her life. Although in almost all cases the children had false Aryan identity papers, Madeleine, who carried the most readily identifiable Jewish last name in France, did not.

Madeleine Dreyfus had to take control of these mostly foreign children to get them through police inspections in the train stations and on the trains. She had to keep them from speaking Polish, German or Yiddish, and make sure that they called their friends by their French names. From September or October 1942 to November 1943, Madeleine made these trips, finding shelter for well over one hundred Jewish children. She would return often to visit the children she had placed, to bring them clothing, medicine, food tickets and, whenever possible, letters from their parents — who, for safety reasons, never knew where their children were hidden.

As of November 1942, Madeleine was already pregnant with her third child, Annette. Being pregnant may have slowed her down, but it didn't stop her. Annette was born in *Lyon* on August 29, 1943. "Very shortly thereafter," writes Raymond, "my wife resumed her trips back and forth between *Lyon* and *Le Chambon-sur-Lignon*."

Only a few weeks later, after his sister-in-law and two of her children were arrested and deported, Raymond begged Madeleine to stop her illegal work, "now that she was responsible for three small children, two months, six, and nine years of age, all without false papers." Madeleine asked Raymond to wait a bit longer, since there was no one to replace her.

On November 23, Madeleine received a phone call from the father of a child she had hidden at the School for Deaf-Mutes at *Villeurbanne*, who was distraught because he had heard there was going to be a Gestapo raid at the institute. Madeleine called there, and the woman on the other end of the line encouraged her to come to

(Continued on page 15)



Jewish youth liberated at *Buchenwald* on a train en route to an OSE home in *Ecouis*, France.

the French. With help from non-Jewish organizations, such as the Quakers and the Red Cross, OSE social workers fed, clothed and raised the morale of these detainees, 3,000 of whom would die of malnutrition and disease over the course of the war.

As of August 1942, when children were being deported even from the nonoccupied zone, the primary goal of OSE became to illegally evacuate the children from the camps and, with the help of its Christian allies, to place them in non-Jewish homes, farms and institutions, or smuggle them out of the country.

To accomplish this work, a 33-year-old engineer named Georges Garel (né Grigori Garfinkel) left his role in the Resistance to form the Garel Network, the first entirely clandestine network for rescuing Jewish

“OUR BELOVED IOZEFSON FAMILY IS NO MORE”

(Continued from page 6)

formed Tzilya of the murder of her loved ones.

Jablonski, as the letter attests, was aware of its significance for Tzilya. “I am very glad that you and also your husband are healthy [...] during the German occupation your relatives were at home — but when the German brutes started shooting at the Jews, I never saw them again. [...]”

I believe they did not have time to escape. [...] Tzilya, I know you’ll have a hard time reading this, but please try not to take it to heart — because it will do you no good. [...] Take care of your health and that of your husband. Send him my best wishes — even though I do not know him.”

Correspondence between Jablonski and the Itzekzons persisted, through which Jablonski shared with Khaim, with whom she had had no previous acquaintance, a heartbreaking account of the final moments of Tzilya’s father.

“Neighbors’ letters such as these are characterized by a variety of voices and styles,” says Yad Vashem Archives Director and Fred Hillman Chair for Holocaust Documentation Masha Pollak Rosenberg. “Writing — as an act of testimony — introduced neighbors who were willing to help



Sofia Yoffe (née Iozephson) with her daughter after the war.

survivors with two difficult tasks: confronting their own traumatic wartime experiences and memories of death and violence, and finding the right words to ex-

press and communicate them. In the words of Tatiana Kulinichenko from *Poltava*: ‘I could not write another letter like this; these memories drive me crazy.’ And as Vera Jablonski of *Kamenets-Podolsk* testified: ‘Writing is difficult enough — but to see before your eyes the suffering, the howling, the shouting, the hands stretched out — is even worse.’”

Little has remained of the Jewish side of the correspondence; the collections consist mainly of the non-Jewish neighbors’ accounts and the bitter news itself. The voice of the Jews is missing or, at best, underrepresented. Restored contact with their Jewish former community members confronted non-Jewish neighbors with their wartime experiences, and, no less, with themselves. To the Jewish survivors, this was a renewed encounter with their former home, a world destroyed beyond repair. The neighbors’ letters are a window into this

complex human encounter.

BY OFER LIFSHITZ

JEWISH HISTORIAN REFUSES AWARD FROM POLISH GOVERNMENT’S HISTORY INSTITUTE

Jewish American historian Eliyana Adler refused to accept an award worth \$19,000 from the Polish government’s Pilecki Institute, arguing that it suppresses work by “historians who strive to show the complex and indeed tragic aspects of Poland’s wartime past.”

Adler, an associate professor at Penn State University, was given a newly inaugurated award for scholarship on 20th-century Poland, the Pilecki Institute’s specialty, for her 2020 book *Survival on the Margins: Polish Jewish Refugees in the Wartime Soviet Union*. The honor was to be co-awarded by the Auschwitz memorial museum.

“The Pilecki Institute, while very generous in supporting some historical scholarship on the Second World War, has also been involved in suppressing the work of historians who strive to show the complex and indeed tragic aspects of Poland’s wartime past,” Adler wrote in a letter dated

November 4, to the institute.

Polish governmental institutions have been accused by historians of whitewashing the country’s treatment of Jews during the Holocaust. The country passed a widely criticized law in 2019 that makes it illegal to blame the Polish nation for Nazi crimes.

A recent high-profile court case pitted historians Jan Grabowski and Barbara Engelking against Poland’s government, which ruled that the pair had to apologize for their book unearthing alleged atrocities by a Polish mayor. An appeals court overturned the ruling in August.

“War and occupation push humans and societies to their limits. The situation during World War II was horrific for all Poles, albeit not in equal measure. Some non-Jewish Poles, as profiled on the institute’s website, lost their lives protecting their Jewish compatriots. Others, as we know from the scholarship of Professors Jan T. Gross, Jan Grabowski and Barbara Engelking

among others, profited in a variety of ways from the murder of their neighbors,” Adler wrote in her letter.

According to the book’s press description, Adler’s work focuses on “about 200,000 Jewish refugees from Poland” who from 1940 to 1946 “lived and toiled in the harsh Soviet interior.”

“They endured hard labor, bitter cold, and extreme deprivation. But out of reach of the Nazis, they escaped the fate of millions of their coreligionists in the Holocaust,” the description reads.

The Pilecki Institute is named after Witold Pilecki, a general who helped found the Secret Polish Army, a major resistance movement against the Nazis during World War II. Pilecki faked his identity to enter Auschwitz, where he helped organize an uprising and gathered reporting on Nazi atrocities.

BY KATARZYNA MARKUSZ, JTA

ROMANIA MAKES HOLOCAUST EDUCATION MANDATORY IN ALL HIGH SCHOOLS

The Romanian Senate has adopted a law that makes it mandatory for all high schools and vocational schools in the country to teach a specific subject on the history of the Holocaust and the Jewish people.

The law stipulates that the course will be taught starting in 2023. Its contents will be decided by the country's education ministry in collaboration with the Elie Wiesel Institute for the Study of the Holocaust in Romania.

In the words of Jewish lawmaker Silviu Vexler, who championed the law, the initiative aims at "countering intolerance and extremism" among youth.

The center-right National Liberal Party and the Social Democrats voted in favor of the law, together with the centrist alliance USR PLUS and the Democratic Union of Hungarians in Romania.

The law, which was previously passed by Romania's lower chamber, was supported by 107 senators, while 13 legislators voted against it and one abstained.

It was opposed by the populist right-wing Alliance for the Union of the Romanians, or AUR, a nationalist party that received 9% of the vote in its debut in a general election last December and is now the fourth-largest party in the country's legislature.

AUR lawmaker Claudiu Tarziu deemed the law unnecessary, as he claimed Romania hasn't seen a single "serious anti-Semitic case" in the past 20 years. Tarziu said the law was "in contradiction" with Romanian and European Union laws as well as with "common sense," as it discriminates against "our fellow citizens who belong to other minorities."

According to official statistics included in a report by the Elie Wiesel Institute, a total

of 27 anti-Semitic incidents were reported to authorities in 2020. A number of Jewish cemeteries have been vandalized in recent years.

Romanian Jewish actress Maia Morgenstern — who made international headlines for her role as the Virgin Mary in Mel Gibson's *The Passion of the Christ* — last March received death threats by an individual who said he would "throw her into a gas chamber." Anti-Semitic messages are also rife in the nationalist fringe press both online and in print, and historical interpretations of the Holocaust that downplay the role of Romania have been touted by local historians and university professors.

According to the Elie Wiesel Institute, between 280,000 and 380,000 Romanian and Ukrainian Jews were murdered in territories under Romanian administration during World War II.

RECOGNIZING JEWISH RESCUERS...

(Continued from page 13)

the school right away. It was impossible for Madeleine to know that her respondent was being held at gunpoint and was being instructed to answer in that manner by her Gestapo captors.



Resistance fighter Tosia Altman, who organized armed resistance in ghettos in German-occupied Poland. Altman died in 1943 from injuries sustained on the run.

Despite walking into a trap, Madeleine managed to immediately warn both her family and the OSE. She was sent to *Fort Monluc* in *Lyon*, where she spent over two months in the Jewish women's dormitory, from whose window she witnessed the execution of many resisters, Jews and Christians alike. At the end of January 1944, she was transferred to *Drancy*. In May, she was

deported to *Bergen-Belsen* in northwest Germany, where about 40,000 inmates would die of starvation and disease.

Even in *Bergen-Belsen*, where she would spend 11 months, Madeleine was concerned with the well-being of others. She constantly tried to raise the morale of her companions and organized daily delousing sessions to help stem the typhus in the camp. She and her companions received between 600 and 700 calories a day. Survival was contingent, she reported later, upon selective camaraderie. Small groups of three or four women would stay together and help one another maintain morale and reestablish their humanity: sharing food, assuming social roles, making an effort to speak about art and literature, and reassuring one another that they were still human beings.

After 18 months of incarceration in prison and Nazi concentration camps, Madeleine was liberated and repatriated on May 18, 1945. She continued her practice as an Adlerian psychologist and was particularly gifted with children, teaching and family situations, until her death in 1987.

Madeleine Dreyfus was only one of dozens of Jewish OSE workers who risked their lives to save other Jews in France.

In *Le Chambon-sur-Lignon*, André Chouraqui, the future assistant mayor of Jerusalem, immediately replaced Madeleine at OSE in *Lyon* and in the Garel Network. Jews not affiliated with OSE, such as Oskar Rosowsky, risked their lives by fabricating false papers for Jews hiding in the area.



Nor were they alone during the occupation years. Jews were involved in the rescue of other Jews all over France.

Let us remember in particular two young Jewish heroines who gave their lives in these endeavors. One was Mila Racine, who was caught smuggling Jewish children into Switzerland in October 1943, was deported to *Mauthausen*, and died during an Allied bombing mission at the age of 23. She was replaced by Marianne Cohn, who was arrested for smuggling Jewish children across the border in May 1944, then beaten, tortured, and murdered by the Gestapo in July 1944. She was 21 years old when she died.

During the occupation of France, OSE saved the lives of roughly 6,000 Jewish children in France; yet 32 OSE staff members lost their lives and 90 OSE children did not survive. Among the 76,000 Jews deported from France were 11,600 children whom the Nazis never asked for.

Prudence dictated that Christians and Jews lie low, out of risk's path. Nor was there any shortage of active collaborators with the Nazi edicts from the highest levels of French government and society to the lowest. All those who chose to rise up against this evil deserve recognition. To celebrate Jews and non-Jews, who risked their lives together to rescue persecuted people, would offer a superb example of human solidarity in a world of rapidly increasing anti-Semitism and group hatreds.

BY PATRICK HENRY,
Tablet Magazine



ZBOROWSKI Legacy Circle


The Legacy Circle, named in memory of Eli Zborowski, is open to anyone who includes ASYV/Yad Vashem in their estate plans.

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With your support, ASYV can strengthen the efforts of Yad Vashem as together we remember the past and shape the future.



The American Society for Yad Vashem, founded in 1981 by a group of visionary Holocaust survivors, was led by Eli Zborowski, z"l, until his passing in 2012.

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