

# MARTYRDOM & RESISTANCE



Vol. 49-No. 2

ISSN 0892-1571

November/December 2022-Kislev/Tevet 5783

## “I NEVER HAD A BAD DAY”

**C**urtis Ward, born Kurt Georg Wertheim, died on May 23, 2022 in Memphis, TN at the age of 104. Known to be an eternal optimist, his family and friends have no doubt that it was his positive attitude that led to his longevity. Despite having to flee his hometown of *Frankfurt* at the age of 16 because it was becoming increasingly



Ward gift presentation in the office of ASYV.

dangerous to be a young Jewish man in Germany, Curt experienced many positive turns of events which led to a truly won-

derful life.

Curt was lucky to get a visa to immigrate to the US, have a cousin (none other than Erich Fromm, the famous social psychologist) to help sponsor him, and relocate to Memphis within a few years of his arrival in the US. He also had the good fortune to join a local mattress company where he remained for nearly all of his professional life until his happy retirement at the age of 70. Curt took leave from his work to enlist in the army in 1941 and ended up becoming one of the famous “Ritchie Boys”, a group of Jewish-German immigrants, trained in military intelligence and integral in the US success in acquiring information from German POWs.

After the war, Curt was able to bring his mother to NY (she and Curt’s brother found refuge during the war in Belgium) but sadly his sister and her family perished at Auschwitz. He married Hedi Schlenklopper (whose family lived a few doors down from Curt’s family in *Frankfurt*) and they had a very happy, 50 year marriage, and raised a son, Jeffrey. Following Curt’s retirement, he and Hedi traveled a great deal, including many trips to their favorite spot, Carmel, CA.

Upon Curt’s 100th birthday in 2017, many friends and relatives gathered from around the world to celebrate with him. After the party, handwritten thank you notes were sent along with this  
(Continued on page 3)

## A ONE-OF-A-KIND WEDDING GIFT

**N**ava Domberger Lewis and Robert Wachbroit are both children of Holocaust survivors. They are so conscious of this that upon the occasion of their recent marriage, they asked guests to forgo the usual wedding gift and consider instead a donation to the American Society for Yad Vashem. This request reflects how they see themselves and the importance of their parents’ legacies.

Robert’s parents, Paul Wachbroit and Rose Piatkis Wachbroit, were both from the same general area of Poland, near *Lvov*, now in Ukraine. Robert’s parents each managed to flee eastward into Russia but tragically many in their respective families did not escape and were murdered. After the war, they returned to Poland but were filled with Zionist feelings. Hoping to emigrate to Israel, they traveled to a Displaced Persons camp in Italy, where Robert was born. While his mother’s family moved to Israel, Robert and his parents moved to the US where they began a new life. Eventually, his parents emigrated and settled in Israel.

Nava’s father, Joseph Domberger, was born in the same part of Poland, now Ukraine, as Robert’s parents, while her mother Pnina Alvo, was born in *Thessaloniki*, Greece. She was fortunate to move with her family to Israel before the war started. Nava’s father also fled to Israel right before the war via a special

rescue program — Youth Aliyah — where children were sent by boat, leaving parents behind. Sadly, many of Nava’s father’s rel-



Nava and Robert.

atives didn’t survive the war. Nava’s parents met and married in Israel where Nava was born.

Despite — or because of — these wanderings Nava and Robert met.

(Continued on page 3)



AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR YAD VASHEM  
IS PROUD TO PRESENT

## LESSONS FROM OUR PARENTS

*Conversations*

The American Society for Yad Vashem was proud to recently premiere two new conversations in its popular series, Lessons from our Parents. The program, first introduced in 2020, presents conversations with entrepreneurs, philanthropists,

Diane Von Furstenberg premiered on November 9th and one with CNN Anchor, Wolf Blitzer on November 30th. Each sat down with ASYV Executive Board Member Lawrence Burian to share their parents' experience during the Shoah and the profound impact it had on them. Both spoke of



Diane von Furstenberg.

builders and dreamers who proudly lay claim to being children of Holocaust survivors. These prominent individuals share how the experiences of their parents continue to impact their personal and professional lives and how the lessons that their parents taught them made them into the individuals they are today.

A conversation with fashion designer



Wolf Blitzer.

the tremendous gratitude and respect they had for their parents, and the responsibility they personally felt to continue sharing their stories.

To view the conversation with Diane von Furstenberg or Wolf Blitzer, or to watch any of our previous conversations, please visit: <https://www.yadvashemusa.org/events-posts/lessons-from-our-parents-2-0/>

## EXCITING U.S. PREMIERE OF LERA AUERBACH'S SYMPHONY NO. 6 'VESSELS OF LIGHT,' DEDICATED TO CHIUNE SUGIHARA AND ALL THOSE WHO RISK EVERYTHING TO SAVE OTHERS

The American Society for Yad Vashem is proud to announce the upcoming U.S. premiere of Lera Auerbach's Symphony No. 6 'Vessels of Light' on the evening of Wednesday, April 19th at 7:00 PM at Carnegie Hall in NYC. Inspired by the heroism of Chiune Sugihara and the thousands of Jewish lives saved through his decisions and actions during WWII, Lera Auerbach created the music, libretto, and artistic concept for Symphony No. 6, 'Vessels of Light,' for Violoncello, Choir, and Orchestra. Auerbach weaves a multilayered tap-

estry of words and music with Yiddish poetry, the art of Japanese Kintsugi, the mystical Shevirat ha-kelim ("breaking of the vessels"), and the silent words of biblical Psalm 121 in a work she dedicates to Chiune Sugihara and all those who risk everything to save others.

Symphony No. 6 'Vessels of Light,' is a commission by Yad Vashem, the World Holocaust Remembrance Center in Jerusalem, and The American Society for Yad Vashem. The commission was catalyzed by the world-premiere performer of the symphony, Japanese-American violon-

## NEW DIRECTOR OF THE US DESK AT YAD VASHEM

Yad Vashem warmly welcomes newly appointed Director of the US Desk of its International Relations Division, Chen Harkov. Chen has a long career in resource development of over 20 years, working for Jewish and Israeli causes, including Bar Ilan University and the City of David. Chen made Aliyah from the US, where she graduated from Boston University School of Law and Barnard College, Columbia University.



Chen is proud to join Yad Vashem, and looks forward to partnering with its dedicated supporters and accomplished professionals.

"Holocaust remembrance and education is especially crucial at this time when anti-semitism is on the rise, and while Holocaust knowledge and empathy for its victims is on the decline. I look forward to working with our teams in Israel and the United States to enable Yad Vashem to combat the decline in Holocaust acknowledgement and knowledge; and to make Holocaust education the strongest tool preventing history from repeating itself."

cellist Kristina Reiko Cooper, whose husband's father, Irving Rosen, was rescued thanks to the life-saving visas granted by Chiune Sugihara. Yad Vashem honored Sugihara as one of the Righteous Among the Nations for his actions during that dark chapter of our recent history.

In addition to the Carnegie Hall premiere, there is also a West Coast performance scheduled for May 18th at UCLA. Ticket information for both events will be forthcoming. For sponsorship opportunities, please contact Amy Cooper, National Campaign Director at [acooper@yadvashemusa.org](mailto:acooper@yadvashemusa.org).

## “I NEVER HAD A BAD DAY”

(Continued from page 1)

message: “I’ve had happy times throughout my life — I never had a bad day. I was blessed with so many happy coincidences. I was blessed to have a very happy marriage with Hedi, and to have a fine son in Jeffrey.”

The American Society for Yad Vashem was recently contacted by Mr. William

Loveless, longtime financial advisor to Curt Ward, and informed that Curt had left a sizeable gift in excess of \$150,000 to ASYV in honor of his niece, Susie Osness (Ken), nephew David Poll (Becky) and many grand-nieces and grand-nephews. Mr. Loveless and his wife and daughter had occasion to be in New York and stopped by ASYV’s offices to present the

gift. Stanley H. Stone, ASYV Executive Director and Robert Christopher Morton, ASYV Director of Planned Giving expressed the organization’s deep gratitude for Mr. Ward’s contribution to Holocaust remembrance, expressing that gifts like these help us ensure that we can meaningfully impart the legacy of the *Shoah* for generations to come.

## A ONE-OF-A-KIND WEDDING GIFT

(Continued from page 1)

Although being a world apart, both were raised with a strong awareness of their parents’ history, despite their parents not always being willing to talk about it. “Better you should not know” was a phrase they often heard from them. Nevertheless, they did hear their share of stories about the war years, which ingrained in them a responsibility for keeping alive the memories and stories of what befell their families and the different Jewish communities. This clearly was also transmitted to their children, as Nava’s son, Jonathan Lewis, is a member of the American Society for Yad Vashem’s

Young Leadership Board.

This is why they suggested that their family and friends consider donating to the American Society for Yad Vashem in lieu of a personal wedding gift. As they so poignantly put it “The Holocaust is not simply a part of world history... it’s also part of OUR history.” They felt that a gift to the ASYV was a way of honoring their parents and the relatives who sadly did not survive.

For a global family like theirs, with a sister in England, a brother in Monaco, nephews in England and France, a niece in Australia, and children in both the US and Israel, Nava and Robert feel that their

personal story is truly the story of the Jewish Diaspora. It is important for this couple to keep the memory of the Holocaust alive, record stories both small and large. From two different families with roots in Poland and Greece, to a family today that is scattered all over the world, Nava and Robert believe they have a responsibility to honor and treasure the legacy of their loved ones, who should never be forgotten. Yad Vashem’s recording of the past and teaching its significance to future generations will help determine how this history will unfold for future generations.

## HOLOCAUST SURVIVOR LEFT ON A BENCH AS A BABY FINDS NEW FAMILY AT 80

**W**hen Alice Grusová was a baby, her parents left her on a train station bench, with no idea of what would become of her.

It was June 1942 and this was the last desperate act by Marta and Alexandr Knapp to save their daughter as their attempt to escape what was then Czechoslovakia ended in disaster.

The couple had fled Prague, but when their train drew in to *Pardubice*, eastern Bohemia, Nazi soldiers boarded in search of fleeing Jews.

Grusová — her married name — never saw her parents again. They were arrested and sent to *Theresienstadt* concentration camp, from where they were later deported to Auschwitz and murdered. Her brother from her father’s previous marriage was also killed there.

It might have been their infant daughter’s fate too, had it not been for their high-stakes gamble. This year, Grusová celebrated her 81st birthday — as well as her 60th wedding anniversary with husband Miroslav. Living in Prague, they have

three sons, six grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

This, she had always felt, was the sum total of her family, but earlier this year the retired pediatric nurse traveled to Israel where she reconnected with her Jewish

added Grusová, who has battled cancer, hepatitis and a spinal surgery.

The reunion occurred thanks to the efforts of a curious woman 5,000 miles away in South Africa, during the initial stages of the pandemic. The incredible story has now been shared by online genealogy site MyHeritage.

With so much of life on hold, Michalya Schonwald Moss delved into her family history on MyHeritage. She had always known her family had been decimated in the Holocaust, but nothing prepared her for the discovery that 120 of her relatives were murdered at Auschwitz.

Yet out of the unimaginable darkness, a tiny and most unexpected ray of hope emerged. With the help of professional genealogists in both Slovakia and

Israel, she unearthed the incredible tale of one survivor: Grusová.

Having been found on the station bench, the one-year-old girl was initially placed in an orphanage. Grusová, who has no memory of her parents, was later moved to *Theresienstadt*. She recalled: “There was

(Continued on page 5)



Alice Grusová, now 81, survived the Holocaust because her parents abandoned her on a train station bench.

heritage and met her only surviving first cousin — as well as a wider family she didn’t know existed.

“I was most shocked when I found out, when I was 80, that I have such a large family,” she said in an emotional video call with CNN.

“I am just sad this didn’t come earlier,”

# REGINA JONAS: PASTOR AND RABBI IN *THERESIENSTADT*

*“To be ‘blessed’ by God means to bestow blessings, goodness and loyalty — regardless of place or situation.”*

These words were the last that Regina Jonas wrote down in *Theresenstadt* before she was deported to Auschwitz. In the spirit of this quote, Regina was a rabbi and pastor in *Theresienstadt* for two years. She worked in the ghetto’s “Department for Mental Hygiene” set up by psychoanalyst Viktor Frankl. Her job was to receive the traumatized deportees who came straight from the trains into the ghetto, ripped from normalcy and thrown into a terrifying new reality of overcrowding, sickness and despair. Regina offered them guidance and comfort, explaining the harsh realities that awaited them but assuring them that she would be there to offer her help to accompany them and to support them spiritually. In the harsh reality of the ghetto, she devotedly pursued her mission and fully exploited her potential as a spiritual shepherdess.

Even as a young girl, Regina Jonas wanted to become a rabbi. In an environment that knew no female rabbis, in which religious leadership was purely a male matter, Regina vehemently pursued her dream. With great determination and tenacity, she broke with convention and prejudice to pursue her religious vocation. In 1935, Regina Jonas became the first ordained female rabbi in history. But it had been a hard road.

Regina Jonas was born into a Jewish-Orthodox family in Berlin in August 1902 and grew up in poor conditions in the *Scheunenviertel* neighborhood. She attended the Jewish girls’ school of the orthodox synagogue on the *Rykestrasse*, and excelled in all subjects related to Judaism, the Hebrew language and Jewish culture. Even then, she told other schoolmates that she wanted to become a rabbi.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, Jewish life in Germany underwent a change. A move away from strict orthodoxy towards a more liberal Judaism shook traditional foundations. Berlin was a center of Reform Judaism, which replaced the clas-

sical old rite with new traditions, often involving choral singing and accompanied by organ music in the synagogue. Even Orthodox communities began to adopt a more “modern” approach to Judaism, such as the *Rykestrasse* synagogue that Regina attended. It was founded by the moderate Orthodox Rabbi Dr. Max Weyl, who promoted religious education for girls and allowed bat mitzvah celebrations. This progressive atmosphere may have strengthened Regina in her quest to become a rabbi.

In 1924, she began her studies at the Berlin Academy for the Science of Judaism. Although she would have preferred an orthodox school, the liberal college was the only one that would consider training a woman to be a rabbi. Accordingly, she wrote her thesis on the subject: “May a Woman Hold Rabbinic Office?” It is a remarkable work, which shows



Regina Jonas.

not only Regina’s vast knowledge of Talmudic and halachic subjects and texts, but also her total certainty and belief in herself. She wrote in conclusion:

“Except for prejudice and unfamiliarity, there is almost nothing halachically against the holding of the rabbinic office by a woman.”

Even though Regina passed her thesis with distinction, trouble lay ahead. The professor responsible for her ordination, Eduard Barneth, died suddenly and his successor was too conservative to allow her to take her verbal rabbinic examination. But Regina never gave up: She continued to teach and learn and was finally

ordained in 1935 by Liberal Rabbi Max Dienemann.

However, becoming a rabbi did not guarantee Regina a pulpit. She was not given a congregation of her own and continued to teach, speak in the more liberal synagogues, visit the sick and elderly in hospitals, and serve as a chaplain in the women’s prison. When many of her male colleagues either emigrated or were arrested, she traveled to various communities across the country where Jews were left without religious leadership. Regina had dedicated herself to German Jewry, and could not think about leaving the Jewish communities she loved or exposing her elderly mother to the upheavals of exile.

Regina’s life in Germany ended on 6 November 1942, when she was deported to the *Theresienstadt* ghetto. There, too, she continued the dedicated and selfless work she had begun in Germany with the elderly and sick. Her teaching activities did not stop in the ghetto, either. A document entitled “Lectures by the Only Female Rabbi Regina Jonas,” contains 24 lectures given by Regina in the ghetto, including stories of Jewish women, as well as Talmudic, religious and biblical subjects. The final lines the rabbi captured on the document reflect her selfless attitude and commitment to those around her:

“Our Jewish people was planted by God into history as a blessed nation. ‘Blessed by God’ means to bestow blessings, lovingkindness and loyalty — regardless of place and sit-

uation. Humility before God, selfless love for His creatures, sustain the world. It is Israel’s task to build these pillars of the world — man and woman, woman and man alike have taken this upon themselves in Jewish loyalty. Our work in *Theresienstadt*, serious and full of trials as it is, also serves this end: to be God’s servants and as such to move from earthly spheres to eternal ones. May all our work be a blessing for Israel’s future (and the future of humanity).”

On October 12, 1944, Regina Jonas was deported from *Theresenstadt* to Auschwitz and murdered.

BY SARAH EISMANN

# HOLOCAUST SURVIVOR LEFT ON A BENCH AS A BABY FINDS NEW FAMILY AT 80

(Continued from page 3)

a nice woman who was taking care of us. I only remember glimpses from that time.

“And then I remember when I got sick with typhoid and the workers there had to protect me from the Germans.

“I remember they were telling me to be silent or the bad Germans would come and kill us.”

Incredibly, she survived and after the war was reunited with her mother’s younger sister Edith — or Editka as she calls her — who survived Auschwitz by being transferred to a labor camp.



Alice’s mother Marta was murdered in Auschwitz after she was detained by the Nazis while attempting to flee Czechoslovakia with her family.

Her voice cracking with emotion, Grusová recalled her aunt, who like many Nazi camp survivors had her identity number tattooed on her arm. She said: “She was so beautiful, she was slim, she had the tattoo. But I didn’t understand that at the time.”

**A**t first, the pair lived together in Czechoslovakia, but in 1947 her aunt emigrated to what was then Palestine. For reasons that remain unclear, Grusová was left behind and put up for adoption.

“I was six when my aunt left Czechoslovakia and I came to my new parents,” she said. “As a child, I was very sad that my aunt left. I didn’t understand why she didn’t take me with her.

“I was in contact with her for a while. She got married and had a son, whom I last saw in a picture when he was two years old.” But the correspondence with Edith petered out, and in 1966 “we lost each other,” she said.

Grusová never knew what happened to her aunt — until her son Jan, who speaks English, translated a surprising email his parents received from Schonwald Moss in

2021. He and his wife had spent years trying to trace his mother’s cousin, without success.

But with the help of professional researchers, Schonwald Moss had not only uncovered Grusová’s incredible tale but had also found that cousin — Edith’s son, Yossi Weiss, now 67 and living in the Israeli city of Haifa.

Weiss and Grusová “met” online last year, alongside other members of the newly discovered family tree. Weiss had known nothing of his cousin and his own life had been blighted by tragedy — having lost both his mother and his son to suicide.

Over the summer, Grusová flew to Israel with her husband, their son Jan and his wife Petra to meet Weiss and members of his wider family, including Schonwald Moss, who had traveled from South Africa for the occasion.

Grusová told CNN: “They wanted to meet me and come to visit me, but my

cousin has cancer and he can’t travel.

“I was scared of the long journey at my age,” she said. “Now I am so pleased I went. I am just sad this didn’t come earlier.

“If it wasn’t for Covid, I would have never found out I have such a big family.”

Grusová — who speaks neither Hebrew nor English — communicated with her new-found relatives via an interpreter. Together they visited her late aunt’s grave, the *Theresienstadt* museum and the World Holocaust Remembrance Center at Yad Vashem, where she recorded her personal testimony and was also filmed for an Israeli news channel.

Simmy Allen, head of international media at Yad Vashem, was there at the time. He told CNN that it was a “very emotional gathering,” adding: “The idea that the family was uniting and different sides of the family were really discovering their roots and coming to Yad Vashem to solidify that,

so that their ancestors have a place that will remember them in perpetuity.”

Grusová said: “My family increased in size a lot. And Michalya keeps finding more and more relatives.”

Weiss told CNN he had known little about his mother’s earlier life and was unable to explain why she left his cousin behind when she moved to what was then Palestine.

“From the little bit she told me I knew she worked in a factory and she came back to the city after the war and she was lucky to survive,” he said. “I knew she was married before and her husband was killed on the Russian front but I didn’t know the chapter of finding Alice.”

Of their reunion, he said: “I made sure I had private time with Alice.

“We opened up the issue of my mother coming to Israel and Alice staying behind and agreed that things were complicated.”

The question will forever remain unanswered, though Weiss has tried to make sense of it. “My mother was a Holocaust survivor coming back from the camps at the age of 25 and had just lost her hus-



Grusová as a child, with her mother’s younger sister Edith, who survived being sent to Auschwitz.

band. Alice was five. My mother couldn’t provide her home, school, food and everything,” he said.

Perhaps she thought her niece would have been better off with adoptive parents, he added.

“It hurts me on a personal level because sometimes I fantasize about ‘what if,’” he said.

Grusová felt similarly: “Of course I thought about what my life would have

(Continued on page 6)

# WHY ANNE FRANK'S DIARY HOLDS A SPECIAL PLACE IN HOLOCAUST LITERATURE EVEN AFTER 75 YEARS

The Anne Frank House in Amsterdam is one of the Netherlands' most-visited tourist sites, with people queuing round the block to see the famous secret annexe. Her diary is the most famous document from the Holocaust, translated into over 70 languages. Now, on the 75th anniversary of the diary's publication in 1947, it is timely to look at why this young girl's diary continues to hold people's attention.

Today it is hard to imagine that the diary's first print run was a mere 3,036 copies, or that Otto Frank, Anne's father, struggled to find a publisher. Yet just a few years after the war, Auschwitz survivor and psychologist Eddy de Wind wrote that the Dutch public "soon became sated" with information about the Nazi concentration camps.

The same was true elsewhere. In France, West Germany, Britain and the US, Anne's diary appeared at first in small print runs. In the US, ten publishers turned it down before it was published by Doubleday in 1952. In the UK, Vallentine Mitchell, a small publisher of Jewish-interest books, found that sales were very slow.

The diary's limited early success was perhaps a result of the fact that the term "Holocaust" had not become synonymous

with the genocide of the Jews in the late 1940s and early 1950s, meaning that readers had no context for understanding it. As the diary was adapted for a Broadway play in 1955, sales of the book exploded across the world. Anne Frank was turned into a universal symbol of innocence destroyed by evil, a process facilitated by the fact that her diary is not a typical Holocaust story.

It ends before the eight people hiding in the secret annex were deported and all, except Otto, killed. And, as numerous productions for theatre, cinema, television, comics and children's books indicate, the broader public, especially younger people, identified with Anne's teenage angst, and tended to overlook — since this was how they were directed — the Holocaust context.

This "universalizing" impulse undoubtedly still remains. But the rise in the western world of "Holocaust consciousness" means that readers today are aware of Anne's Jewishness and her ultimate fate.

Yet she still remains an appealing figure precisely because she is recognizably "like us". And the diary, even given the inclusion of additional material that was discovered a few years ago (having been removed by her father) that speaks to Anne's sexuality, remains a version of the Holocaust without

the actual horrors.

Whatever privations characterized the secret annex, there is no Auschwitz and no *Belsen*, no violence, no starvation. Changing the ending of the diary, in the Broadway and Hollywood versions, so that the audience was left with Anne's message that "in spite of everything, I still believe that people are really good at heart", presented her to the world as a happy teenager.

Anne Frank's diary has been adapted many times for theatre and the big and small screens. It has been turned into comics and children's books "about hope" (*The Anne Frank you Wished You Knew*, for example). It has been made the basis of fiction, most famously in Philip Roth's *The Ghost Writer*. And it has been used as a source of black humor on the internet and social media.

The message of hope in the face of evil that has always accompanied the reception of the diary continues to resonate. But whether we are ready, even now, for an Anne Frank whose story speaks to what the Holocaust was really about — the brutal destruction of Europe's Jewish population with no happy ending — is another question.

BY DAN STONE, *The Conversation*

## HOLOCAUST SURVIVOR LEFT ON A BENCH AS A BABY...

(Continued from page 5)

been. As a child, I was very sad that my aunt left. I didn't understand why she didn't take me with her."

"My cousin tried to explain," she added. "She was young, her life was saved by a miracle. I am not blaming her for anything."

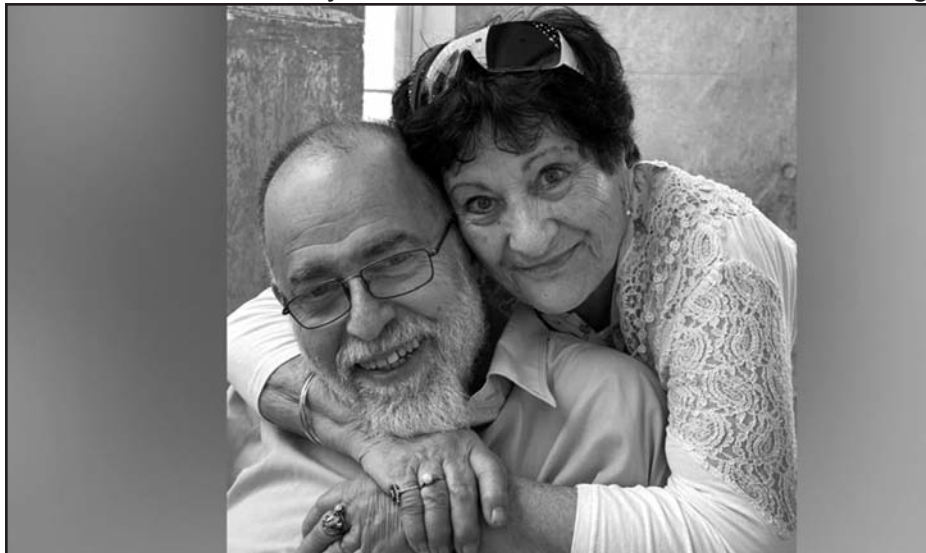
Of the reunion with Grusová, Weiss said: "She wanted very much to see my mother's grave. It was very important to her and part of the closure."

Being at Yad Vashem with Grusová when she recorded her testimony was particularly poignant, he said. "It was very emotional and not easy for anyone."

Schonwald Moss agreed. "It was one of the most extraordinary, intimate, emotionally healing experiences of my life," she told CNN.

The family is now in talks with Steven

Spielberg's USC Shoah Foundation, which plans to record Alice's video testimony in the new year.



First cousins Alice Grusová and Yossi Weiss had an emotional reunion in Israel over the summer.

"To discover that one family member had survived that we never knew about, and that she was still alive and living in Prague, was as if we had found a living ghost. And then to discover her story was especially heartbreaking," said Schon-

wald Moss.

"By having her anew in our lives, she's taught us what living looks like. Every day is a repair for our family. And thanks to Alice and the sparkle in her eyes and the love she emanates, we have become a family again."

Roi Mandel, MyHeritage's director of research, welcomed the outcome for Grusová and her family. "Alice's story is the story of many who survived the war and assumed they were left alone in the world, not knowing that there was another branch that survived," he said.

"Decades of disconnection as a result of the Iron Curtain that was raised over Eastern Europe, have come to an end thanks to the technology that makes it possible to connect pieces of a puzzle that it seemed would never come together."

BY LIANNE KOLIRIN AND IVANA KOTTASOVÁ, CNN

# UNSTOPPABLE

Unstoppable: Siggie B. Wilzig's Astonishing Journey from Auschwitz Survivor and Penniless Immigrant to Wall Street Legend.

By Joshua M. Greene with a Foreword by Deborah E. Lipstadt, Ph.D.

Insight Editions: San Rafael, California, 2021. 315 pp. \$26.40 hardcover

**A**fter the war Siggie promised himself three things. "First, he would never go hungry again. Second, he would marry a Jewish woman, have children, and help rebuild the Jewish people. Third, he would preserve Holocaust memory and speak up whenever he witnessed injustice." What made these promises he made to himself come true? What made these dreams of a Holocaust survivor become a reality? In reading Joshua M. Greene's absorbing book, *Unstoppable: Siggie B. Wilzig's Astonishing Journey from Auschwitz Survivor and Penniless Immigrant to Wall Street Legend*, we realize it was Siggie's courage, resourcefulness and, determination — all of it blessed by a God-given instinct for making the right decision at the right time. In fact, those characteristics of his and that blessing from above had always made the difference . . .

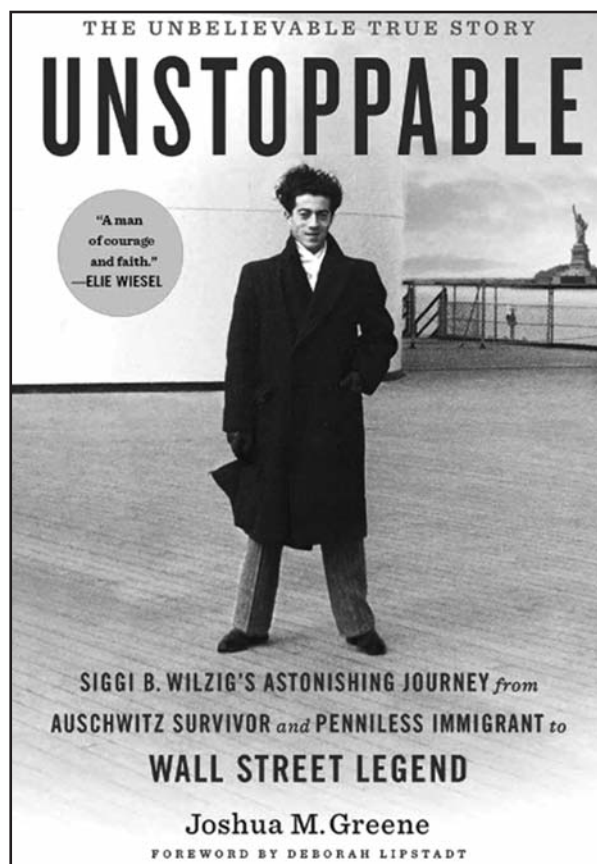
In Auschwitz and later *Mauthausen*, Sigbert (in America, Siggie), a teenager from the West Prussian village of *Krojanke*, Germany, immediately stripped of his family upon arrival in Auschwitz, also immediately and intuitively realized that making himself "useful" to the camp's Nazi overlords would be wise. Thus, when asked by them if he was a master toolmaker, barely thinking,

he quickly answered in the affirmative. The same happened later when he was asked if he was a bricklayer or a carpenter. Was he any of those things? No! But he would somehow do the job . . . and live. Then, luckier still, he met and befriended another

in shoes, pockets, and bags. Lothar went dangerously out of his way to get Siggie a job there — and Siggie never forget that. For years after the war Siggie would say "By getting me that job, he [Lothar] saved my life."

**N**ot surprisingly, when he came to America in 1947, Siggie — with only \$240 in his pocket — quickly realized all the opportunities America afforded its people. So while his earliest jobs included: shoveling snow, cleaning sweatshop toilets, and selling neckties — that was only where he began. For regardless of the fact that he only had a grammar school education, his developing interest in the stock market led him to diligently study its workings and conscientiously learn all he could. The result: With the years he became the CEO of a New York Stock Exchange-listed oil company. After that, his interest in banking and all it could do for his oil company led him to learn all he could about banking. The result in this case: With the years he become the head of a commercial bank, which because of his "unstoppable" efforts ended up turning profits it never saw before! And all this he did in industries — the oil business and banking — known in the post-war years for their anti-Semitism.

Meanwhile, Siggie met Naomi Sisselman of Newark, New Jersey, through a fruit and vegetable vendor who noticed the young lady and gave her phone number to Siggie. They — Siggie and Naomi — "liked each other immediately." True, her parents didn't particularly care for him. Why? He was a  
(Continued on page 10)



German-Jew, "six years his senior," Lothar Nartelski. Lothar worked in "Canada," a place where "clothing, shoes, valises, and other items confiscated from arriving prisoners were sorted and stored." Working there was a "plum" job. Not only were you inside and safe from the elements, but there were opportunities here for starving Jews to find food, money, and more hidden

## NEW FUTURE

**Marking one year since the passing of loyal friend and Patron of the Mount of Remembrance Sheldon G. Adelson, Yad Vashem, the World Holocaust Remembrance Center, has launched the Dr. Miriam and Sheldon G. Adelson Educational Leadership Academy.**

**H**olocaust education around the world has been transformed over the last two decades thanks to the Adelson Family Foundation Educational Program, which has directly influenced millions of learners by professionally training students, teachers, principals, government officials, policy-makers, journalists, clergy, artists, military leaders and a myriad of interested parties.

Tens of thousands of Yad Vashem graduates from six continents have become "multipliers," placing learning and teaching about the Holocaust at the center of their

respective educational agendas. The program has enabled close collaborative relationships to be created with ministries of education, state institutions and municipal legislatures, universities and education authorities, historical sites and civil society organizations.

Despite this incredible achievement, today Yad Vashem graduates navigate an educational system wherein surveys indicate serious deficiencies of the basic awareness and knowledge of the Holocaust among individuals and groups around the globe; and when antisemitism as well as Holocaust distortion and trivialization have gained shocking traction in the public sphere in both the physical and digital realms. As humanity recedes further from the events of the Shoah and its survivor witnesses sadly dwindle, there is a clear and urgent need for intensive Holo-

caust education and remembrance activities worldwide. Moreover, indications highlight the positive effects of meaningful Holocaust education on individuals in today's fractured world.

In light of all of these facts Yad Vashem inaugurated the new Dr. Miriam and Sheldon G. Adelson Educational Leadership Academy on the Mount of Remembrance in Jerusalem, in the presence of Dr. Miriam Adelson, former Chairman of the Jewish Agency Natan Sharansky, Yad Vashem Chairman Dani Dayan, Holocaust survivors and other esteemed guests.

Patrons of the Mount of Remembrance, Dr. Miriam Adelson and her beloved late husband Sheldon G. Adelson are shining examples of true dedication to Holocaust education for the sake of a better future. Two years ago, on the occasion of the Fifth  
(Continued on page 11)

# THE POWER

It was wonderful to welcome friends of the American Society for Yad Vashem on Thursday evening, November 3rd at the Pierre Hotel in New York City, for ASYV's 2022 Gala, "The Power of One." It was the first "in person" gala in three years, and it was a wonderful opportunity to come together and celebrate the critical work of the American Society. We gathered to strengthen one another through our shared commitment to Holocaust remembrance and education as well as to shine a spotlight on the individual, in appreciation for what each one of us is able to do... the "Power of One." We also gathered to pay tribute to honorees Beth and Lenny Wilf for their profound commitment and dedicated leadership to the organization and its mission.



Harrison Wilf, Alex Oshinsky and Halle Wilf; Leonard Wilf, Chair Emeritus of the American Society for Yad Vashem, Gala, Jenna Wilf, Kimberly Cooper and Orin Wilf.



Leonard Wilf; Wolf Blitzer, CNN Anchor, Master of Ceremonies, 2022 National Gala; Abraham Foxman, National Director Emeritus, Anti-Defamation League.



Mark Moskowitz, Adina Burian; Leonard and Beth Wilf, 2022 National Gala Honorees.



Barry Levine, ASYV treasurer; Sam Hersly, Holocaust survivor and Mark Hersly.



Leonard Wilf and David Halpern, executive committee, American Society for Yad Vashem.



# ER OF ONE



and Beth Wilf; honorees, 2022 National



Mark Moskowitz, Dani Dayan, Yad Vashem Chairman; Adina Burian; Haim Gertner, Division Director, International Relations at Yad Vashem; Stanley Stone.



Zygmunt Wilf, ASYV board member; Leonard Wilf; Mark Wilf, ASYV Secretary; Stanley Stone, ASYV executive director.



Abbi and Jeremy Halpern, ASYV board members and co-chairs of the 2022 National Gala; Stanley Stone, Beth and Leonard Wilf; Mark Moskowitz, ASYV co-chair; Adina Burian, ASYV co-chair.



Adina Burian; Caroline Massel, American Society for Yad Vashem executive committee member, chair of education committee; Mark Moskowitz, Nancy Shamie, Sam Shamie, board member, American Society for Yad Vashem.



Stanley Stone, Ted Comet, Malcolm Hoenlein, Executive Vice Chairman, Conference of Presidents of Major Jewish Organizations.

## THE AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR YAD VASHEM MOURNS THE PASSING OF LOUISE “LUCY” LORBER PANTIRER



The American Society for Yad Vashem mourns the passing of Holocaust survivor Louise “Lucy” Lorber Pantirer. Lucy died peacefully on October 31, 2022, surrounded by her children and grandchildren.

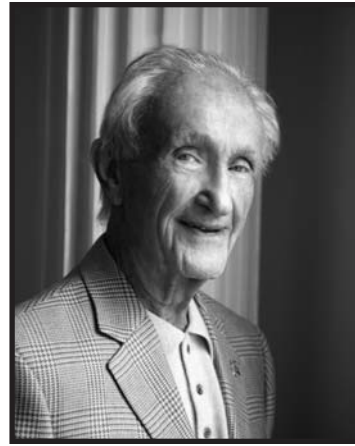
Lucy was born on February 6, 1928 in *Roswadow*, Poland. She, along with her sister and parents, fled Poland when the Nazis invaded. The family went to Siberia, Uzbekistan, and Kazakhstan from 1941-1945. Lucy’s father died in Siberia, leaving behind his wife and two young daughters. When the war ended, the three of them were relocated to a displaced persons camp in *Linz*, Austria, where Lucy met the love of her life, Murray Pantirer z”l. They were married in 1947.

Lucy and Murray immigrated to the United States in 1949 and started life anew, building a devoted family and sharing a wonderful life together for 61 years. They first lived in Hillside, NJ and then moved to Livingston, NJ to be close to their children and grandchildren.

Lucy was fluent in numerous languages, including English, Hebrew, Yiddish, Polish, and Russian. She loved classical music and ballet, and was devoted to her family, always stressing the importance of kindness, compassion, and philanthropy. Lucy and Murray were dedicated to supporting Holocaust remembrance and education. They were founding members of the American Society for Yad Vashem and avid supporters of many other charitable organizations and institutions. Lucy, her daughter Elisa and her granddaughter Nicole were honored at the 2011 30th Anniversary ASYV Luncheon. Lucy and Murray Pantirer were proud to be U.S. citizens and at the same time, always maintained a strong love and support for the State of Israel. Lucy is survived by her three children, nine grandchildren, and 23 great-grandchildren. Lucy was a beautiful, loving, and devoted member of our community who will be missed dearly.

May her memory forever be a blessing

## THE AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR YAD VASHEM MOURNS THE PASSING OF EDWARD MOSBERG



The American Society for Yad Vashem mourns the passing of board member and benefactor Edward Mosberg z”l at the age of 96 (January 6, 1926 — September 21, 2022). A Holocaust survivor and staunch advocate for Holocaust education, Ed was an early supporter of ASYV. Ed lost his entire family during the Holocaust, and after coming to the United States, became a successful real-estate developer while taking an active leadership role in numerous charitable organizations and dedicating his life to Holocaust commemoration.

Born in *Krakow*, Poland, Ed Mosberg was only thirteen years old when the war started. Ed, along with his parents, two sisters, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins were thrown out of their homes and forced into the *Krakow* ghetto. He was a prisoner in the *Kraków-Plaszów* concentration camp, *Mauthausen* concentration camp, and a slave labor camp in *Linz*, Austria, which was liberated by the United States’ 11th Armored Division of the Third Army on May 5, 1945. Nearly all of Mosberg’s family were murdered during the Holocaust, including his parents and sisters.

Ed and his wife, Cecile z”l, were deeply committed to Holocaust education and remembrance through their involvement with the American Society for Yad Vashem. In 2007, Mosberg and his wife received the Yad Vashem Remembrance Award. In 2009, Mosberg was one of six survivors who met with Pope Benedict XVI at the Yad Vashem Holocaust memorial in Jerusalem, Israel. Additionally, the Mosbergs were especially proud that they rescued over 22 Torahs from Poland, which had languished there since the *Shoah*, repaired and restored them, and donated them to synagogues and schools throughout the United States and Israel.

Ed was pre-deceased by Cecile and is survived by daughters Beatrice Mosberg, Louise (Stuart) Levine and Caroline (Darren) Karger, 6 grandchildren, including ASYV board member Barry Levine and YLA board member Alexander Levine, and five great grandchildren.

Ed was pre-deceased by Cecile and is survived by daughters Beatrice Mosberg, Louise (Stuart) Levine and Caroline (Darren) Karger, 6 grandchildren, including ASYV board member Barry Levine and YLA board member Alexander Levine, and five great grandchildren.

May the family be comforted among the mourners of Zion and Jerusalem.

## UNSTOPPABLE

(continued from page 7)

refugee. He was still quite poor. Additionally, his lack of education didn’t bode well for the future. Naomi, however, saw Siggie as “exotic, sensual, independent,” and “entrepreneurial.” So when it looked like Naomi’s parents wouldn’t allow them to marry, they agreed to elope. Thankfully, the story ended happily as her parents finally did accept him. And then came their three children . . .

Needless to say, Siggie was a very busy man. But he never forgot the losses his family suffered because of the Holocaust, by his calculation “fifty-nine family mem-

bers.” Nor did he forget our six million. He began to give talks on the Holocaust, making it real to those who hadn’t experienced it — something only a survivor can do. Particularly memorable is the talk he gave at West Point — the first by any survivor. When it came to what he saw as an injustice to the memory of our murdered co-religionists Siggie eagerly took to the airwaves to try to change President Reagan’s mind as regards visiting *Bitburg* — the cemetery where a number of Waffen SS, Hitler’s elite police force, were buried. In later years he fearlessly took on Holocaust “deniers,” underlining the danger they presented to all

of us.

Finally, in the Forward to this book, Deborah Lipstadt, Dorot Professor of Modern Jewish History and Holocaust Studies at Emory University, and a well-known award-winning writer and Holocaust historian herself, summarizing Siggie’s life writes, “Siggie rose from the ashes, never gave up, and always moved forward.” Indeed, were it necessary to find one word that describes this book and Siggie’s story it would be: inspiring.

REVIEWED BY DR. DIANE CYPKIN  
Emeritus Professor at Pace University

# NEW FUTURE

(Continued from page 7)

World Holocaust Forum, Sheldon Adelson remarked: "My wife Miriam and I, a Sabra and a Diaspora Jew, are completely united in our commitment to supporting in the sphere of Yad Vashem... at some point, the Holocaust will no longer be a living memory. Its stories of horror and heroism will be relegated to books, files and video testimonials. Miriam and I trust Yad Vashem to find ways to preserve Holocaust education as a priority... we feel a measure of satisfaction that some justice is being done."

The Adelson Academy will spearhead efforts to enhance effective, accurate and meaningful global Holocaust education programs. Given the continuing relevance of the Holocaust in the current societal polarization, the Academy will further concentrate on creating more in-depth initiatives, in the classroom, lecture halls and online sphere. It will also reach out to official visitors to the Mount of Remembrance, in order to foster new international partnerships and cooperative agreements.

Two years of working under unprecedented conditions due to the COVID-19 pandemic has provided Yad Vashem with a unique opportunity to delve into how best to empower its graduates based around the world who are seeking mentorship and direction. During the pandemic, staff at the International School for Holocaust Studies heard from hundreds of them regularly, all keen to organize programming, online and in-person, to amplify their activism and reach in the sphere of Holocaust education. The Adelson Academy seeks to pro-

vide a platform for this, too.

The Academy will focus much of its activities and programs, both at Yad Vashem in Jerusalem and online, on widening the scope of Yad Vashem seminar graduates – "ambassadors" of Holocaust education around the world – and forging closer and more productive networking between the



Yad Vashem Chairman Dani Dayan presenting Dr. Miriam Adelson with the Yad Vashem Key on the occasion of the opening of the new Dr. Miriam and Sheldon G. Adelson Educational Leadership Academy.

most effective amongst them. Yad Vashem's "ambassadors" are diverse in both scope and range. They include a teacher from India, who following participation in a Yad Vashem seminar, returned home and facilitated agreements between Yad Vashem and the Indian Ministry of Education to ensure comprehensive curricular Holocaust education; a school principal from France who, having participated in a tailored program, sent all her educators to Yad Vashem and completely redesigned the Holocaust education curriculum in the school, invoking the interdisciplinary models of the International School for Holocaust Studies and also encouraging the students

to reach out to local survivors; and a lecturer from the Democratic Republic of the Congo who, having completed one of Yad Vashem's online courses, reached out to Yad Vashem to arrange a series of Holocaust Education seminars at his university.

There are thousands of such stories, testament to the proven models of Adelson Educational Program activities and the desire of Yad Vashem graduates to continue to impact their communities with what they have learned, in order to reach not only the youth of today, but also the next generations.

"For me, Yad Vashem has always represented connection – a connection with the half of my family who perished in the Holocaust, and a place where I can find answers for the pieces missing in the narrative puzzle that I heard over the years," said Dr. Miriam Adelson at the opening event. "Shel-

don and I saw manifold value to the International School for Holocaust Studies. This School teaches foreign educators about the Holocaust, so that they might teach it in turn when they return home. At a time of spiraling antisemitism globally, these teachers are equipped to spot and call out this unique evil before it spreads. Their training helps make the Jewish catastrophe a firm fact in the international consciousness, a fact beyond denial – in the hope that the world which turned a blind eye during WWII will not do so again, and will ensure that such events never recur."

BY LEAH GOLDSTEIN

# BEYOND THE MAIN PERPETRATORS

The phenomenon of camps used by governments to forcibly incarcerate civilians – its own citizens, aliens or natives in occupied countries – did not begin with Nazi Germany; rather, it is a notable trend of modern centralized states that began to evolve at the end of the nineteenth century. The use of this tool of oppression and terror expanded and accelerated under the totalitarian states from the 1920s, and in Nazi Germany it reached an unprecedented extent. The number of camps of all kinds – "reeducation" camps, transit camps, forced labor camps, and concentration and extermination camps – established already before but especially during WWII numbered

more than 40,000. During the Third Reich period, the term concentration camp – KL, or often KZ – turned itself into an effective threat used by the authorities.

In 1980, Yad Vashem convened its fourth international scholarly conference, dedicating it to the Nazi concentration camps in general. Since then, research on camps has developed enormously, especially following the downfall of Communism in Eastern Europe, and the emergence of younger generations of scholars with a fresh perspective, who integrate novel historical methodologies into research on Nazism and the Holocaust. There is now a comprehensive encyclopedia of Nazi camps, as well as sociological, psychological, architectural and archeological studies

and more that provide multiple insights into that field of study. However, the subject of concentration, internment, forced labor and transit camps for Jews – as well as camps in which Jews were incarcerated together with other groups – which were run by non-German authorities, either in countries occupied by Germany or in allied and satellite countries, remains under-researched and has not yet been approached in a comprehensive mode. Therefore, Yad Vashem's International Institute for Holocaust Research decided to dedicate its latest international conference to this topic. Scholars from Canada, the US, Italy, Belgium, France, Germany, Great Britain, Croatia, Slovakia, Hungary, Ireland and Is-

(Continued on page 12)

# FAMILIES DISCOVER FATE OF LONG LOST DUTCH JEWISH CHILDREN

Relatives of four Dutch children killed by the Nazis have described their sadness after being told their identity tags were found in the ruins of a death camp.

The extermination camp at *Sobibor*, in Nazi-occupied Poland, was established in March 1942 and shut down in late 1943 following a prisoners' uprising. Some 250,000 Jews died there, according to the World Holocaust Remembrance Center at Yad Vashem.

Following the German invasion of the Netherlands in 1940, some 107,000 Jews were deported from the country, mostly to Auschwitz and *Sobibor*, where they were murdered.

Among the dead were two uncles of



Deddie Zak's badly burnt tag was found in one of the crematoria of the extermination camp.

Yoram Haimi, the Israeli archaeologist who spent 10 years excavating the *Sobibor* site alongside fellow archaeologists Wojciech Mazurek from Poland and Ivar Schute from Holland. Together they discovered metal

identity tags belonging to four Jewish children.

The discovery made headlines last year as the tags appeared to have been made not by the authorities, but relatives concerned about becoming separated.

Now housed at the State Museum at *Majdanek*, Poland, the tags were engraved with names, dates of birth and addresses for Deddie Zak, Annie Kapper, David Van Der Velde and Lea Judith De La Penha.

Relatives of Deddie and Lea were located before the discoveries were publicly announced last January, but no trace of Annie and David's families was found — until now.

Recently, researchers from genealogy  
(Continued on page 14)

## BEYOND THE MAIN PERPETRATORS

(Continued from page 11)

rael actively participated in the conference, which was held in early December 2021, via Zoom, with an audience of more than 300 attending the various sessions.

Cutting-edge research presented at the conference threw light on camps in southeastern Europe in general, and in Serbia and Croatia in particular; in France and Italy; in North Africa (especially in Libya and Tunisia); in Denmark, the Netherlands, Romania, Slovakia and Hungary — and even in neutral Turkey and in the Philippines occupied by Nazi-ally Japan. One presentation also dealt with the internment of "Gypsies" (the term used for Sinti and Roma) by Vichy France. The lectures revealed extremely varying attitudes of authorities in the different camps towards the prisoners and the broad array of conditions in them — stretching from relatively reasonable ones (for example, pictures from Dutch labor camps were shown in which inmates, who were later deported and

murdered, carried out their labor wearing suits and ties), to horrendous (as in the *Giado* concentration camp in Libya), and murderous (such as in *Jasenovac*, Croatia). On the other hand, sometimes camps turned out to be a temporary haven from immediate deportation, because those in the camps were kept, for instance, to carry out labor deemed necessary for the authorities. One presentation showed how Allied aerial photos can help in setting right the



A kindergarden in the labor camp in *Sered*, Slovakia.

historical record and refute denial and distortions regarding the *Jasenovac* camp being promoted by extremists in Croatia today: These photographs geo-locate many of the mass graves created by murder and genocide committed by the Ustaša in and in the vicinity of that camp, and corroborate atrocities described in survivor testimonies. Another presentation emphasized the interaction between camps and their surroundings, i.e., that they were not as isolated as was once thought. An inter-

esting aspect brought up for discussion was the material element of barracks, a central component of the camps' establishment: wooden barracks that could be swiftly constructed were a twentieth-century invention that served various purposes (army, storage and more) and were especially significant in the world of the camps.

The conference was concluded by Professor (Emeritus) Alan Kramer of Trinity College, Dublin, an expert on concentra-

tion camps, who succeeded in colligating the broad array of presentations into a deeper comprehensive insight into this phenomenon. "This conference was much more than the accumulation of facts," Prof. Kramer stated. "It has also substantially advanced the scholarly debate over the interpretation of the past." At the beginning of the conference, the participants were asked to consider the connection between ideology and modern, centralized states. Prof. Kramer suggested that the presentations "enabled us to compare and contrast the various regimes that operated camps for Jews during WWII... [and thus] to examine the degree to which each state was integrated into the Nazi program of genocide, and to what extent states acted autonomously."

"The multifaceted character of the topic, the novel insights, the new information presenting the most up-to-date the collegial atmosphere at the conference were a vital contribution to the general understanding of the *Shoah*," concluded Director of the Research Institute Dr. Iael Nidam-Orvieto. "Awareness of the broad scope of camps is vital in understanding that the anti-Jewish campaign unleashed by Nazi Germany was — unfortunately — so successful due to the fact that this campaign was carried out not only by Germans and Austrians, but also by many others beyond the main perpetrators."

BY PROF. DAN MICHMAN

# “REMEMBER YOUR NEW NAME”

**A new online exhibition displays stories of Jews who survived under assumed identities all over Europe: In eastern Europe — Poland, Lithuania, Hungary and Ukraine; in central and western Europe — Germany, France and the Netherlands; and in southern Europe and the Balkans — Italy, Greece and Croatia.**

*I often used to wake the children in the middle of the night, to check if they remembered their new names even when half asleep. I would repeat over and over again that no one could know that we were Jewish.*

**O** Branda Pluczenik-Schor originally from Krakow, Branda Pluczenik-Schor survived the Holocaust living under a false identity in Budapest together with her husband and daughters. Branda's parents were murdered. The story of the Pluczenik-Schor family is just one of the many stories presented in a new online exhibition, entitled “Remember Your New Name: Surviving the Holocaust Under a False Identity.”

Throughout the Holocaust period, in the shadow of persecution at the hands of the Nazi regime, many Jews tried to save themselves and their families using forged papers that provided them with false identities. These were, in the main, Jews who

estates and in factories that labored for the German war effort. Some remained in their places of birth, and others stole across foreign borders where they presented themselves as refugees or seeking work.

One of the narratives in the exhibition tells the tragic tale of Ida Krayz (Pinkert). Her young son Welwele was murdered together with his grandmother in *Babi Yar* in September 1941. Ida wandered alone, broken-hearted, between villages and towns under an assumed Ukrainian identity. She was in perpetual danger of being discovered and turned over to the Germans. Once she posed as a doctor; another time as a seamstress. “My bedding was the field and the forest,” she related in her testimony sorrow and lice.” On one occasion, she was caught and sent to a camp where she received a document testifying to her status as a POW by the name of Lidia Wladimirowna Tyszczenko. She joined the partisans, and managed to cross enemy lines into the Soviet Union. Her husband was killed fighting in the Red Army.

For many, living under assumed identities was a daily battle for survival in a hostile environment, requiring resourcefulness and the ability to adjust to constantly shifting circumstances. They lived in perpetual fear of all people and places, and made every effort to make themselves invisible. Mistakes were not an option. They memorized the Christian prayers, and were forced to renounce their religion and mother tongue. They often changed their hair color, in an effort to erase all signs of their “Jewish” appearance.

**I**n many cases, they were helped by non-Jews, some of whom were paid for their services. There were those who took advantage of their situation and blackmailed them. Some offered assistance without knowing they were Jewish, while others knew they were Jews and helped them anyway for no monetary gain and at risk to their own lives (many were eventually recognized by Yad Vashem as Righteous Among the Nations). Jews under assumed identities were also helped

by members of Jewish underground movements, who worked tirelessly on behalf of their brethren, finding them hiding places and food, and equipping them with forged documents, including ID cards, birth certificates, food coupons and travel permits. The owners of assumed identities did not always make it until liberation, and often



Welwele-Walentin Krayz, Ukraine, 1939. Welwele was murdered at *Babi Yar* in September 1941.

certain family members were discovered and murdered, while others survived.

One example of this is the heartbreaking story of Isaac and Ida (née Yacoel) Angel and their two sons, Raymond and Eric. Hailing from *Thessaloniki*, the family spent the war years living under assumed identities in a number of locations across Athens. Ida and nine-year-old Eric were arrested after an informant betrayed them to the Gestapo. After Ida was brutally tortured, they were sent to the Haidari transit camp, and from there deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau in April 1944. Eric was murdered on arrival; Ida survived and was eventually liberated in Bergen-Belsen. After she recuperated, she returned to Greece, where she was reunited with Isaac and Raymond.

All the stories in the exhibition are based on documents from the Yad Vashem Archives, and material from Yad Vashem's various databases and collections: personal documents, testimonies, photographs, Pages of Testimony, artworks and more. The forged documents were donated to Yad Vashem by survivors and their families, and bring to light incredible stories of survival under unimaginable conditions, through an astonishing display of sheer determination, creativity, resourcefulness, courage and sacrifice.

BY YONA KOBO



Forged ID card in the name of Johann Agelides, issued for Isaac Angel when he was living under an assumed identity in Athens in 1943-1944.

were fluent and accurate in the range of dialects, culture and customs of the area in which they were trying to survive. Sometimes they chose names close to their original one, and occasionally they acquired already existing identities. The names and background stories until they were perfect, and in particular, to conceal their terror and pain.

The Jews with assumed identities took refuge on the “Aryan side,” in basements and in attics, in labor camps, on agricultural

# FAMILIES DISCOVER FATE OF LONG LOST DUTCH JEWISH CHILDREN

(Continued from page 12)

site MyHeritage tracked down their closest living relatives in the US.

Roi Mandel, director of research at MyHeritage, used archives and family trees to join the dots.

He told CNN: "I felt it was my duty to find the living relatives of Annie and David, to



Cousins Deddie and Lies photographed not long before he was deported to Sobibor.

tell them what was found in the damned Sobibor land and to hear from them the story of their almost extinct family. They are the only branches left of the huge family trees and they will have a duty to tell the story of these children to future generations."

\*\*\*

**B**rother and sister Sheryl and Rick Kool are second cousins once removed of David — his grandmother was their great-grandfather's sister.

The Kools, whose parents were born in the Netherlands, knew many of their family perished, but were unaware of David, who died aged 10.

Sheryl, who lives in Seattle, told CNN: "I was very surprised because I knew nothing about David and that part of the family."

She added: "The Holocaust was so dehumanizing. So to have a specific name and a concrete symbol of his life, it just makes him a real person.

"It's obviously sad but gratifying to have more information and to put more pieces of the puzzle together."

Her brother, who lives in Canada, told CNN: "David's name tag has reminded me of the grief that my grandmother and so many others, who by luck or intent managed to avoid the fate of their murdered family members, must have carried with them to the end of their days."

\*\*\*

Annie's aluminum tag was found near a mass grave. Her family was sent to Sobibor on March 30, 1943. When the train ar-

rived three days later, all 1,255 passengers were sent to the gas chambers. Annie was 12 years old.

MyHeritage tracked down Annie's second cousin Marc Draisen in Boston. Annie's father Meijer was a first cousin of his mother Tilly.

"It was like having a voice from beyond the grave," Draisen told CNN.

Draisen, who has never seen a picture of Annie, said: "The parents, in creating this name tag, were desperately trying to maintain their daughter's identity and some hope of survival which of course didn't come to pass."

Mandel's timing was eerily poignant, said Draisen. "My wife did a little research and soon learned Annie's birthday was January 9 — the very day MyHeritage contacted me.

She would have been 91."

In the wake of the 1943 uprising, the Germans dismantled the camp. The site was plowed over and planted with a pine forest, according to the USHMM.

Haimi told CNN the excavation, which began in 2007, revealed the site of the gas chambers.

"There were eight rooms, 350 square meters of killing — 800 to 900 victims in six to seven minutes," he said.

The excavation revealed 80,000 artifacts including shoes, jewelry, dentures, wallets and cutlery, Haimi added.

Welcoming the revelations, Haimi said: "Where there are relatives still alive they might have some information about those kids. We want their stories to be told."

\*\*\*

Lies Caransa traveled to Sobibor with her son in 2013, after learning of the tag belonging to Deddie — her first cousin. The pair grew close after spending much together at their grandparents' home.

Being not quite 4, Caransa was taken to a crèche when her family was rounded up in 1943. Her mother survived Auschwitz, but she never saw Deddie — then aged

8 — her aunt, uncle or grandparents again.

Now 82 and still living in Amsterdam, Caransa told CNN: "Because I possess nothing of him, it came as a shock — but it came also as a sign from heaven.

"I always thought I had a guardian angel on my shoulder because many times I was dangerously ill but always recovered. I think Deddie is my angel."

Caransa was given a replica of the tag as Polish law dictates all archaeological finds belong to the state. Nevertheless, she has spent years fighting for the original — but to no avail.

"I have no brothers, no sisters, no aunts, no uncles and my mother died long ago. So I hope to have it back before I die," she said.

\*\*\*

**L**ea lived with mother Judith and father David in Amsterdam. In June 1943 the family was deported to the transit camp in Westerbork and eventually Sobibor. She died aged 6.

Suzanna Flora Munnikendam is Lea's second cousin — their grandmothers were sisters. She knew her grandmother died at



Siblings Sheryl and Rick Kool lost many relatives in the Holocaust besides David Van Der Velde. Only one person in this image survived.

Sobibor, but had never heard of Lea.

"It's absolutely shocking," she told CNN.

A spokeswoman from the Majdanek museum said the tags "grant an exceptional opportunity to identify" some of the victims.

She said: "The tangible evidence of their lives that were brutally ended upon their arrival at the Sobibor unloading ramp allow us not only to discover their history, but also to pass it on to the next generations and to keep the victims' memory alive."

BY LIANNE KOLIRIN, CNN

# DOCUMENTARIAN REUNITED HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS AFTER 80 YEARS

**A New-Jersey based journalist and Holocaust survivor have teamed up to show their audiences that “Hitler did not win”.**

**F**red Behrend, 95, and his family fled from Germany to Cuba after *Kristalnacht* before coming to the U.S. in 1940, leaving behind Behrend’s close friend Henry (Heinz) Baum.

Eighty years after the Night of Broken Glass, nearly to the day, Behrend, with the help of journalist Larry Hanover, reunited with Baum.

“It was like the years melted away at the moment the doors opened,” Hanover said. “It was like they were acting like 12-year-old kids again. It was unbelievable.”



Fred Behrend and Henry Baum in Florida in 2019, their first time seeing each other since the 1930s.

The reunion, to Behrend, was representative of the survival of the Jewish people, a triumph against the odds. Hanover tells the story of Behrend’s and Baum’s survival and reunion in his documentary *Rebuilt from Broken Glass*, which premiered on May 17.

Vorhees resident Hanover first met Behrend in 2010, when Behrend spoke in front of Hanover’s son’s Hebrew high school class at Congregation Beth El. He was struck by Behrend’s story.

“I used to be a newspaper reporter ’till a few years before that, and I was missing the chance to write,” Hanover said. “And I’m like, ‘Listen, why hasn’t he written a book?’ And so after that, we met, and I talked him into writing.”

The two worked on a book recounting Behrend’s time in Nazi Germany and his eventual escape to the United States. The book, *Rebuilt from Broken Glass: A German*

*Jewish Life Remade in America* was published by Purdue University Press in 2017.

Behrend continued to spend time speaking to young people about his story, and in 2018, it became apparent to Hanover that the history recorded in Behrend’s book was still being written.

While talking to a Jewish day school in Cherry Hill on the 80th anniversary of *Kristallnacht*, Behrend was handed a cell phone by the head of the school. Behrend heard Baum’s voice on the other end, for the first time in almost 80 years.

“I couldn’t believe it,” Behrend said.

The next year, in 2019, Behrend, Hanover, and a small documentary crew traveled to Florida, where Baum lives and where, coincidentally, Behrend spent his

winters just 16 miles away.

When the two survivors reunited, awkward formalities were forgotten as the two met each other again with childlike wonder.

“He introduced himself as ‘Professor Baum,’” Behrend said of the reunion. “When we were in school together, you were such a dumb kid! How did you manage to become a professor?”

Though the friends’ reunion was joyful, their first meeting was under more challenging circumstances.

Behrend, born Fritz Behrend in November 1926, grew up on an estate originally owned by the Zeppelin family in Germany. He remembers having a normal childhood until Hitler rose to power in 1933.

“All of a sudden, I had no kids to play with,” Behrend said. “As a matter of fact, my parents did not allow me on the streets because they were afraid that something

would happen to me.”

After only three years in public school under the Third Reich, Behrend was forced out of school in 1937. In order to continue his education at a Jewish school, his family sent him to Cologne, where he was sent to live with a *hazzan* and his family, including two children, Margot and Henry Baum.

Less than two years later, on November 9, 1938, Behrend and Baum witnessed their school and two synagogues engulfed in flames.

At first, not knowing the context of the fire, Behrend reacted in the way many children would: “Would you believe this was the greatest moment in my life?...Can you picture? No school; no homework; no teachers!”

**B**ut the reality of the looming Holocaust was never far from Behrend’s family. Unbeknownst to Behrend at the time, stormtroopers came to his family’s home the night before, kidnapping his father and taking him to *Sachsenhausen* concentration camp, where he stayed for a short time, along with the lucky few Jews able to leave a concentration camp prior to the declaration of World War II. He was released under the condition that his family leave the country immediately.

With the help of his mother’s brother, who was very wealthy, the Behrend family secured \$7,500 deposits for the Behrend family and three others — worth over \$600,000 today — to fund a new life in America.

The family spent a year-and-a-half in Cuba as a place of refuge before they were allowed to enter the U.S. Behrend became a bar mitzvah there, in front of a congregation of 20 people, each of whom were responsible for bringing their own food to the party.

In 1945, Behrend was drafted into the U.S. military, where, in a turn of fate, he was part of the Intellectual Diversion denazification program, where he reeducated German prisoners of war on democracy.

Behrend later became a television mechanic, claiming to be one of the best.

“The beauty of his story is this optimistic personality...and he kept having these collisions with history,” Hanover said of Behrend’s life. “It was like he was a magnet for it.”

BY SASHA ROGELBERG,  
*Jewish Exponent*



# 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.**

This includes:

- Bequest by will
- Making ASYV/Yad Vashem a beneficiary of a Charitable Remainder Trust or Charitable Gift Annuity
- Donating a paid-up life insurance policy
- Contributing the proceeds of an IRA or retirement plan

**By including ASYV/Yad Vashem in your estate plans, you assure a future in which Holocaust remembrance and education can serve as a powerful antidote to Holocaust denial, distortion, hate and indifference.**

**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:**

Robert Christopher Morton, Director of Planned Giving at ASYV  
212-220-4304 or [Cmorton@YadVashemUSA.org](mailto:Cmorton@YadVashemUSA.org)

American Society for Yad Vashem  
**MARTYRDOM & RESISTANCE**  
500 FIFTH AVENUE, 42nd FLOOR  
NEW YORK, N.Y. 10110-4299  
Web site: [www.yadvashemusa.org](http://www.yadvashemusa.org)

NON-PROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
SMITHTOWN, N.Y.  
PERMIT NO. 15

## Martyrdom & Resistance

**Stanley H. Stone**  
Editor-in-Chief

**Yefim Krasnyanskiy, M.A.,**  
Editor

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

\*1974-85, as Newsletter for the American Federation of Jewish Fighters, Camp Inmates, and Nazi Victims