

MARTYRDOM & RESISTANCE



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A NIGHT TO REMEMBER: A CONCERT FOR SUGIHARA

Oh, what a night! After 3 long years of planning, the American Society for Yad Vashem had the honor and privilege of presenting *A Concert for Sugihara* at Carnegie Hall on Wednesday evening, April 19. Commissioned by Yad Vashem and the American Society for Yad Vashem, Lera Auerbach's Symphony No. 6, "Vessels of Light," enjoyed its U.S. premiere that evening to a sold-out crowd. Inspired by the heroism of Chiune Sugihara, the Japanese vice-consul to Lithuania who saved thousands of Jewish refugees during World War II, this performance was dedicated to him and all those who risked their lives to save others.

Lera Auerbach was approached by world-renowned Japanese-American-Israeli cellist Kristina Reiko Cooper to write the work. Kristina is married to a man whose father received a life-saving visa from Sugihara. In Kristina's own words: "Chiune Sugihara's story deeply touched me, and I felt utterly compelled to help bring this incredible story forward. I could not stop thinking about how my husband and children are alive, that they exist, because of this man's bravery." Kristina was the soloist at Carnegie Hall that evening, performing together with the New York City Opera Orchestra and Chorus, conducted by Constantine Orbelian.

The opening program was introduced by Chorus Master and Master of Ceremonies Zalmen Mlotek, the artistic director of the National Yiddish Theater Folksbiene, and

himself the son of a Sugihara Jew. He was joined onstage by the co-chairs of the evening's event, ASYV Board Members Abbi Halpern and Peter Till, and Zalmen's brother, Mark Mlotek. The program continued with a meaningful candle-lighting ceremony, honoring the memory of the six million Jews lost in the *Shoah*.

Lithuania, and Ambassador Israel Nitzan from Israel. Joining the three ambassadors were Nobuki Sugihara, son of Chiune Sugihara; ASYV Chairman Emeritus Lenny Wilf, a champion of this project from the beginning; and Talia Jacobs, ASYV Young Leadership chair and granddaughter of a Sugihara Jew. Capping the candle lighting

was a solemn, soulful rendition of *El Maleh Rahamim* (the Jewish prayer for the soul of the martyrs) sung by Elie Borger, a grandchild of Holocaust survivors.

Following the dramatic performance of the moving symphony, sponsors were invited to attend a private cocktail reception at Carnegie Hall. Attendees had an opportunity to engage with the artists, performers, dignitaries and special guests who were in attendance that evening. The American Society for Yad Vashem was proud to raise over \$400,000 in support of this event, but perhaps even more importantly, it was proud to have the unique opportunity to educate, commemorate and remember the *Shoah*. ASYV's involvement with this event gave it the chance to build awareness and educate new audiences about the Holocaust, remind people of its lessons, and highlight the power of an individual to change the world.

On May 18, the Western Region of ASYV co-hosted *A Concert for Sugihara* with the Lowell Milken Center for Music of American Jewish Experience and the Herb Alpert

School of Music. More on that event in a future issue.

See pp. 8–9 for the photo gallery of the event.



Kristina Reiko Cooper.

The first three honored guests to light candles were members of the diplomatic corps who all showed early interest in this event: Ambassador Mikio Mori from Japan, Ambassador Vaclovas Salkauskas from

FROM DOCUMENTATION TO SOCIAL MEDIA: EMPOWERING STUDENTS TO ANALYZE (MIS)INFORMATION

25th Barbara Gutfreund Arfa Professional Development Conference on Holocaust Education

The Education Department of the American Society for Yad Vashem (ASYV) held its twenty-fifth annual Professional Development Conference on Holocaust education, on March 19, 2023. This year’s program, which included educators from 25 states and 10 countries, was gen-

ums, memorials, cinema and historical documentation. The conference program also featured a panel discussion moderated by Dr. Berenbaum. The panelists were Felice Cohen, Karen Kruger and Steven Fisher — three Holocaust educators who, through their individual works, have created oppor-

learning opportunities from individual contributions to Holocaust memory.

The conference was created by Caroline Arfa Massel, Executive Board member of ASYV and founding chair of the Young Leadership Associates of ASYV, who established the Barbara Gutfreund Arfa Endowment Fund for Holocaust Education in memory of her late mother, Barbara Gutfreund Arfa, z”l. This conference, organized by Marlene W. Yahalom, PhD, director of education for the American Society of Yad Vashem, has proven to be a strong vehicle for promoting the mission of Holocaust remembrance and memory through education over the years. Re-marked Yahalom, “Through teaching, we warn about the consequences of extreme and baseless hatred and prejudice. We educate to promote tolerance in the hope that through our efforts, future generations will make sure that the Holocaust, a low chapter in human history, will not repeat itself.”

In her opening remarks, Caroline stated that “we live in an era where truth is a relative concept and facts can be mere suggestions or discarded if they do not fit a narrative. That is why ASYV has been running this conference over the years. Hopefully, our program today will encourage and inspire you and your students to make the world a better place; to make our country a better place; to make your classroom a better place for accurate learning.” Stanley



Stanley Stone, ASYV executive director; Caroline Massel, ASYV Executive Committee board member; Karen Kruger, workshop presenter; Steven Fisher, workshop presenter; Marlene W. Yahalom, PhD, ASYV director of education; Michael Berenbaum, PhD, keynote speaker; Felice Cohen, workshop presenter.

erously supported by the Barbara Gutfreund Arfa Endowment Fund for Holocaust Education.

The theme this year, *From Documentation to Social Media: Empowering Students to Analyze (Mis)Information*, represented an opportunity to reflect on our obligations to honor the memory of Holocaust victims and preserve the factual record of the Holocaust to ensure this history remains relevant decades later. Anti-Semitism, Holocaust denial and Holocaust distortion are rampant today, and while social media generally foster peer-to-peer learning, they also open the risk of misinformation, disinformation and the influence of hate, including anti-Semitism.

Dr. Michael Berenbaum, in his keynote address, discussed “How the Memory of the Holocaust Shapes Our Understanding of Contemporary Anti-Semitism.” He emphasized the urgency to give anti-Semitic challenges to Holocaust education and memory immediate attention, and to address these issues represented in muse-

um opportunities to gain experience about the Holocaust through stories of courage,



Michael Berenbaum, PhD, panel moderator. Panel participants: Felice Cohen, Steven Fisher, Karen Kruger.

determination and triumph. Documentation was key to each of their efforts. Participants gained insight from this presentation on the value of documentation to facilitate

Stone, executive director of ASYV, underscored that the answer lies in education and memory and quoted Elie Wiesel that
(Continued on page 15)

YLA LEADS THE WAY

On Thursday evening, March 30, the Prince George Ballroom in New York City was the place where records were broken. The American Society for Yad Vashem Young Leadership Associates (YLA) hosted its most successful Gala ever, surpassing its fundraising goal and selling out the event. Chairs Rachel Gelnick Lobel, Jonathan Fine and Dana Rogozinski led a committee of almost 40 dedicated volunteers, all passionate and committed to the sacred mission of Yad Vashem.

As guests arrived, they were able to view a special exhibit honoring the Righteous Among the Nations, those non-Jews who took great risks during the Holocaust to protect their Jewish neighbors at a time when hostility and indifference prevailed. As guests entered the ballroom, they were able to enjoy regular YLA Gala favorites, including an open bar, DJ, photo booth, dinner and dessert by Table One Caterers, a silent auction, the very popular fishbowl,

and of course Mikey's famous Tequila Bar. The evening also afforded YLA the opportunity to honor its outgoing chairs, Rachel Shnay and Josh Gelnick, and thank them for their years of leadership. They were each presented with the gift of a *tzedaka* box in acknowledgement of their tireless efforts and philanthropy.

Reflecting on the success of the event, the event committee was proud to know it had more than doubled fund-raising efforts from previous years, and raised over \$170,000, the most YLA has raised in its history, from a combination of ticket sales, sponsorships, auction items and the fishbowl. But perhaps a point of even greater pride is that many in attendance followed up after the event to say they wanted to get more involved. For, ultimately, that is the mission of YLA: to promote Holocaust awareness and connect the younger generation to Yad Vashem's mission of Holocaust education, research, documentation and commemoration.



Dana Rogozinski and Rachel Gelnick Lobel, YLA Gala chairs.



Josh Gelnick and Rachel Shnay, outgoing YLA co-chairs.



Dana Shakarchy, Tristate Region director, with Dana Rogozinski and Rachel Gelnick Lobel, YLA Gala chairs.



Jordana Urman and Sophie Krakowski, incoming YLA co-chairs.



Erica and Michael Distenfeld at Mikey's Tequila Bar.



The fishbowl.

LESSONS FROM OUR PARENTS: A SPOTLIGHT ON REGIONAL LEADERS

The Southeast Region was honored to host the first live taping of Lessons from Our Parents, a series of conversations with community leaders who lay claim to the way the Holocaust shaped their lives as descendants of survivors. The interviews highlight how their parents' experiences continue to profoundly impact their personal and professional lives, and allow them to share the lessons their parents taught them that made them into the leaders they are today.

The event was hosted by Sky Lake Synagogue in Miami on March 16 and featured a live conversation with Dr. Julio Frenk, the president of the University of Miami and former federal secretary of health of Mexico, and his wife, Dr. Felicia Knaul, director of advanced study of the Americas at the University of Miami. The interview was conducted by Haley Draznin Leibowitz, a former CNN reporter and podcast and video producer.

Both Dr. Frenk and Dr. Knaul shared their families' stories of survival and their experiences growing up in the shadow of the Holocaust. Dr. Frenk shared how his grandfather, a respected physician, escaped with his wife and two children (including Dr. Frenk's father). The family settled in Mexico and helped found some of Mexico's largest Jewish organizations.

Dr. Frenk's childhood was filled with stories of their escape and their determination to build a Jewish life in Mexico, while always remaining ready to leave their home in case they came for the Jews again.



Haley Draznin Leibowitz, interviewer; Mariana Frenk Knaul, daughter of Dr. Knaul and Dr. Frenk; Dr. Felicia Knaul; Dr. Julio Frenk; Andrew Draznin, chair, ASYV Southeast Region.

Dr. Knaul told the audience how her father, originally from Poland, spent five years in slave labor and concentration camps and was one of only two members of the family to survive. After the war he studied medicine and dentistry and settled in Toronto, where he lived until he passed

away at the age of 60, from illness brought on by his mistreatment in the camps. His experiences in the war never truly left him, and Dr. Knaul shared what that meant to her and her siblings growing up.

Andrew Draznin, chair of ASYV's Southeast Region, commented, "We felt very fortunate to have Dr. Julio Frenk and Dr. Felicia Knaul speak at the first live Lessons from Our Parents event down in Miami Beach. These are two people who are thought leaders in global education and are deeply connected to and impacted by their own history with the Holocaust. We all have ideas on how to combat anti-Semitism, but few of us have dedicated our lives to building the infrastructure to best deliver and shape that message. They are extraordinary people, and we look forward to more events with them and others that can help lead the way."

This event was just one example of the many ways in which the Southeast Region of ASYV is working in the local Florida community to bring its important message of Holocaust commemoration and education to a wider audience. We are looking forward to welcoming people to our upcoming programs and encourage involvement across Florida.

The video is available on our YouTube channel
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bqrmAuhKc7E>

HEROES COME IN ALL SHAPES AND SIZES

Elly Schlesinger Braun, z"l, was only 14 when she began demonstrating the kind of bravery and life-saving activities that are the making of true wartime heroes. Elly's daughter, Leah Modlin, recently shared her mother's inspirational life story, providing insight into the impact that one heroic young girl can have on scores of others.

According to the way Leah described Elly, one might say that she was a "superhero on wheels." When she was just 17 and hiding in the south of France with her family, Elly became a lifeline for her parents and others in hiding by flying around the countryside on her bicycle, foraging for food and transmitting news. One dramatic story that Leah shared was about the time Elly got a tip from a local policeman that their close family friends were about to be "picked up" and sent away. Elly's father told her to take this family's young son (Freddy) and bring him to a safe place: specifically, to a children's home about 25 miles away.

Elly transported him, first on her bicycle



Elly Schlesinger Braun.

and then by train, to the children's home, and upon returning was arrested and interrogated for 24 hours. Despite threats including imprisonment of both her and her parents, Elly didn't reveal anything about the boy's whereabouts and miraculously was released unharmed. The boy's parents were ultimately captured and dispatched to Auschwitz, where they were murdered, but thanks to Elly's bravery, their son is alive today. What's more, Elly and this young boy (today a prominent French ethnomusicologist who goes by the name Simha) were miraculously reunited sixty-three years later on the streets of Jerusalem in a chance encounter.

Another incredible chapter in Elly's heroic life took place the following year in August of 1942, when she was just 18. Leah explained that Elly and her parents learned of a decree from the government that all Jews, French or foreign, had to assemble at train stations and police headquarters for transport. Thanks to relationships that Elly herself, as

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HEROES COME IN ALL SHAPES AND SIZES

(Continued from page 4)

a French speaker, established with local authorities, she and her parents were privy to the list of those slated for transport. One time she brought a dozen highly coveted eggs wrapped in a sweater, and placed them in an officer’s desk drawer. He later handed her a list of Jews the French police were going to pick up and deport. Elly was able to ride around on her bicycle to warn people to hide and/or flee, thus saving their lives.

Beyond courageous activities like that, Elly’s father positioned Elly for an even more heroic role. Convinced that the Catholic church should be helping Jews during this precarious time, Elly’s father took her with him (thanks to her fluency in French) to appeal to the local priest. They sadly found the priest to be unreceptive, so they opted instead to go straight to the top and approach the archbishop of *Toulouse*, Monsignor Saliège. With her father’s coaching, the plan was for Elly to plead their case to the archbishop. Not only were they fortunate enough to get an appointment with him, but the archbishop actually acknowledged that they were right and wrote a directive known as “The Pastoral Letter of August 23, 1942,” which condemned the deportation of Jews and encouraged others to help the refugees. The archbishop told Elly, “This Sunday a letter will be read in every church in my diocese, which I will have hand delivered.” The following Sunday, Elly and her parents went to the local church and listened to the priest read this pastoral letter. In total, it was read in 400 churches, and 300,000 copies were made and distributed by the partisan underground throughout France. This manifesto can surely be credited with helping influence others to hide and protect Jews and with saving scores of lives. All because of an appeal made by an 18-year-old girl to an archbishop.

During the darkness of World War II in Europe, when the simple act of staying alive and safe took all the strength that one could muster, acts of kindness and heroism toward others deserve to be known and shared. The bravery and heroism which Elly Braun displayed are points of light which help dispel the darkness and serve as a reminder of the connection and responsibility we each have for one another and which keep us linked from generation to generation.

HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE DAY: TORCHLIGHTERS AND THEIR STORIES

One of the most poignant elements of the Holocaust Remembrance Day Official State Ceremony is the torchlighting ceremony, which takes place every year at Yad Vashem. The six torches represent the six million Jewish lives extinguished by the German Nazis and their collaborators.

At this year’s ceremony, six Holocaust survivors — Tova Gutstein; Ben-Zion Raisch; Judith Sohlberg; Robert Bonfil; Efim Gimelshtein; and Malka Rendel — each lighted a torch, and a short film recounted their individual heart-wrenching stories of survival and resilience. Their testimonies are a reminder of the horrors of the Holocaust and the mixture of fortune and courage of those who survived.

Tova Gutstein

Tova (Gitela) Gutstein was born in Warsaw in 1933 to Zanvel and Malka-Mania Alba, the middle of three children of this

Yiddish-speaking family.

When the Warsaw ghetto was established in October 1940, Tova’s father was sent to forced labor. From the window of her house, Tova saw German soldiers shooting young men and women every day.

Though only seven, she began to take care of the family’s livelihood. She would leave the ghetto through the sewers and beg for food from local Poles, even though they threatened to hand her over to the Germans. Sometimes she collected produce from the fields. She would tie a rope around her waist, fill her clothes with food, and return to the ghetto via the sewers.

When the Warsaw ghetto uprising broke out, Tova was outside the ghetto in search of food. Suddenly, she saw the sky turn red; the ghetto was burning. She ran toward her home. The bombing started, and she saw people falling and houses collaps-

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YAD VASHEM

ASYV COMMEMORATES YOM HASHOAH WITH CORPORATE GROUPS

Coinciding with Yom Hashoah which this year fell on April 18, the American Society for Yad Vashem was invited to partner with a number of different corporations/institutions to help promote Holocaust awareness and education. ASYV is proud to be a part of these programs, allowing participants to learn about the Shoah and about our collective responsibility to remember its lessons.

COLUMBIA BUSINESS SCHOOL

On Monday, April 17, the American Society for Yad Vashem partnered with Columbia Business School to commemorate *Yom HaShoah*. Over 200 students joined in person to hear from Holocaust survivor Toby Levy.

Jordana Urman, director of global brand marketing at Ralph Lauren, a granddaughter of survivors, and incoming co-chair of ASYV's Young Leadership Associates, moderated the event alongside Paige Gindi and Rachel Aboodi, MBA candidates at Columbia Business School, who worked with their Jewish Business Student Association (JBSA) and student government to host the event.

Toby Levy shared the importance of knowing where you come from so you can know where you are going, as well as the responsibility we have to protect our community. "All of you are my witnesses. I am counting on you to continue to share the countless stories and to never allow the deniers to go full swing. You will be my witnesses," said Toby.

We are grateful to have had the opportunity to partner with Columbia Business School on this meaningful program and were so moved by the incredible turnout.



Rachel Aboodi, MBA candidate at Columbia Business School; Toby Levy, Holocaust survivor; Paige Gindi, MBA candidate at Columbia Business School; Jordana Urman, incoming YLA co-chair.

INTERNATIONAL TECHNOLOGY COMPANY

On Thursday, April 20, the American Society for Yad Vashem partnered with one of the top international technology companies in commemoration of *Yom HaShoah*. The program was led by YLA board member Rachel Ohayon and her colleagues Skylar Buschinski and Jessie Jakoby.

We welcomed Ted Comet, a Jewish communal leader, who shared his wife's Holocaust story of survival and resilience. More than 100 joined virtually and/or in person to hear from Ted. "Remembering must have an active component to it" was the powerful and



YLA board member Rachel Ohayon and her colleagues Skylar Buschinski and Jessie Jakoby with Ted Comet.

TAPESTRY

On Tuesday, May 9, American Society for Yad Vashem partnered with Tapestry on its corporate program "Standing Up to Anti-Semitism." Over 100 employees participated in person and virtually.

Abe Foxman, Holocaust survivor and former national director of the Anti-Defamation League, spoke. "'Never again' is an aspiration, not a promise," shared Abe. He went on to say, "The Holocaust didn't start with gas chambers; it started with words." Abe poignantly brought to life the need to speak up and speak out against hate and intolerance.

The event was moderated by Helen Freilich and Kate Nienaltow, who both serve on the Jewish Community & Allies Taskforce at Tapestry.



Helen Freilich and Kate Nienaltow with Abe Foxman, Holocaust survivor.

A MEANINGFUL YIZKOR PROGRAM

Ronda Bellsey is co-president of Congregation Beth Kodesh in Boynton Beach, Florida. Ronda's congregation undertook a very special initiative this past year in connection with its Yom Kippur Yizkor Appeal. Together with her counterpart, Co-President Izzy Bordainick, and their spiritual leader, Rabbi Michael Simon, the congregation decided to say *Yizkor* on behalf of individuals killed in the *Shoah*, and, as is customary, give charity on their behalf.

The congregation made it a point to identify names of children who had perished in the Holocaust by accessing them directly from Yad Vashem's database, so they could recite the *Yizkor* service on their behalf. And as part of this initiative, they decided to channel their *Yizkor* funds specifically toward Yad Vashem's Children's Memorial.

Ronda was delighted shortly thereafter to learn that Yad Vashem had a regional presence in South Florida, when she discovered that the American Society for Yad Vashem had a Southeast office and that our own Denise Herschberg was its re-



Ronda Bellsey and Izzy Bordainick, co-presidents of Congregation Beth Kodesh; Rabbi Michael Simon of Congregation Beth Kodesh; and Denise Herschberg, ASYV Southeast regional director.

gional director. Ronda immediately invited Denise to join Congregation Beth Kodesh at a pre-Shabbat program on Friday, October 28, when they presented her with a check for \$2,000 toward Yad Vashem's Children's Memorial. It was gratifying for everyone involved to note that over 100

people had participated in the campaign, which had exceeded everyone's expectations. They have now decided to make this effort an annual event.

"As co-presidents, Izzy and I are in awe of the response from our congregation to this incredibly moving program to honor the memories of the many children murdered in the *Shoah*. Our members will say *kaddish* for them for as long as we live. And it was a true honor to have Denise Herschberg address our congregation to stress the importance of this mission. We hope to continue this every year and hope other temples will join us," remarked Ronda.

The American Society for Yad Vashem invites other synagogues and community groups interested in replicating this program to be in touch with Denise or any of our other regional directors, to discuss how we can assist you in executing a meaningful program like this. The opportunity to raise awareness of the Holocaust and stand together to remember the *Shoah* and the six million who lost their lives is a reminder for a future generation to never forget.

WHAT MATTERS NOW TO YAD VASHEM HEAD DANI DAYAN

Anti-Semitism has captured media headlines around the world, ranging from "Death to the Jews' chants heard at Berlin rally" to "Bone-chilling anti-Semitic display in Poland sparks condemnation."

These modern iterations of anti-Semitism are, of course, of concern to Israel's national Holocaust memorial museum Yad Vashem. But it was yet another headline recently that caused Yad Vashem head Dani Dayan to speak out: "Polish propaganda': Critics assail deal to resume Israeli youth trips to Poland."

As a guardian against the distortion of Holocaust memory, in the past year, the Buenos Aires-born Dayan, a former head of the settler movement and a past consul general to New York, has spoken up in several other cases, including when Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban made comments last summer that evoked Nazi ideology.

Speaking with *The Times of Israel* Dayan said he sees results.

Days before Israel marked *Yom Hashoah*, the national Holocaust memorial day, we asked Yad Vashem head Dani Dayan, what matters now?

The Times of Israel: Dani, after a week

in which we've heard anti-Semitic chants in Berlin, in which we saw a hugely anti-Israel basketball game in Greece, in which we have a new deal, perhaps, with Poland for school trips — in this action-packed week, what matters now?

Dani Dayan: Well, first of all, that we are approaching *Yom Hashoah*, and that gives context to all those things that you just mentioned. And this year, on *Yom Hashoah* the annual theme is eighty years since the Warsaw ghetto uprising and Jewish heroism during the *Shoah*. And I cannot fail to remember, every single time I think about it, that even in the depths of the Warsaw ghetto, there were two Jewish underground organizations. One, let's call it the left wing, was led by Mordechai Anielewicz; the other, let's call it the right wing, was led by Paweł Frenkiel. And even in the ghetto, they weren't able, because of their ideological or alleged ideological differences, to unite forces.

And this is a lesson very relevant to these days when Israel is confronting not only anti-Semitism, but also quite mighty adversaries, enemies inside its boundaries and even beyond. And there is a very worrying wedge in Israeli society.

So you're telling Israelis to take note of the wedge that was in the Warsaw ghetto. And do you think that things would have happened differently had the Jewish forces been aligned?

No, of course not. The Warsaw ghetto uprising was a way to die honorably. But the situation, of course, now is completely different. I'm not making any comparison of the circumstances in the ghetto to the circumstances in independent, sovereign, regional power, Israel, but the lesson is the same.

It's a lesson, obviously, that we've heard since biblical times over and over and over. You, of course, were in politics, and now you're heading a nonpartisan institution. But do you see that this lesson will ever be learned?

I hope so. We should educate, we should tell the stories that are relevant even from the dark days of the *Shoah* — again, without comparing the situation of the Jewish people then to the situation of the Jewish people now, which are completely different. But in this respect, I think it's equivalent.

As I just said, you're the head of a non-
(Continued on page 10)

A NIGHT TO REMEMBER: A



Pre-concert candle-lighting ceremony, from left to right: Master of Ceremonies Zalmen Mlotek; ASYV Young Leadership Chair Talia Jacobs; ASYV Chairman Emeritus Lenny Wilf; Nobuki Sugihara, son of Chiune Sugihara; Israeli Ambassador Israel Nitzan; Lithuanian Ambassador Vaclovas Salkauskas; Japanese Ambassador Mikio Mori.



Constantine Orbelian, Lera Auerbach, Kristina Reiko Cooper, New York City Opera Orchestra and Chorus.



David Halpern, Executive Committee member, ASYV; Malcolm Hoenlein, vice chair, Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations; Loren Weiss, NY Tristate Region chair, ASYV.



Abbi Halpern, event co-chair, and Jeremy Halpern.



Kristina Reiko Cooper (center) with Zalmen Mlotek, chorus master and master of ceremonies; Debra Cohen; Mark Mlotek, event co-chair; and Audrey Mlotek. The Mloteks are descendants of Sugihara Jews .



Adina and Lawrence Burian with Nobuki Sugihara and his wife.

A CONCERT FOR SUGIHARA



Joshua Walker, President and CEO, Japan Society; and Stanley Stone, executive director of ASYV.



Rabbi Eliezer Rubin, Elie Borger, Jeremy Halpern.



Kristina Reiko Cooper with Leonard and Beth Wilf.



Ellie Eisenberger and family — descendants of Sugihara Jews.



Peter Till, event co-chair.



WHAT MATTERS NOW TO YAD VASHEM HEAD DANI DAYAN

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partisan, nonpolitical organization. And yet throughout the past year and some since we last spoke — we spoke last year before International Holocaust Remembrance Day — you have come out with some very strong statements which are not politically aligned, but are very forceful in the name of the State of Israel. One example, I would say is, of course, what happened this past week in terms of the Poland school trips in which Yad Vashem — you, I assume, signed off on this, or said it yourself — came out very forcefully against this new draft agreement.

I want to be much more accurate, much more nuanced to what you just said. The agreement has an annex. The annex is a list of recommended sites. I understand that those are recommended by the Polish side that Israeli students should visit at least one of them on the list. In that annex, there are indeed a few problematic institutions that shouldn't be there.

But on the practical side, it makes no difference. No Israeli student, I foresee, will visit those places. And in fact, if we are talking realpolitik, the missions, the trips that took place before the COVID pandemic will be exactly the same as those that will take place now.

So I would say in the formal, in the declarative aspect, yes, we see a problem. In the practical side of things, we don't see a real issue. And if we are posed with the dilemma, what is preferable, to have those trips with that problematic declaration or not, I think it's a good thing we're going to have those trips.

You think exposing Israeli teens to the trauma of the Holocaust, on the sites of the Holocaust is a good thing? I wonder, as a mother, if it's a good thing.

Well, when you use the word trauma, you imply that they will come back traumatized? I don't think so. I think that if the trips are carried out with the proper preparation, as we at least in Yad Vashem do, with the trips that we send, even of youngsters, of high school students — with the proper preparation, with the proper context, with the proper guidance on site, those are not traumatizing, but highly educating trips.

And right now we're of course in a situation in which many, many Holocaust survivors are leaving us at a rapid pace. And do you feel like these trips will fill the vacuum of that first-person testimony?

We are really in a watershed moment in Holocaust remembrance. We are, indeed, as you said, approaching rapidly, unfortu-

nately, but also inevitably, the post-survivor era, the post-witness era. In that case, our task in Holocaust remembrance will be, on the one hand, much more challenging, much more difficult, and on the other hand, much more important, much more vital. I fear when that occurs, when we get to that stage, it will be the "happy hour" of the deniers and the distortionists. And we will need a myriad of tools to confront that.

The trips to the death camps in Poland are one of those means, but definitely not the only one. We will have to be much more creative, much more ingenious in doing that. But that said, I never forget that 6 million Jews never had the privilege to sit down in front of a camera and give their testimony because they did not survive. And therefore we continue and even strengthen our gathering of documentation from archival sources we have today in Yad Vashem, by far the largest archive in the world in Holocaust-related documentation, with more than 220,000,000 pages of documents, tens of thousands of artifacts



Yad Vashem chairman Dani Dayan meets with Pope Francis in the Vatican on June 9, 2022.

and photographs, et cetera.

But we continue because, as I said, those are the testimonies of those that did not survive. Our last achievement, partially in following my meeting with Pope Francis in the Vatican, was that the Church, the Catholic Church, opened for the first time in history, its archives in the relevant period for our researchers.

The Catholic Church has opened its archives. Other countries are increasingly closing their archives, at least symbolically. Poland, for instance.

First of all, before I tackle the Polish issue, actually, the archives that are unfortunately closed to us are the Russian archives. By the way, quite amazingly, the Ukrainian archives, we still continue to receive copies of documents from the Ukrainian archives, even under the current

situation. Unfortunately, that is not the case regarding the Russian Federation archives. And that's a pity.

Regarding Poland, well, yes, we know about the legislation and the limitations that exist in Poland regarding Holocaust research, and we don't accept them, obviously.

You said that the archive from Russia is closed. That surprises me. I actually didn't know that, because Russians are so proud of their role in liberating Holocaust survivors. Why do you think it's closed still?

Regarding Russia, we see also problematic tendencies in the Russian education system regarding the Holocaust. We see, in some senses, withdrawal to the Soviet-era kind of education regarding the Great Patriotic War, including the Holocaust. That disturbs us. But we are monitoring it quite closely.

Let's talk a little bit more about Russia and Ukraine, and the use of Nazi imagery that during the beginning part of the war, the end of February, March, was so ram-

pant all over social media, all sorts of images, memes painting the other as the Nazi. Why do you think this is still such a touchstone for both of these peoples? Why this use?

Because the Shoah, the Holocaust, is still relevant. And I think it's even more relevant now than ever. I must say that what they call sometimes Holocaust awareness or interest in the Shoah, in the Holocaust, is growing and not

diminishing as time passes. And one of the negative examples is the use of, as you said, of Shoah imagery and terminology in the propaganda war between Russia and Ukraine, mainly in the Russian side. But Ukrainians are not exempt from that blame.

I had two altercations with the Russians in following two problematic statements of Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov. In one case, I believe the Kremlin spokesperson attacked me but also invited me to visit Donbas to see for myself the alleged atrocities committed by the Ukrainians. In another case, I had quite a heated exchange of messages with a very senior Russian diplomat.

One of the things that was said, if I'm not mistaken, is that Hitler had Jewish roots?

Exactly. That's one of the cases. And an-
(Continued on page 12)

HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE DAY: TORCHLIGHTERS AND THEIR STORIES

(Continued from page 5)

ing. When she reached her house, it was already destroyed and her family was gone.

Tova managed to reach the forest and was taken in by partisans. They fed and dressed her in the coat and boots of German soldiers, as well as in clothes they took from clotheslines. Tova lived with them in the forest for about a year and a half, and learned Russian and Polish from them.

At the end of the war, Tova emerged from the forest. She waited for her mother at the train station every day for a month. She was eventually sent to the city of *Walbrzych*, where young Jews took her to an orphanage. After 18 months, she arrived in Germany, where she found her mother, sister and brother in a DP camp in the city of *Ulm*.

Tova emigrated to Israel in 1948 and became a hospital nurse. Today she is active in helping Holocaust survivors.

Tova and her late husband, Binyamin, have three children, eight grandchildren and 13 great-grandchildren.

Ben-Zion Raisch

Ben-Zion Raisch was born in 1932 in *Chernivtsi*, Romania (now Ukraine). His parents, Max and Sara, owned a grocery store in the city, and Ben-Zion studied at the local Jewish school. That year, because of anti-Semitic incidents, his father emigrated to Mandatory Palestine. In 1940, the Soviet Union occupied *Chernivtsi*. The Russians took over a large part of the family home, and the connection with Max was severed.

In July 1941, the Romanians and the Germans occupied *Chernivtsi*. Jews were forced to wear a yellow Star of David and were confined to a ghetto. After a few weeks, Ben-Zion, his mother and his little brother Poldy (Peretz) were put on a cattle car and taken to the *Marculesti* concentration camp, from where they were marched to other ghettos. Many of the prisoners died of cold, hunger and disease. Some were shot by the guards.

The family eventually arrived at the *Zhabokrych* ghetto, where they entered a house with no door. Three-year-old Poldy was weak with hunger. The next day, he asked for soup. Those were his last words. He died in his mother's arms.

Ben-Zion began to crawl under the ghetto fences and collect beets that would fall from freight wagons. Despite being whipped by coachmen, he continued to do so in order to survive. In the summer, he worked with Ukrainian villagers. Young Ukrainians beat him and set dogs on him.

In the winter, he made knitting needles

from a barbed-wire fence, and learned to knit. He and his mother made socks, gloves and sweaters for the villagers in exchange for potatoes.

In mid-March 1944, the Red Army occupied the area, and Ben-Zion and his mother returned to Romania. Sara reestablished contact with Max, and in January

1946 Ben-Zion arrived in Israel with his mother. After eight years of separation, Ben-Zion, now 14, barely knew his father.

He became a wireless technician in the IDF; after his military service, he studied electronic engineering at the Technion — Israel Institute of Technology. He worked in defense technology development.

Ben-Zion and his wife, Charna, have three sons and a daughter, 30 grandchildren and more than 70 great-grandchildren.

Judith Sohlberg

Judith Sohlberg was born in Amsterdam in 1935 to Rosette and Joseph van Dijk. Joseph was a lawyer and active in the Jewish community.

In September 1943, on the eve of Rosh Hashanah, Judith and her family were deported to the *Westerbork* transit camp. Every Tuesday, deportations left *Westerbork* for the east. Before each deportation, an atmosphere of deathly fear prevailed in the camp.

Judith and the rest of her family were sent to *Bergen-Belsen*. As she got off the train, she heard shouts of "*Raus!*" ("Out!") and saw Germans with whips and dogs. For hours, Judith and her family stood in formation, day after day, in the snow and the bitter cold.

Rosette knew German and was there-

fore taken to work in the German offices. She would steal burnt crusts of bread and secretly bring them to her daughters. Adults covertly kept the children busy. Judith studied arithmetic and embroidery. She and her sister Elisabeth embroidered a challah cover for Shabbat, decorated it with an inscription in Hebrew, and kept

dried bread in it. On Passover, the prisoners baked a matzah-like pastry. One uncle wrote a *Haggadah* from memory, and family members read from it.

In April 1945, the family members were put on a train that traveled without a destination, between the adjacent western and eastern fronts. Many of the prisoners died on the train. At one of the stops, Judith and her sister jumped over the dead at the door of the car, took a sack of potatoes and brought it inside. "Those potatoes saved many people on the train," Judith says. Two weeks later, the Red Army released the prisoners from the train near the town of *Trobitz*.

Judith arrived in Switzerland, where she met Saul, a classmate who had been hidden with Christian farmers in the Netherlands. Later, the two married, and they emigrated to Israel in 1959.

Judith and Saul have four children, 24 grandchildren and 33 great-grandchildren.

Robert Bonfil

Robert (Reuven) Bonfil — born in 1937 in *Karditsa*, in the *Thessaly* region of Greece — was the only son of David and Efthymia Allegra (Simcha).

In 1941, Italy occupied *Thessaly*. Robert fell ill, so his parents took him to Athens

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Top, L.-R.: Tova Gutstein, Ben-Zion Raisch, Judith Sholberg. Bottom, L.-R.: Robert Bonfil, Efim Gimelshtein, Malka Rendel.

WHAT MATTERS NOW TO YAD VASHEM HEAD DANI DAYAN

(Continued from page 10)

other case: Mr. Lavrov said that the West wants to implement a final solution for the Russian people like what the Nazis did to the Jewish people. But also President Zelensky, a Jew himself, said in the Knesset, in his Zoom address to the Knesset members, he said that Israel should assist Ukrainian people like the Ukrainian people assisted the Jews during the war, during the Shoah.

Which obviously wipes out all sorts of history.

It's rewriting history because he doesn't really want us to behave the way the Ukrainians behaved toward the Jews. I



High school students participate in the March of the Living at Auschwitz in Poland, April 16, 2015.

must tell you, I visited Kyiv in September 2021, before the war, for the 80th anniversary of the Babyn Yar massacre. And I opened an academic seminar, and in the presence of very senior Ukrainian officials and academics, I said, one, we welcome Ukraine into the family of democratic nations. Two, I express my gratitude that Ukraine, contrary to the Soviet Union, acknowledges the Jewishness of the victims. But I also said, three, that there is an extra mile they must go, and that is to recognize, to look into their past and recognize widespread collaboration, Ukraine's collaboration with the Nazis.

They've been a bit busy since then, perhaps, and maybe that hasn't quite happened?

Well, now they are busy with other problems. But we still see in Ukraine, as in other places, the glorification of collaborators with the Nazis that are considered in general.

You know, visiting Kyiv for a Jew with a very deep Jewish historical consciousness is a very mixed-feelings experience. On one hand, on one side, you see that they

acknowledge the Jewishness of the victims in Babyn Yar, there is a synagogue in Babyn Yar and many other manifestations of that. On the other hand, I remember myself going down the steps from my hotel in Kyiv to a very beautiful square with a huge statue of Bohdan Khmelnytsky the Cossack leader, who until Hitler probably was considered the most evil anti-Semite assassin of Jews in Jewish exile history. So it's a very troubling experience sometimes to be in Kyiv.

I would say that I see today in the world, in Europe, three ways of confronting their past, their respective past. I visited, for the first time in my life, two countries, Germany and Austria. At a very young age, I decided that I would not visit them. But now, as chairman of Yad Vashem, I decided to do it for the same reason I refrained — memory. I thought that I strengthened memory by doing that.

And, for instance, let's take the Austrian case. Austria was a country that for decades after the war, had the chutzpah to define itself as the first victim of Hitler. And then they recognize wholeheartedly that they were perpetrators. They completely reject the notion of being the first victims, and they admit they were perpetrators.

In Lithuania, for instance, I met the leadership of Lithuania and also the prime minister and others, as I did in Austria. And I found, for instance, there a young and committed leadership that really wants to make things right. But I'm not sure they have the political courage to do that. And in other cases, the most extreme probably is Belarus, where they completely deny. In Belarus, they even talk about the genocide of the Belarusian people instead of the genocide of the Jews.

And let's turn to Hungary as well. The Jobbik party that was such a rising force is now changing its tune and becoming at least less overtly anti-Semitic. But at the same time, we're hearing statements from Prime Minister Viktor Orban, which you addressed last summer.

Well, yes, I must say the Orban statement that you refer to that I addressed was not exactly anti-Semitic. It was more about a racial tone, not necessarily against Jews.

By the way, here you have a scoop: 48 hours after I criticized Mr. Orban for his statement, I had a personal letter from President Orban in my desk explaining. That shows the importance of Yad Vashem because there were many critics. I don't think he sent personal letters to each one of them. But Yad Vashem is seen, and rightly so, as a moral beacon in this world.

You have to choose very carefully when you speak out and when you don't. How do you know when?

Well, I am in this business of media for many years in my different roles. I think that you acquire that instinct to know when you will overshoot. And, as I said, Yad Vashem as a beacon, as a symbol in this world, shouldn't react to every single thing that is still said or done anywhere in the globe. But you have to understand the context and to choose carefully when to enter the arena and when not to.

Did Yad Vashem make a statement on the basketball game that happened last night? No, because why?

Well, as you said, look, it was a terrible event. I saw the film, the clips. It was terrible. It was anti-Israeli. I don't think it was Shoah related. So no, I don't think that. But of course, as a human being, as an Israeli, as a Jew, I condemned it wholeheartedly. But we didn't do that on our own initiative.

We are ahead of Yom Hashoah, as you said. And do you have any message for the many, many generations that hopefully will come from these survivors? What is their role now?

As we already spoke about, we are approaching the post-survivor era, and the burden on the second and third generation will be huge. And I want to say a word of praise for the third generation, the grandchildren of the survivors. In many cases, obviously not in all cases, but it's quite a pattern that in many families, the first generation, namely the survivors themselves, didn't talk, didn't speak about their experiences. And the second generation, their children, didn't ask. And then came the third generation and they did ask, and the grandparents responded. So in many cases, we owe the testimonies of the survivors to their grandchildren. It is a very peculiar experience, a very peculiar phenomenon. We are very grateful to that third generation for doing that.

And now this fourth generation, who hopefully...

Well, fourth generation, we'll still have to wait and see what their role will be. But,
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WHAT MATTERS NOW TO YAD VASHEM HEAD DANI DAYAN

(Continued from page 12)

you know, if we are talking about humanity in general, mankind in general, as we spoke already, anti-Semitism is rising. When I came to New York to serve as consul general of Israel in 2016, I thought that anti-Semitism would be in a low place in my agenda. But during my term, 15 Jews were murdered in anti-Semitic attacks. In Pittsburgh, Poway, Jersey City, Monsey. Fifteen. So it's clear that anti-Semitism, unfortunately, is raising its head again.

Now, what I tell all the leaders that visit Yad Vashem, the leaders I meet in their capitals, is that we are not in Germany of the 1930s. Thank God. We are far from it. But there is one difference between our contemporary generation, Jewish and non-Jewish, and the generation of the 1930s. And that difference is that we have the experience they didn't have. We know it can happen. Probably they thought: they burn books, that's bad. They burn synagogues, that's even worse. But they will never kill six million people. We know that anti-Semitism, if it's not confronted vigorously, forcefully, immediately, undefeated, can develop into monstrous dimensions.

So we don't have the luxury, the privilege to say, let's wait and see how this thing develops. Leaders today have to confront anti-Semitism immediately and defeat it immediately, before it's too late.

At the same time, there's huge fatigue for the Holocaust; for instance, in Europe, definitely here in Israel, kids of my children's generation are more tending to make jokes about the Holocaust than to treat it with any kind of serious respect. How do you combat that?

I don't agree that there is Holocaust fatigue. I think that Holocaust awareness is rising actually in the world. I will give you two or three examples. International Holocaust Remembrance Day, January 27, didn't exist in the 1980s or the previous century. It was established this century. IHRA, the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, didn't exist in the 20th century. It was established in the 21st century. A conference like the conference that the prime minister of Sweden, from all places, convened in *Malmo* in 2021 to talk with world leaders about Holocaust remem-

brance, those were things that didn't happen 20 or 30 years ago. I understand there's going to be a follow-up conference later this year in *Toledo*, Spain.

So those things didn't happen. Look, I meet leaders all over the world. In the last few months, I had the privilege to meet in their capitals the Pope and Chancellor Olaf Scholz from Germany and Chancellor Karl Nehammer from Austria and President Emanuel Macron from France and many others. And I see that this issue is in their agenda. Holocaust remembrance is today in the international agenda, and we hope



Holocaust survivor Lore Mayerfeld and Yad Vashem Chairman Dani Dayan lay a wreath at Berlin's Memorial to the Victims of the Holocaust

we help to put it there and to keep it there. *So you think that there should be some kind of trickle-down effect for the regular people?*

That's the challenge. Leadership is committed today. Does it trickle down? To a certain amount, and sometimes people don't talk enough about it because they fear crossing a line and becoming politically incorrect in how to deal with Shoah remembrance and responsibility in societies, in European societies that are becoming increasingly multiethnic and multicultural. I told both Chancellor Scholz from Germany and Chancellor Nehammer from Austria that with German or Austrian citizenship, there are certain responsibilities that are linked to it even if the grandfather of the citizen was not in Germany or in Austria, but in a different continent during the war.

Say Syria, with all the refugees from the Syrian war.

Yeah. So by the way, they completely agree, and I agreed with Chancellor Scholz of Germany that the first satellite installation, the first educational center of Yad Vashem outside of Israel, will be in Ger-

many. We will take on our shoulders the responsibility to help Germany to educate its people regarding the responsibilities that the Shoah put on their shoulders.

When is that meant to take off?
Ah, we are in an early stage. It's a multi-year project. I hope it won't take too long, but for sure it will take a few years.

And it's meant to be a building or an educational project?

A building, a physical educational center. But I must tell you, all the Germans I met, the entire German leadership, chancellor, president, Bundestag president, Minister of Finance and others, and the leader of the opposition, all of them were thrilled about the idea and they committed to help it happen.

I'm just confused because they have so many educational resources already in Holocaust memorials; why would they need Israel to help them?

Look, in this case, unfortunately, we have a unique perspective. We are the victims. The perspective that we have is completely different when the institution that represents the victims comes to the country of the perpetrators. First of all, it's quite a statement, and

it's quite a difference from all other remembrance institutions. And we are talking specifically about education, an educational center, not a museum, not a memorial, but an educational center. I think it's very significant.

Earlier in our conversation, you talked about your trip to Kyiv and how you welcomed the country to the group of democracies in the world. Now, as you rightly said, Israel is torn asunder by this fight for democracy. Do you see that your work will be affected by this perhaps infringement upon democracy that may soon happen?

I hope not. First of all, Yad Vashem — as you said, I put, the moment I came to Yad Vashem, a firewall between us and anything that is political. Not on anything that is moral, but anything that is political. We need very sharp instincts to detect where is the line that crosses, that defines what is politics, or what is morality. But I hope that Yad Vashem's values will remain unchanged whatever happens outside its walls.

BY AMANDA BORSCHEL-DAN,
The Times of Israel

HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE DAY: TORCHLIGHTERS AND THEIR STORIES

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under a false identity in order to undergo surgery. At the time, Athens was under German occupation. On the way back to *Karditsa*, at the train station in *Domokos*, the Bonfil family saw Jewish forced laborers under the guard of German soldiers.

One of the Jewish workers asked them for bread. Robert's father threw him a loaf of bread from the train window, but a German soldier beat the Jew to death with a rifle butt. A German officer then got into the wagon and asked: "Who threw the bread?" Robert was frozen with fear and his mother turned pale, but David replied in broken German, "No one threw bread from this wagon." The officer left.

At the end of 1943, the Germans arrived in *Karditsa*. Robert and his mother hid in a coal bunker under the house. His father was at the home of the town's bishop, Ezekiel, whom he taught French. When German soldiers arrived at the bishop's house, the bishop took off his cross pendant, hung it around David's neck, and introduced him to the Germans as his beadle.

Robert and his parents escaped in a donkey cart to the mountain village of *Dafnospilia* (today *Velessi*). When the Germans approached the village, members of the Communist underground smuggled the family to *Apidea*, where the Greek Orthodox Goulas family took the family in.

When German planes bombed *Apidea* and German troops approached the village, Konstantinos and Vassiliki Goulas hid Robert and his parents in a cabin in the forest and provided them with food. When the Germans retreated, Robert and his parents returned to *Karditsa*.

Robert married Eva, a Holocaust survivor from Germany, and emigrated with his family to Israel in 1968. He is professor emeritus of medieval and Renaissance Jewish history at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

Konstantinos and Vassiliki Goulas were posthumously recognized in 2018 as Righteous Among the Nations.

Robert and Eva have three children, eight grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

Efim Gimelshtein

Efim Gimelshtein was born in 1935 in Minsk in the Soviet Union (Belarus) to Mikhail and Rachel Yudovich, traditional Jews who spoke Yiddish at home. His grandparents lived with them.

In June 1941, the Germans invaded the Soviet Union. Efim's father was recruited into the Red Army and killed in battle.

About a month after the German occupation, the Minsk ghetto was established, and Efim and his family were imprisoned there. He witnessed Jews being murdered by gunfire, hanging and being put into gas vans. In 1943, Pinchas Dobin, Rachel's brother-in-law, and his sons dug a hiding place under the house next to the Jewish cemetery in the ghetto. The entrance to the hideout, intended for seven people, was through a stove. Pinchas placed food and water in the bunker.

In October 1943, when the Germans began to liquidate the Minsk ghetto, 26 people entered the bunker, including Efim, who was the youngest child there. They sat in almost complete darkness, distinguishing between day and night only by the faint light that entered through a small air hole. Rats tried to gnaw their fingers and toes.

After their food and water ran out, Efim's mother would leave the bunker and approach Russian acquaintances for food. Those in hiding began to die of thirst, hunger, weakness and disease, including Efim's grandmother. They were buried in the floor of the bunker. The soil was removed from the cemetery graves and sprinkled in the bunker, causing the floor to rise. The ceiling became lower and the bunker space kept shrinking. They stayed in the bunker for nine months.

On July 3, 1944, Minsk was liberated, and the group was discovered by Soviet soldiers. Only 13 of the 26 who entered the bunker survived. They did not have the strength to walk, and their vision was impaired from being in the dark for so many months. Soldiers carried them on stretchers to a hospital.

Efim was hospitalized for three months. After the war, his mother married Ya'acov Gimelshtein, a partisan whose entire family was murdered in the Holocaust. Ya'acov treated Efim like a son.

In 1992, Efim and his wife, Rivka, emigrated to Israel. He volunteers at Yad Vashem and tells his story to groups of Russian-speaking students.

Efim and Rivka have two sons and five grandchildren.

Malka Rendel

Malka Rendel, born in 1927 in the Hungarian town of *Nagyecsed*, was the youngest in an Orthodox family of eight. Malka's father, David-Aaron Freundlich, died before her birth, and her mother, Sarah, ran the family's fabric store after his death. Her two older siblings emigrated to Eretz Yisrael before World War II.

Upon entering the town in 1944, the

Germans closed Jewish-owned shops, forbade the Jews to trade, and ordered them to wear the yellow star. Malka was assigned the humiliating task of cleaning the street in front of her Hungarian friends.

In May 1944, the Jews of the city were deported to the *Mateszalka* ghetto. The entire extended family lived in one apartment. Three weeks later, Malka and her family were deported to Auschwitz in a cattle car — a journey of about six days.

On arrival, Malka tried to grab hold of her mother, but most of the family was sent to one side and Malka and her sisters, Miriam and Rachel, were sent to the other. Her mother gave her two cookies and told her sisters: "Take care of Malka." Of all the family members, only Malka, Miriam and Rachel survived the selection.

After three months, the girls were sent to the *Plaszow* concentration camp, where they labored in a quarry carrying stones with their bare hands, in the freezing cold. People around them were constantly killed by rock explosions. The three were returned to Auschwitz, and from there they were sent to *Neustadt*, a factory for weaving parachutes.

On Hanukkah, the women stole oil and threads to light makeshift candles. "It made it feel like home, that they didn't take everything from us," Malka says.

As the Red Army approached, Malka and her sisters were forced on a death march to the *Gross-Rosen* concentration camp. In order to survive, Malka imagined her mother, her home and the foods she used to eat.

Malka and her sisters were transferred to *Bergen-Belsen*, where Miriam and Rachel died. "That memory still haunts me," Malka cries. "Mother told them to look after me, and they gave me their bread. If I hadn't eaten it, maybe they would have survived.

"Sometimes I can't believe I went through all this. Then I roll up my sleeve and look at the number on my arm, which proves to me that it did happen."

After liberation, Malka was transferred to Sweden, where she was hospitalized. She took Zionism and Hebrew classes from emissaries who came from Eretz Yisrael, in a school established for the survivors. She became a teacher, and after retirement, she taught Hebrew to new immigrants.

Malka and Yehoshua have three daughters, 11 grandchildren, 36 great-grandchildren and one great-great grandson.

BY LEAH AARON,
The Jerusalem Post

FROM DOCUMENTATION TO SOCIAL MEDIA: EMPOWERING STUDENTS TO ANALYZE (MIS)INFORMATION

(Continued from page 2)

there is “divine beauty in learning.”

Marlene W. Yahalom, PhD, director of education of ASYV, spoke about the impor-

was discussed.

A commitment to the long-term goals of Holocaust education, memory and remembrance obligates us, as educators, to ad-

amplify hateful content; and finally, creating, sustaining and securing Holocaust memory and contributing to the solution.

These challenges are significant because they raise awareness and inspire us to ask more questions, permitting lessons to evolve, grow and continue.

The Arfa Professional Development Conference is a collaborative effort with the Association of Teachers for Social Studies of the United Federation of Teachers (ATSS/UFT), the UFT Jewish Heritage Committee/The Educators’ Chapter of the Jewish Labor Committee, the Educators’ Chapter of the UFT Jewish Heritage Committee, and the School of Education of Manhattanville College. The program this year also included an exhibit, created and developed by Yad Vashem, entitled “Architecture of Murder: the Auschwitz Birkenau Blueprints.” This educational resource, along with an array of additional traveling exhibitions, is available to schools to enrich their

educational programs on the Holocaust. For additional information please go to <https://www.yadvashemusa.org/traveling-exhibits/>



Caroline Herbst, UFT liaison and co-sponsor.

tance of this program in its efforts to raise Holocaust awareness through education, and offered suggestions and resources for enriching students’ knowledge and awareness on this important and timely subject. She explained that through our educational programs, we broaden our students’ understanding of the Holocaust as both a Jewish and a universal tragedy with a significant universal impact. The goal is to ensure that future generations understand the causes of the Holocaust and reflect upon its consequences. It is also our goal to safeguard students who might be exposed to manipulation and indoctrination through social media platforms.

The conference reinforced for all participants that for educators, the obligation is to teach students the importance of accurately recording historical events, because this is one of many ways to honor the memory of the victims. Determining how historical events should be presented and re-presented over time, and how to retrieve information from various kinds of resources available,



dress the challenges that exist in Holocaust education. These challenges include raising student awareness of the narratives of Holocaust denial and distortion;

empowering students to be aware of the problems; building resilience against the ideologies of hate through accurate knowledge, critical thinking, and digital literacy skills; promoting regulation of online platforms and breaking the cycle of efforts to



Stanley Stone, ASYV executive director, presenting a paper cut in honor of the 25 anniversary of the conference to Caroline Massel, ASYV Executive Committee board member as a gift to her and her family; alongside Marlene W. Yahalom, PhD, ASYV director of education.

For more information about ASYV educational programs, events, and traveling exhibitions, contact Marlene Warshawski Yahalom, PhD, director of education:
mwy@yadvashemusa.org.



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

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