

MARTYRDOM & RESISTANCE



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TEACHING TOLERANCE, UNDERSTANDING, AND UNITY

On March 11, 2007 over one hundred educators gathered at the Pratt Mansions in NYC for the American Society for Yad Vashem's Ninth Annual Professional Development Conference. Once again, this program was co-sponsored by the Association of Teachers of Social Studies of the United Federation of Teachers. Remarks on behalf of the

resource developed by Yad Vashem, The Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Authority, the Anti-Defamation League, and the USC Shoah Foundation Institute for Visual History and Education. We were pleased to welcome representatives from all three institutions. We were also very excited about having teachers from eight different

Vashem Jerusalem. They led the following workshops: 1) The Final Solution 2) Jewish Resistance 3) Survivors and Liberators 4) Perpetrators, Collaborators, and Bystanders and 5) The Ghettos.

The *Echoes and Reflections* curriculum is a comprehensive ten-lesson program that focuses on the history of the Holocaust within the context of contemporary issues. For example, it deals with cultural diversity, genocide, and intolerance. This year's conference tried to show educators how to utilize this innovative curriculum in their classrooms. The aim of the American Society for Yad Vashem hosting these education conferences is to transmit the lessons of this historical event to present and future generations. Teaching about the Holocaust in an age-appropriate and historically accurate manner will promote greater sensitivity and understanding to reduce the hatred, intolerance and prejudice prevalent in today's society. What also sets this particular curriculum apart from others is its use of testimonies. This is one of the first multi-media curricula to be used in classrooms. Educators can have the voice of those people who lived through the atrocities right in their classrooms by using the DVD or VHS provided with the curriculum.

As Shulamit Imber stated, it is so much more than just the words that these survivors use, it is the way their voices sound, they look in their eyes, and the posture of their bodies.

Studying the Holocaust is important to students today in a world of growing Holocaust denial and anti-Semitism. A curriculum like *Echoes and Reflections* will enable students to think about the responsibilities they have as individuals, when confronted with prejudice and intolerance. The holocaust provides a context for looking at the dangers of remaining silent in the face of the oppression of others. As Pastor Martin Neimoller said:

"When the Nazis came for the communists, I remained silent; I was not a communist.

When they locked up the social democrats, I did not speak out; I was not a social democrat.

When they came for the trade unionists, I did not speak out; I was not a trade unionist.

When they came for me, there was no one left to speak out."

The educators who attended this conference will be able to show their students the importance of social awareness, so that the words "Never Again" will ring true. As one participant



From left to right: Shulamit Imber, Director of Pedagogy of the International School for Holocaust Studies of Yad Vashem Jerusalem; Eli Zborowski, Chairman, American Society for Yad Vashem; Carolyn Herbst, past president of ATSS/UFT; Elizabeth Zborowski, Cultural Director of the American Society for Yad Vashem; Caroline Massel, co-chair of the Young Leadership Associates of the American Society for Yad Vashem at the 9th Annual Professional Development Conference.

president, Levi Anthony, were delivered by Ms. Carolyn Herbst, past president of ATSS/UFT. Remarks were also given by Caroline Massel, co-chair of the Young Leadership Associates of the American Society for Yad Vashem; as well as Mr. Eli Zborowski, Chairman of The American Society for Yad Vashem. Mr. Zborowski remarked that the American Society for Yad Vashem's Educational Department "works to put a face on individual Holocaust victims in order to introduce a human element to the story. Transmitting these messages is our hope for the future."

This year, we were once again highlighting the *Echoes and Reflections* curriculum. This is a valuable education

states represented at this year's conference.

The educational conference started with remarks from Shulamit Imber, Director of Pedagogy of the International School for Holocaust Studies of Yad Vashem Jerusalem. Her remarks, regarding the education philosophy of Yad Vashem, were found "insightful, compelling and passionate" by some conference participants. Other workshops during the day were also led by Dan Tarplin, Project Director of the A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE® Institute, Deborah Batiste, Project Director for *Echoes and Reflections*, and Stephanie McMahon-Kaye, Coordinator of the Desk for International Seminars in English at Yad



Conference participants looking over the curriculum at the 9th Annual Professional Development Conference.

noted, "Emphasizing the human element of the Holocaust allows for more thoughtful learning."

Many people can remember their teachers, they can remember the lesson they were taught. It is our hope that the teachers who attend the American Society for Yad Vashem's Educational Conferences will be remembered for the lessons that they are transmitting. It is our hope that they will go on and inspire their students, teaching them tolerance, understanding, and unity.

For more information regarding upcoming educational activities, please contact our office at 212-220-4304.

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CLAIMS CONFERENCE HONORED FOR PARTNERSHIP AND SUPPORT

In a tribute ceremony on November 29, Yad Vashem honored its longstanding friends and partners at the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany (Claims Conference) for their steadfast support of Yad Vashem's activities for more than 50 years.

Yad Vashem and the Claims Conference are now intending to enter into a new strategic partnership that will allow Yad Vashem to embark upon large-scale commemorative and educational

projects. "As the importance of passing on the legacy of the Holocaust grows over time, and with a view to the coming years, when the eyewitnesses will no longer be among us, we must look towards securing Holocaust remembrance for future generations," said Avner Shalev. "By supporting Holocaust education, research and documentation, the Claims Conference is fulfilling the last wishes of the Holocaust victims, expressed in the many letters and messages they left behind."

GERMANY TO COMPENSATE HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS

The German government plans to pay compensation to Holocaust survivors who worked in Jewish ghettos set up by the Nazis. Weekly magazine *Der Spiegel* said the government was making a second attempt to pay damages to surviving workers from the ghettos, who, unlike slave laborers compensated since 2000, generally earned a small, albeit often negligible, wage. In 2002, the

German parliament passed a law to grant these survivors a small pension, but the drive proved unsuccessful, due to bureaucratic complications in processing the claims. In view of this, German Chancellor Angela Merkel has now instructed the German finance ministry to settle the claims in a non-bureaucratic manner, and set up a fund based on the model used for the slave labor victims, the magazine said.

IRANIAN HOLOCAUST FOUNDATION DEMANDS DOCUMENTS ON JEWISH MASSACRE

The so-called Holocaust Foundation of Iran demanded from Austria, Germany and Poland that they submit documents related to the massacre of Jews during the Second World War.

The head of the Foundation, Mohammad-Ali Ramin, told IRNA that the documents were needed for the "fact-finding commission" to clarify the real extent of the Holocaust and the number of Jewish victims.

The fact-finding commission was formed during a Holocaust conference in Tehran last December, which had been attended by controversial historians challenging the extent of the mass killings of Jews by the German Nazi regime.

The conference had prompted widespread international criticism, and Ramin

is well-known for his anti-Semitic standpoints and sympathies for neo-Nazi groups. He has, however, no official position in Iran's political system.

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad had branded the Holocaust as a "fairy tale" and demanded the relocation of Israel to either Europe or America.

Ahmadinejad had not attended the Holocaust conference in Tehran, but welcomed the formation of the fact-finding commission at a reception of the participants.

Ahmadinejad had blamed the West for allegedly prohibiting any investigation into the Holocaust, while accepting insults against Muslim Prophet Mohammed in form of cartoons as part of freedom of expression.

HOLOCAUST MONUMENT AND JEWISH GRAVES DESECRATED IN ODESSA

A monument to Holocaust victims and hundreds of graves have been defaced with swastikas in a Jewish cemetery in Odessa, southern Ukraine, local police said.

Unidentified people desecrated the Holocaust monument with red swastikas and with an inscription: "Congratulations on the Holocaust."

"There are also swastikas on hundreds of graves, up to one thousand according to diverse information," Boleslav Kapulkin, a spokesman for Odessa's Jewish community, told reporters.

"It's a planned operation as the monument and the cemetery are in two different locations," he said.

He said such incident is rather rare in

the city, which is home of a large Jewish community since centuries.

The monument was erected at the site where thousands of Jews were killed and burned by the Nazis between 1941-1944. It is reported that police launched a probe

into the "hooliganism."

But Avraham Wolf, chief rabbi of Odessa and southern Ukraine, told EJP he rather believes that this act is "purely anti-Semitic."

Ukrainian sociologists recently expressed concern about a rise in xenophobic attitudes in the country over the last years.

Ukraine is home to about 450,000 Jews, one of the largest Jewish community in the world.



GERMAN CLERICS ENRAGE YAD VASHEM

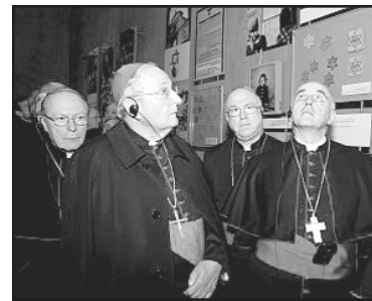
ETGAR LEFKOVITS, THE JERUSALEM POST

Yad Vashem lambasted a group of visiting German Catholic bishops for comparing the situation in the Palestinian territories with the Holocaust, calling the contentious remarks "political exploitation and demagoguery" and a gross distortion of history.

The sharp condemnation by Israel's Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Authority followed reports in the German press of comparisons made by senior German bishops between conditions in the Warsaw Ghetto during World War II and current conditions in Ramallah, resulting from Israeli military activities.

"The remarks illustrate a woeful ignorance of history and a distorted sense of perspective," Yad Vashem Chairman Avner Shalev wrote in a letter to Cardinal Karl Lehmann, who led the Conference of German Catholic Bishops on a 10-day visit to Israel and the Palestinian territories.

"Making analogies between the mass murder that was part of the plan to annihilate the Jewish people, carried out under the German Nazi regime and the current situation in Ramallah, and using words whose rhetorical power is immense, does nothing to help us understand what is going on today; such words only further poison the atmosphere making it that much more difficult to find workable solu-



German bishops during visit to Yad Vashem.

tions to deeply entrenched and thorny problems.

"These unwarranted and offensive comparisons serve to diminish the memory of victims of the Holocaust and mollify the consciences of those who seek to lessen European responsibility for Nazi crimes," he wrote.

The German bishops' bitterly contentious comparisons stunned Yad Vashem officials, who had hosted the senior Christian leaders just hours earlier.

"In the morning, we saw the pictures at Yad Vashem of the inhumane Warsaw Ghetto, while in the evening we were in the Ramallah Ghetto," Bishop Gregor Maria Franz Hanke reportedly said.

Another visiting bishop, Joachim Meisner, who serves as the Archbishop of Cologne, reportedly described the conditions at Israeli security checkpoints as "something done to animals, not to humans."

In his letter, the head of Yad Vashem noted the words of the late Pope John Paul II when he visited Yad Vashem in which he said "no one can diminish the scale" of the Holocaust.

"I urge all people to keep the Holocaust out of cheap political exploitation and demagoguery," Shalev wrote.

"Such use of the Holocaust misrepresents both today's reality as well as that of the Shoah; it distorts historical facts and context, and trivializes the memory of the Holocaust's victims and events," he concluded.

YAD VASHEM TEACHES JORDANIAN EDUCATORS

Yad Vashem secretly taught a group of Jordanian educators about the Holocaust.

Ya'acov Yaniv, a member of Yad Vashem's main school of Holocaust studies, told the media that a seminar was held at the Jerusalem museum for about a dozen Jordanian Muslim educators in 2006.

Yaniv told *Yediot Achronot* that he initiated the project after a chance conversation with

high-ranking Jordanian officials, and was surprised that they didn't reject the idea.

"They were not at all familiar with the subject of the Holocaust," Yaniv said.

"They did not know its influence on Israeli society and really knew almost nothing about us."

The seminar was given in Arabic and in English, and included a meeting with a Holocaust survivor.

FRANCE TAGS A NAZI COLLABORATOR: THE RAILWAY

A French court ruling has reopened the country's wartime record and revived a question that has shadowed it for years: Who should be held responsible for the mistreatment and deportation of French Jews during World War II?

An administrative tribunal in Toulouse, France, ruled that the state-owned railroad, the SNCF, was liable for its part in transporting some 76,000 Jews to transit centers in France and then on to Nazi

concentration camps.

The railroad did nothing to stop the operation, the court found, and on its own initiative, chose to cram its passengers into cattle cars in "abominable" conditions, with no food or water, for trips that lasted days.

It was the first time a French court had condemned a government institution, rather than an individual, in connection with Holocaust crimes.

VANDALS IN EASTERN POLAND BADLY DAMAGED HALF OF THE TOMBSTONES IN A JEWISH CEMETERY

Half of the 20 tombstones in the Jewish cemetery of Swidin were broken March 1, according to Albert Stankowski of the Foundation for the Preservation of Jewish Heritage in Warsaw.

"This was done during the same time as the Claims Conference was visiting in Poland, and I have no doubt that the act against the cemetery was related," he said. Stankowski was referring to a Claims Conference meeting with the government about compensation for Jewish property stolen by the Nazis and communists. "The articles in the press gave readers the feeling that the Jews were coming to take

their property away, and an evangelical priest in the town thinks the people who did this to the cemetery were reacting to that," he said.

It was the third time in five years that the cemetery was attacked. Last year, when three tombstones were damaged, Stankowski asked the regional prosecutor to investigate.

"The prosecutor told us it was the wind that caused the problem. So I brought it to a higher prosecutor and the case was still under investigation when this destruction happened, he said. "But I can tell you that the police have shown no interest in really investigating the case."

JUDGE ORDERS SS DEPORTATION

A U.S. judge ordered the deportation of a Wisconsin man who acknowledged his past as an SS death camp guard.

Josias Kumpf was stripped of his citizenship in 2005 after it was established that he concealed his SS past when emigrating from Austria to the United States in 1956. Last year, U.S. authorities launched deportation proceedings against him, and immigration judge Jennie Giambastiani issued the order in January. According to

a Justice Department release, Kumpf acknowledged his role as a guard at "Sachsenhausen Concentration Camp in Germany; at an SS labor camp in *Trawniki*, Poland, where 8,000 Jewish men, women, and children were murdered in a single day, as part of a two-day mass-murder operation involving 42,000 victims at three camps."

Kumpf, who says he never participated in the killings, plans to appeal. If deported, he has chosen to go to Germany.

VATICAN LAWYERS CLAIM NAZI REGIME VIOLATED NO LAW IN GENOCIDE OF 500,000 SERBS, JEWS AND ROMA

Lawyers for the Vatican Bank — including Pope Benedict's personal attorney — have argued that genocide committed in Croatia during the Second World War by a Nazi regime was permissible under international law.

In the ongoing lawsuit *Alperin v. Vatican Bank*, the Vatican Bank has filed a motion set for hearing in November which argues in part that the Vatican Bank is immune because the Nazi-backed Croatian regime did not violate international law by slaughtering 500,000 of its own citizens — Serbs, Jews, and Roma (Gypsies) in an ethnic cleansing campaign.

The Vatican Bank stands accused of the post-war laundering of the profits of genocide — including dental gold taken from the victims of the Nazi-backed Croatian regime known as the *Ustasha*.

Attorneys for the Holocaust survivors are outraged that the Vatican Bank suggests genocide and plunder are permissible acts under international law. Jonathan Levy, one of the attorneys for the Holocaust survivors, questions whether the Pope is even aware of what the bank's attorneys are proposing: "On the one hand, the Vatican is quick to condemn Israel and Serbia in recent years, but in essence, says its O.K. to butcher 500,000 people, steal their belongings and stash it in the Vatican Bank...Pope Benedict should be concerned that the moral integrity of his Papacy is being undermined in a Federal Court."

The lawsuit has been ongoing since 1999. Despite growing evidence of the Vatican Bank's complicity in criminal acts, the lawsuit has been resisted tenaciously by the Vatican Bank.

NAMES RECOVERY MONTH LAUNCHED IN ADVANCE OF HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE DAY

March-April 2007 has been designated *Names Recovery Month* by Yad Vashem. The month, including both Passover and Holocaust Remembrance Day (April 16), will be marked by local community campaigns to recover names of Holocaust victims. Thousands of Jewish communities will engage in this historical grassroots initiative.

Names Recovery Month is part of the overall 11th hour campaign calling upon people to memorialize Jews murdered in the Holocaust by recording their names, and when available, photos and other biographical data on Pages of Testimony. It has taken upwards of five decades to document over 3.1 million names currently listed in the online Central Database of *Shoah* Victims' Names. "Millions more names may be lost forever," warns Avner Shalev, Chairman of Yad Vashem. "Jewish communities play a key role by actively reaching out to the generation that best remembers before it is too late."

Thousands of posters and tens of thousands of Pages of Testimony are being distributed to synagogues, Holocaust centers, Jewish community centers, agencies, federations and schools globally in preparation for Names Recovery Month. Communities are enlisting volunteers to assist survivors and their families to complete Pages of Testimony.

Since the Names Database went online in November 2004, there have been over 11 million visitors, from 215 countries. Some 465,000 names and biographical details and nearly 5,000 photos have been added to the Database.

GERMAN COURT CONVICTS FIVE MEN FOR BURNING ANNE FRANK'S DIARY

A court in Magdeburg, Germany convicted five men of sedition for throwing a copy of Anne Frank's Diary onto a bonfire last year at a community party organized by neo-Nazis.

The men were each handed a suspended sentence of nine months' imprisonment. The court in Magdeburg also convicted the men, aged 24 to 29, of insulting the memory of the dead.

The Summer Solstice Party last summer in the small town of Pretzien caused uproar in Germany after it was revealed that the town mayor and police were also present and saw nothing wrong in the book and a US flag being burned amid applause by torch-waving neo-Nazis. Local policemen claimed they had never heard of Frank.

Denying the Holocaust is punishable in

Germany with up to five years' jail as sedition.

The men stood in a circle holding flaming torches and shouted "It's all alien," as the flag and book were hurled into the flames. Judge Eicke told the accused that burning Frank's book and calling it "alien" was the same thing as publicly approving the Holocaust.

"You insulted Anne Frank's human dignity," he told them. "That is overt racism." He said the bonfire was an echo of a public burning by Nazis in Berlin in 1933 of books which they intended to censor.

The director of the Anne Frank Centre in Berlin, Thomas Heppener, welcomed the ruling and praised the judge's "spectacular speech" to the accused. Judge Bruns dismissed the defense case that the men had just felt oppressed by Germany's evil past as "utter drivell."



Anne Frank

POLISH JEWRY MUSEUM TO BE CONSTRUCTED IN WARSAW

Construction on the long-awaited Museum of the History of Polish Jews will begin in the Polish capital next fall, and the museum's doors are expected to open within three years.

Warsaw's chief architect, Michal Borowski, confirmed that work on the multi-million-dollar multimedia facility would finally begin after more than a decade of preparation.

The museum will be built in an area of the city that was the center of Jewish life prior to World War II, but was then trans-

formed by the Nazis into the Warsaw Ghetto. It will focus not only on the Holocaust, but also on the 800 years of Jewish life in Poland that the Holocaust obliterated. Poland's Jewish community numbered some 3.5 million prior to World War II. However, the vast majority died in the Holocaust.

Financed by the Polish government, Warsaw City Council and private donors, the project will cost some \$55 million. It is expected to attract some 250,000 to 500,000 visitors each year.

YAD VASHEM AND FRIENDS FROM SPANISH SPEAKING COUNTRIES UNITE FOR HOLOCAUST SEMINAR

Thirty-two members of the Yad Vashem Friends Societies in Spain, Argentina, Venezuela, and Mexico participated in an informative and moving week-long seminar at the International School for Holocaust Studies at Yad Vashem. This is the first seminar for Friends Societies of Yad Vashem, and was initiated by the Association of Yad Vashem in Mexico. Participants met with Yad Vashem Chairman Avner Shalev, had the opportunity to explore the new museums at Yad Vashem, as well as the Visual Center and Learning Center, and to hear about new projects and initiatives from senior Yad Vashem staff. During the seminar, participants also heard interesting lectures on antisemitism, Holocaust



Participants in the first Yad Vashem seminar for members of Friends Societies of Yad Vashem with Yad Vashem Chairman Avner Shalev, (front row, fourth from right), MK Rabbi Michael Melchior (front, fifth from right) and Perla Haza, Director, Iberoamericana Desk, International Relations Division, Yad Vashem (front left)

denial, Holocaust education, the Righteous Among the Nations, technology in the service of memory, and met with Holocaust survivors, and family who had been reunited thanks to the Central Database of Shoah Victims' Names.

Among the participants were Judge Daniel Rafecas of Argentina who has been active in combating neo-Nazis in that country, and Dr Stephanie Kurian Fastlicht, president of the Association of Yad Vashem in Mexico who shared some of their experiences with the participants.

A number of participants are teachers in the Jewish schools.

The International School for Holocaust Studies is currently active in 22 countries and 11 languages.

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY BONDED WITH NAZIS

Columbia is one of our nation's most prestigious institutions of learning. But now, it's facing the ugliest of allegations.

"It's a disgrace," said Oklahoma Prof. Stephen Norwood, a Holocaust expert. "Horrible. Outrageous."

Norwood, considered an expert of Nazi Germany and the Holocaust, earned his doctorate in history from Columbia.

Norwood claims that at the height of Adolf Hitler's power in the mid 1930s, as the Third Reich removed Jewish professors and students from its universities, Columbia "enhanced" Hitler's regime by sending a school delegate to Germany to celebrate Heidelberg University's 550th

anniversary, a celebration attended by top Nazi officials.

"They displayed gross insensitivity to barbaric acts," Norwood said. "They were in a position to bring Nazi crimes to wider attention. They failed to take that opportunity."

Norwood lays the blame at the feet of then University president Nicholas Murray Butler — ironically, a former Nobel Peace Prize recipient — who he said hosted a German ambassador at Columbia shortly after the Nazis came to power in 1933. "They were used by the Nazis on several occasions to enhance Nazi prestige," Norwood said.

ARAB NOMINATED AS RIGHTEOUS GENTILE

A Tunisian farmer was the first Arab nominated for Yad Vashem's Righteous Gentile designation.

Ha'aretz reported that the efforts of Khaled Abd al-Wahab, a Tunisian farmer who died in 1997, were discovered by historian Robert Satloff.

Some 60 Muslims are among the more than 20,000 Righteous Gentiles already named by the Holocaust museum and memorial in Jerusalem, but no Arabs.

Satloff, executive director of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, attributed this partly to historians' lack of research in the area, and also to some

Arab rescuers' desire not to be found, since the Holocaust, which made plain the Jews' need for their own state, has become a touchy subject in the Arab world.

Survivor Anny Boukris told Satloff how Wahab hid her and 24 relatives on his farm.

Boukris, who was 11 at the time, wrote that Wahab risked his life when he stopped a German officer from raping her mother.

Satloff traveled to the farm and interviewed witnesses, who verified Boukris' testimony.

AUSTRIA SEEKS HEIRS FOR ARTWORKS STOLEN BY NAZIS

A fund for victims of the Nazi annexation of Austria is looking for the owners of thousands of artworks lying in national museums, which are waiting to be returned to their mainly Jewish owners or their heirs.

Hannah Lessing, the secretary general of the Austrian National Fund for the victims of National Socialism, told *Agence France Presse* that 2,600 artworks out of 10,000 have already found their rightful owner since the works were listed on the Internet several months ago.

The works include paintings, manuscripts, musical scores, sculptures, and furniture.

The works for whom owners cannot be

found will be auctioned off, and the benefits given to survivors of the Nazi Holocaust, Lessing said.

The fund, which was created in 1995, is the main agency in Austria dealing with the restitution of stolen artworks. It deals not only with property which needs to be returned, but also distributes money to compensate the victims of Nazism.

So far, the fund has paid out a total 180 million euros, or about 5,000 euros to each Austrian survivor of the Holocaust. It has also paid compensation to Austrians who were thrown out of their homes by the Nazis, as well as holders of life insurance, bank accounts and stolen savings accounts.



BOOK REVIEWS

HIDING IN THE OPEN

Hiding in the open. By Zenon Neumark. Valentine Mitchell, 2006. 216 pp. \$23.50

REVIEWED BY TOM TUGEND

Whole libraries are filled with accounts of the Holocaust, with eyewitness reports by victims, perpetrators and bystanders, together with analyses by historians and fictionalized versions by novelists.

Rarer are accounts by those, mostly young Jewish men and women, who took their fates into their own hands, passed over to the "other" side to survive as clandestine "Aryans" or resistance fighters.

One of the more readable and convincing of such recollections is by Zenon Neumark, a retired aerospace engineer, who waited until his late 70s to write his story.

Neumark was barely 15 when Nazi armies occupied his native Lodz in September, 1939. He was 20, and living in Vienna, when Soviet troops liberated him in April 1945.

During those long years, he lived as a Polish Catholic with forged papers, escaped from two forced labor camps, joined two resistance groups, was betrayed by some friends and saved by some strangers, among them Jews, Poles and ethnic Germans, and helped others to survive.

To assure his own survival, Neumark enjoyed certain advantages. He was young and strong, could pass as a non-Jew, spoke fluent Polish without Yiddish inflections, was immensely resourceful and had a great deal of luck.

His greatest fear and nemesis were not the Gestapo or Polish anti-Semites, but

gangs of blackmailers, which infested Warsaw and other cities, robbing hidden Jews of their last belongings and denouncing those who sheltered them.

Living as a Polish worker, Neumark draws a detailed picture of "normal" daily life under Nazi occupation, and a vivid portrait of the Viennese, who within a few days after their city fell to the Red Army, were back at their theaters, concert halls and ballrooms.

While Neumark did not experience the horrors of the concentration camps, he describes unsparingly the bloody slaughter of Polish underground fighters during the 1944 Warsaw uprising, one year after the heroic Jewish defense of the ghetto.

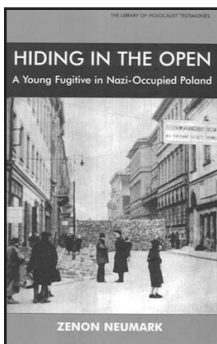
He devotes three chapters to his work with two non-Jewish Polish resistance groups, one left-wing, the other right-wing. Neumark acknowledges that not all Jews could have followed his escape choice and undertake the lonely risks of seeking daily shelter, food and work, while facing constant exposure.

But many who were otherwise equipped to take the risks were deterred by the comforting presence of family and friends in the ghetto, a reassuring daily routine, and an inability to imagine what was in store for them.

In the end, those who took their chances vastly increased their odds for survival. In Warsaw alone, according to the best statistics, 28,000 Jews lived outside the ghetto on the Polish side, either in hiding or with false papers. Of these, 41 percent survived the war, compared to only 3 percent of camp inmates.

Neumark is an engineer, not a professional writer, and the book is much the better for it. He tells his story without literary embellishments, honestly and straightforward, and with self-deprecating humor.

"Hiding in the Open" is part of the excellent London-based Library of Holocaust Testimonies, whose eminent editors include historian Sir Martin Gilbert.



SCORCHED: A COLLECTION OF SHORT STORIES ON SURVIVORS

Scorched: A Collection of Short Stories on Survivors. By Irit Amiel. Translated from the Hebrew by Riva Rubin.

The Library of Holocaust Testimonies. Valentine Mitchell, London, 2006. 93 pp.

REVIEWED BY DR. DIANE CYPKIN

In all the years this reviewer has critiqued books for *M&R* – more than fifteen years – she has never felt the need to comment on the title of a book. But, this book's main title deserves comment. It is so very right. The Holocaust was a roaring fire that ruthlessly consumed its prey. And even those it didn't consume, but merely touched, were Scorched!

Additionally, in all the years this reviewer has critiqued books for *M&R*, she has generally critiqued non-fiction works. But, like The Library of Holocaust Testimonies that has published this work under the auspices of Valentine Mitchell, and has previously only published non-fiction, *Scorched: A Collection of Short Stories on Survivors* by Irit Amiel, is a deserved exception. For, indeed, the slim volume is exceptional. Its stories are unforgettable, poignantly told, simple, yet powerful, each and every one . . .

Thus, for example, *Scorched* begins with a piece entitled, "Leaf from a Diary." Here, a woman remembers how, at the age of eleven, she was smuggled out of a Polish ghetto – never to see her father, her mother, or her childhood again. She remembers the look of the mournful street that autumn day. She remembers how her father tried so very hard to tell her, as casually as he could, that they had to get to the Jewish Hospital "as soon as possi-

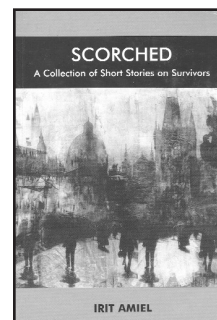
ble." She remembers the shots fired by a Ukrainian soldier as they went on their way, mortally terrified, to the appointed getaway place. Finally, since that day, she revealingly and sadly notes, she has never felt "at home" in her life again . . .

Interestingly, in "Batya," a woman born Basie, orphaned as a child in Auschwitz, "appears" to all the world "un-scorched." She gets to Israel with an adoring companion, Aaron, also a survivor. She marries him. They have a family. And yet, something is very wrong. Something spiritual . . . A something is missing that cannot be retrieved and trying doesn't help. The end is sad and real and not "prettified" for those looking for "happily ever after" endings.

Meanwhile, in "Contemporary Tangle," the child of a survivor feels the consequences of a parent's "scorching." Set in Israel, Naomi joyfully comes to visit her son, Boaz, in Eilat. He is serious about a beautiful, blond young lady, Ruth, who looks Danish. But Ruth is German, and sees the numbers tattooed on Naomi's arm. How will it end? Will Boaz and Ruth marry? What about how Naomi feels? Will the love Naomi bears for her son mitigate her feelings vis-à-vis Ruth? The story is gripping, and the end, thought-provoking. In fact, it makes one wonder what they would do.

Surely, Irit Amiel's own memories and the memories of the many she spoke to, all survivors and witnesses of the Holocaust, ground this volume and make it valuable. Surely, too, the fact that all survivors were "scorched" – some more, some less – and that Ms. Amiel brings to the fore the consequences of that experience in so many ways, makes this work even more valuable to us.

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



I WAS A CHILD OF HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS

I Was a Child of Holocaust Survivors. By Bernice Eisenstein. McClelland & Stewart, 2006. 187 pp. \$32.99

REVIEWED BY STAN MACK

In the old days, that is, when I was young, life for the book reader was simple. There were books, and there were illustrated books. Of course, there were always pulpy comic books, but they were mainly adventure stories for boys, and were generally considered a disposable item. Today, bookstores trumpet a new section, "Graphic Novel." Okay, but what exactly is a graphic novel?

Over the past several years, a number of books — notably Art Spiegelman's Holocaust saga *Maus* and Marjane Satrapi's Iranian political memoir *Persepolis* — have broken new publishing ground by using comic-strip formats to tell serious stories. They, combined with the aggressive campaign by comic-strip devotees to have comic strips accepted as a legitimate art form, have caught the attention of publishers fighting to keep competitive in the new multimedia universe. Witness the transmogrification of my old pal, the pulpy comic, into the serious,

adult graphic novel, which apparently has to look like an uptown comic book. Or does it?

I have in front of me *I Was a Child of Holocaust Survivors*. It's a memoir in which Bernice Eisenstein examines her love for and anger toward her parents, who met in Auschwitz. She speaks of her torment growing up in Toronto as the child of survivors whose relationship with their children may well have been permanently scarred by their horrendous experiences. She searches for connections to her parents' past, a past they will not look at, never mind interpret for her. Her goal is to get closer to an understanding of what they lived through and, in the process, to find some peace for herself.

There is a large body of literature to which this book belongs. However, there's

something different here. The book is filled with the author's cartoony drawings, comic strips and word balloons in a wild array of sizes, shapes and layouts.

Eisenstein's book is not a comic book-y graphic novel (a meaningless term, anyway, since many of them are not novels). Nor is it an illustrated book (the traditional book illustration elaborates on a particular moment in the narrative, but doesn't move the story forward). We could, instead, call hers a hybrid, but there aren't any shelves in the bookstore labelled "hybrid." This book is in the language of the author, a writer and an artist, who has chosen a particular way to tell her story. Must we chase around looking for new genre labels to fit each variation of words and pictures?

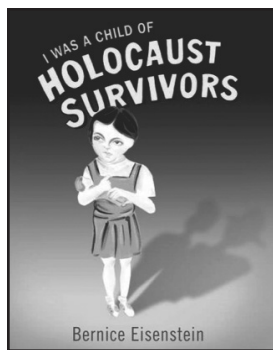
For argument's sake, allow me to redefine a graphic book. It is a novel, memoir, history or documentary that tells its story equally in words and visuals, and does a richer job than either art form would by itself. By this definition, each "graphic" work would be evaluated in terms of its combined power to inform and move the reader, rather than by its adherence to the purity of a grid system.

Now, we can look at Eisenstein's book for what it is, rather than for what it isn't. She presents some of her story in a traditional narrative. One example: She describes how, growing up, she traded on her status as the child of survivors to gain attention and privileges — and even dates.

At the same time, her drawings communicate some ideas faster and better than words. In one drawing that sprawls across a spread, she draws herself as a child, artist's brush in hand, speaking to the reader. She's pointing to her drawing of her mother, grandmother and aunt, now looking matronly and well-fed in 2002, displaying the consecutive numbers branded onto their arms at Auschwitz.

The problem with artists who both write and draw is that they may do one better than the other. In Eisenstein's case, I sometimes struggled with her sentences. She seemed to feel compelled to add extra words, possibly in the belief that we might otherwise miss the message. "How is one able to regain connection, belonging, when all that was as innocent as being alive has been taken away," she

(Continued on page 13)



HOLOCAUST HEROINE'S SURVIVAL TALE

BY ADAM EASTON, BBC

Irena Sendlerowa recently celebrated her 97th birthday in her small room in a Warsaw nursing home.

Among the flower-bearing well-wishers were a number of people who owe their lives to this tiny, courageous woman.

They were among the estimated 2,500 Jewish children Mrs. Sendlerowa and a small group of social workers rescued from the Warsaw ghetto during World War II.

She is a Polish Catholic who risked her life to save Jews during the Holocaust.

For doing so, she was awarded the title of Righteous Among the Nations by Yad Vashem, Israel's Holocaust remembrance authority.

Unlike her fellow Righteous, German industrialist Oskar Schindler, who was immortalized in Steven Spielberg's film *Schindler's List*, few people have heard of Irena Sendlerowa.

RISKS

When the war broke out Warsaw was home to 1.3 million people, of whom 380,000 were Jews, making it the largest Jewish community in the world outside New York. The Nazis moved quickly to identify and isolate the city's Jewish population.

Jewish-owned businesses had to be clearly marked and Jews had to wear armbands with the Star of David. Then, on 15 November 1940, Warsaw's German Governor Ludwig Fischer officially created the ghetto.

More than 10 miles of brick walls, up to

10ft high and topped with broken glass, had been built to segregate Warsaw's Jews.

Within a couple of months, almost 400,000 people were confined to an area roughly the size of New York's Central Park in appalling conditions.

At the time, Irena Sendlerowa was a 30-year-old nurse who worked for the city's health and care department. Since 1939 she had been taking enormous risks giving Jews food and shelter. The penalty for helping Jews in Nazi-occupied Poland was death. It was a threat that was often carried out.

But she recruited a group of her social worker colleagues to rescue children from the ghetto.

"I was brought up to believe that a person must be rescued when drowning, regardless of religion and nationality," she said.

Mrs. Sendlerowa and a colleague, Irena Schultz, were allowed to enter the ghetto using special work passes. They smuggled children out in ambulances, through the sewers, or through a courthouse on the edge of the ghetto, which had a passage leading to the "Aryan" side.

TORN APART

In July 1942, the Nazis began the mass deportation of Warsaw's Jews to the

Treblinka death camp in north east Poland. During that summer, 300,000 were murdered.

Persuading parents to part with their loved ones was particularly traumatic.



Irena Sendlerowa with Eli Zborowski, Chairman of the American and International Societies for Yad Vashem, during his visit to Poland in February/

Mrs. Sendlerowa could give no guarantee the child would survive.

"That was when we witnessed infernal scenes. Father agreed but mother didn't. Grandmother cuddled the child very tenderly and, weeping bitterly, said 'I won't give away my grandchild at any price'.

"We sometimes had to leave such unfortunate families without taking their children from them. I went there the next day to see what the whole building had come to and often found that everyone had been taken for transport to the death camps," she said.

The children were first taken to emer-

gency safe houses, where they were taught basic Catholic rituals to pass as Poles until a family could be found to take them in.

"I once carried such a tearful, broken-hearted little boy to other guardians when he asked me, crying and sobbing, 'Please tell me how many mums can you have, for this is the third one I'm going to'," she said.

EXECUTION FOILED

In December 1942, the Polish underground set up *Zegota*, the Council of Assistance for Jews. Mrs. Sendlerowa became the head of its children's department. She had noted the names of all of the rescued children on cigarette papers and sealed them in two bottles.

In April 1943, several thousand of the remaining Jews in the ghetto rose up against the Germans. Armed with hand guns, grenades and home-made bomb launchers, they held an SS brigade at bay for three weeks. By mid-May the ghetto was a giant field of rubble.

Mrs. Sendlerowa continued her work, but on October 20, 1943, she was arrested at her home. She was taken to the notorious Gestapo headquarters in central Warsaw and tortured. During the sessions, they broke her legs and feet, but she refused to reveal any names.

"I still carry the marks on my body of what those 'German supermen' did to me then. I was sentenced to death," she said.

Zegota managed to foil the plan after they bribed a Polish-speaking German (Continued on page 14)

POSTWAR GERMAN GOVERNMENT AND CIA SHIELDED NAZI CRIMINALS

The recent publication of some 27,000 pages of secret CIA documents has brought to light new details regarding the close ties between the political elite in post-war Germany and leading Nazis who survived the collapse of the Third Reich.

The publication is a result of a 1999 US law, which had been opposed by the CIA, that regulates the release of US government documents concerning German and Japanese war crimes. The historian Timothy Naftali from the University of Virginia, who has seen the documents, discovered that the West German government under Konrad Adenauer had known the secret whereabouts of Adolf Eichmann since at least 1958 and had covered this up. The CIA had also shielded the Nazi mass murderer from prosecution.

The documents published by the CIA make clear that both the German and American governments had shielded Eichmann for a long time in order to protect the Nazi elements that they were deploying against the Soviet Union in the Cold War.

A memo to the CIA by a German secret service operative on March 19, 1958, noted that, according to reports, Eichmann had been living in Argentina since 1952 under the pseudonym Ricardo Clement.

Eichmann escaped from an American internment camp in 1945. He then lived in Germany for several years, using forged papers. In 1950, he, like many other Nazis, went to Argentina along the so-called rat line, receiving help from the Vatican. Somewhat later, he was joined by his family, and they lived undisturbed in Buenos Aires.

The references to Eichmann were not followed up by the German or American secret services because it was feared he might divulge information about Hans Globke, a lawyer in Hitler's Interior Ministry and the author of a commentary on the Nazi's notorious Nuremberg race laws. Following the war, Globke became an undersecretary of state in Germany, and was regarded as the grey (in reality, brown) eminence of the Adenauer chancellorship.



Adolf Eichmann

WHO WAS GLOBKE?

Unlike Eichmann, the lawyer Hans Globke had not fled abroad after the Second World War, but had risen to become an undersecretary of state and security advisor to Chancellor Adenauer. He was regarded as the Chancellor's right-hand man, and was responsible for the fact that numerous old Nazis gained prominent posts in the Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany). Adenauer stood by Globke throughout his term in office, which ended in 1963.

Globke came from a rich Catholic household, studying law after the First World War. He attained his doctorate in 1922 and three years later was deputy chief of police in Aachen. In 1929, he entered the Prussian Interior Ministry, and by 1932 had already risen within the Reich Interior Ministry, where he was

active until 1945. In this position, he was the co-author with William Stuckart of the first commentary on the Nuremberg race laws. After the Nazis had seized Slovakia in 1939 as a so-called protectorate, Globke was involved in the elaboration there of the *Codex of Jewish Law*, a euphemism for the expropriation and repression of the Jewish population.

After 1945, Globke denied having any close involvement with the Nazi regime. But he was by no means a mere fellow traveler, as he claimed. Working in the Prussian Interior Ministry even before Hitler came to power in 1933, Globke had ordered that Efforts by Jewish persons to mask their Jewish origins by changing their Jewish names cannot therefore be supported.

People who sought assistance from him for their relatives during the war were harshly rejected and threatened against continuing to support Jews and Poles. Globke could not deny his authorship of the commentary on the Nuremberg race laws, printed by the C.H. Beck publishing house (*Commentary on the German Race Legislation*, Munich and Berlin, 1936). Globke's text contains among other things the following remark: The dramatic decline in feeling for the purity of blood in the decades before the radical change [Hitlers coming to power] appears to urgently demand social intervention. He also wrote: "The Jews must resign themselves to the fact that their influence on the organization of German life is gone forever."

Globke also classified the degrees of Jewishness in his commentary: The three-eighths Jew, who possesses one full-Jewish and one half-Jewish grandparent,

is considered as a half-breed with a full-Jewish grandparent, the five-eighths Jew, with two full-Jewish grandparents and one half-Jewish grandparent, is a half-breed with two full-Jewish grandparents.

After the Second World War, Globke maintained that he had merely commented on the laws, and claimed that he bore no responsibility for their development or implementation. This was a lie. His superior, Nazi Interior Minister Wilhelm Frick, who was condemned to death in the 1946 Nuremberg trials, had issued the following testimonial on Globke in 1938: Senior government advisor Globke is unquestionably among the most capable and most efficient officials in my ministry.

Adenauer's right-hand man was involved in the elaboration, formulation and application of laws whose consequence was the final solution of the Jewish question i.e., genocide in Auschwitz and elsewhere.

THE CIA, THE ADENAUER AND THE NAZIS

Globke was, however, only one of many. The names of the high-ranking officials, judges, state lawyers, SS men and Nazi party members of the Third Reich who continued their careers in the Federal Republic of Germany, more or less without interruption, would fill volumes. Here are only some.

Hermann Josef Abs was a member of the executive board of the Deutsche Bank from 1938 to 1945. Among other things, he was jointly responsible for the *Arianization* (expropriation) of Jewish businesses and banks. After the war, he was deeply involved in the setting up of (Continued on page 13)

SURVIVORS' CORNER

HOLOCAUST STILL HAUNTS CHILDREN OF SURVIVORS

BY TIM SHUFELT

Growing up in Hungary following the Second World War, Eva Dojc said each Christmas her father would drag a tree into their courtyard apartment, making sure all the neighbors could see. It stood in a corner, undecorated, for a couple of weeks until her father dragged it back out again.

When the family escaped to Canada in the fall of 1956, nine-year-old Eva asked her father whether they would be getting a tree.

"No, we don't need a tree," her father said. "We're Jewish."

Ms. Dojc's father, who was forced into a labor camp during the war, lost his parents and one of his sisters in the Holocaust. Her mother survived Auschwitz, but her mother's parents, two brothers and two sisters were killed. After liberation, with the oppression and massacres fresh in their minds, her parents concealed their ethnicity and religion for fear of further persecution.

Ms. Dojc said she has adopted a similar instinct over time.

"The antenna is up," said Ms. Dojc, one of the organizers of a conference in Toronto for adult children of Holocaust

survivors. "When you're vulnerable, why increase your vulnerability?"

Another organizer, Margie Levitt, also a child of Holocaust survivors, said she agrees.

Ms. Levitt said she was prompted to change her behavior by an incident that took place 21 years ago this month aboard an Italian cruise ship. On Oct. 7, 1985, heavily armed Palestinian terrorists hijacked the Achille Lauro near Egypt. Leon Klinghoffer, a disabled Jewish retiree from New York, was shot and thrown overboard, along with his wheelchair.

"Up until then I always wore a little *mezuzah* that was given to me when I was 12," Ms. Levitt said. "I took it off that day and never put it back on."

Paula David, a social worker at the Baycrest Wagman Centre, a long-term care facility in Toronto that houses one of the largest populations of Holocaust survivors in North America, said that those sentiments echo those of other survivor families.

"If you have intimately experienced oppression, ranging from personal insults to someone wanting to annihilate you, you are going to be cautious of how you present yourself," Ms. David said. "You don't have an automatic sense of trust, and

many have experienced anti-Semitism to validate that feeling."

Ms. Dojc said there are certain triggers that should be avoided in the company of survivors, like references to "showers." The sight of dogs can also conjure up painful memories for some.

One should also keep a close eye on possible health problems. In many of the camps in Europe, the sick were automatically killed. "So maybe they don't tell you they're sick until it's too late," Ms. Dojc said.

The conference held a panel discussion on returning to places in Europe where Jews were persecuted and massacred.

Ms. Levitt, for example, said in 2001 she returned to Poland, where her mother spent three years in a slave labor camp that produced munitions.

"In Krakow, I saw beautiful iron works, like the Star of David, and beautiful synagogues.... There was a square with restaurants serving Jewish food. It's all Jewish. The only thing missing were the Jews," she said, clutching a tissue. "It was haunting."

Her father's two brothers survived the Holocaust, but her mother lost her entire family, Ms. Levitt said, examining the framed pictures in her Forest Hill home.

She picked up a framed black-and-white photo of a naked baby sleeping. "That was my mother's nephew. He was six or seven when he was gassed."

The conference, held every three years, provides a forum for survivor children to forge bonds, Ms. David said, adding that they share a sense of community that others might find difficult to understand.

"Most of them feel quite privileged and quite lucky to be in this world. The plan in 1945 was that this whole generation would not exist," she said.

But Ms. Levitt is eager to dispel the stereotype that survivor children are emotionally damaged or dysfunctional.

After she was born, her father's two younger brothers lived with her until she was six years old.

"So here I was, an only child born after the war to four survivors. I was never spoiled materially, but with love and affection," Ms. Levitt said. "I have always known what's important in life," she said.

Ms. Dojc said the literature on the subject, mostly case studies of people in therapy, can be misleading.

"The people that never go for help, they don't write case studies about," she said.

First published in the National Post

FRENCH RAILROAD SUED OVER HOLOCAUST

BY MARY PAPANFUSS

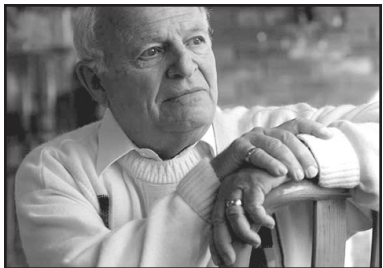
Ernest Hirsch was a scared 9-year-old in a French children's home the last time he heard from his mother.

The boy had been rescued from the French internment camp Rivesaltes in 1941, but his parents were still trapped there when his mother, Lisa Kirchheimer, wrote that they were about to be moved.

"She said not to worry; that we would see each other again. She said she loved me," recalled Hirsch, a retired operations research analyst who lives in Orinda.

Shortly after Hirsch got that letter, his parents were forced onto a train headed for death. When they arrived at Auschwitz, "they were marched directly to the gas chambers and killed," he said.

Hirsch, 75, is one of more than 100 Americans who have joined a groundbreaking legal action here against the French railway *Société Nationale des Chemins de Fer* (SNCF), which transported thousands of Jews during World War II to transit hubs on their way to their deaths. It's the same state-owned



Ernest Hirsch of Orinda, one of more than 100 Americans participating in a French suit, was rescued from a French internment camp as a boy.

against the railroad, half of them from survivors who now live in the United States.

"This is a critical issue for the French — and the world," said Corinne Hershkovitch, one of the Paris attorneys involved. "It's not only an issue of money, but one of responsibility. What role did the SNCF play in this crime?"

The case could be one of the last significant legal actions on behalf of Holocaust survivors, many of whom have already died of old age. Germany and German businesses have paid billions of dollars — much of it the result of court cases — in insurance claims, restitution for seized property and bank accounts, as well as compensation to slave laborers and victims' families. European insurance companies and Swiss banks have been sued for failing to honor obligations to survivors of their Jewish customers. Four years ago, the U.S. Supreme Court threw out a 1999 California law requiring insurance firms licensed to do business in the state to account for

World War II-era policies they or their affiliates sold in Europe from 1920 to 1945.

The Toulouse finding is the first such ruling against the French republic or one of its agencies. In 2001, French banks reached a multimillion-dollar settlement with Holocaust victims in a suit brought by a New York law firm. The French government also voluntarily pays a pension to current and former French residents orphaned by Nazi atrocities.

Like Hirsch, retired engineer Manfred

Wildmann, 76, of Menlo Park, was freed from a French camp and taken to a children's home. His parents also died at Auschwitz. The day he left them, he said, "I remember sitting on a truck with other kids. My mother was standing below, crying."

The path was cleared for the latest lawsuits with a ruling in June concerning relatives of European Parliament member Alain Lipietz, who were shipped to a transit hub outside Paris, but were freed by the Allies.

The judges held that SNCF administrators failed to protest the transports — and failed to prove they were under duress not to protest. The ruling said the railway moved family members in a manner "incompatible with human dignity," without food, water or "minimal hygienic conditions." It also noted that Lipietz's relatives were transported, as deportees typically were at the time, packed into a cattle car — yet the SNCF billed for passengers at third-class rates, and continued to charge the French government even after the country was liberated from Nazi domination.

The suits have deeply divided the French Jewish community. SNCF officials argue that the agency had no choice but to follow the orders of the Germans and the collaborationist Vichy government. It's a position supported by some French historians, who have also expressed concern about a backlash against the Jewish community.

Paris attorney Arno Klarsfeld, son of

famed French Nazi hunters Serge and Beate Klarsfeld, wrote in *Le Monde* newspaper following the June decision that the deportations were an "authoritative act of state from which the SNCF could not shrink."

For Abe Dresdner, 78, of Brooklyn, whose family managed to survive the war, the "French were as bad as the Gestapo." French police and rail workers "stole everything from us except the clothes on our backs," he said.

Others in the suit, like Wildmann, are more ambivalent about the culpability of the French railway, but believe the litigation may serve to shed light on the issue. "I don't know how much freedom the French (running the SNCF) had to choose," he said.

A similar case against the French railroad was filed several years ago in New York, but the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the French agency was protected by the Foreign Sovereign Immunities Act. Ironically, the SNCF does not have the same protection in France. American law does allow exceptions, including suits seeking restitution for stolen property.

"That means you can sue in a U.S. court if Mommy lost her handbag when she was forced on the train in France, but not if she lost her life at Auschwitz," said New York attorney Harriet Tamen, who is representing some 500 clients against the SNCF in a class action case seeking restitution for stolen property.

Meanwhile, time for payback is running out for Holocaust survivors.

"My baby sister is one of the youngest survivors and she's already 67," said Dresdner. "We've been waiting a long time."

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New York attorney Harriet Tamen is seeking restitution for stolen property for 500 clients.

FIGHT AGAINST TIME TO PRESERVE AUSCHWITZ

BY CHRIS JOHNSON, JTA

Over 60 years of winter snow, summer drought and millions of visitors have taken a heavy toll on the former Nazi death camp.

Just as survivors visiting the camp dwindle each year, so time is bearing down on the prison buildings, the rusting barbed-wire fencing and remnants of the gas chambers left behind when the Germans fled in January 1945.

Evidence of the victims — hair, spectacles, children's toys and other belongings — is also falling to pieces, eaten away by insects and mildew, its disappearance giving slow support to those who try to deny the Holocaust ever happened.

Unless conservation is stepped up, there may soon be little left of the biggest graveyard in Europe, where up to 1.5 million men, women and children, mostly Jews, were slaughtered.

Now, new management at the camp, covering 470 acres on two sites near Oswiecim in southern Poland, is accelerating work and hiring more staff to slow the deterioration and save the site as a lesson for future generations.

"If there is one place in the world that should be kept as a reminder of the consequences of racism and intolerance, it is this one," said Piotr Cywinski, who took over as director of Auschwitz in September. "But it gets more difficult every year."

One of the many problems facing Cywinski and his 260 staff members at the site, now a museum, is that Auschwitz

was not built to last. The concentration camp known as Auschwitz was actually two camps, and both are suffering serious problems.

"NOT STONES — BONES"

Auschwitz I, a stone and brick-built Polish military base used by the Nazis to house Polish political prisoners, was hastily enlarged with forced labor, using the cheapest possible materials after Germany invaded Poland in 1939.

Auschwitz II Birkenau, two miles away, was a specially built killing factory thrown up in 1943 for the mass murder of Jews, gypsies, homosexuals

and other minorities.

Linked directly to Europe's railway network by a special siding to speed up the murders, the Nazis used it to expedite their plans for a "Final Solution" to "the Jewish problem."

Parts of the Birkenau site are built from the remains of demolished Polish villages and stable blocks and these have survived. But many other buildings have already disappeared.

Most wooden huts were removed after the war for use as temporary shelters. And the strongest of the buildings, the concrete gas chambers and crematoriums, were blown up by the guards before their retreat. These ruins have collapsed, undermined by rising ground water, flooding and erosion.

The area around the gas chambers is cordoned off with tape, but still accessible to the public, some of whom clamber over the rubble. Some visitors even remove relics and artifacts.



The main entrance to Birkenau viewed from the unloading ramp.

The ash pits, where the remains of many victims were dumped, lie open to the elements and the ground, trampled by visitors. The area around them is studded with what look like tiny white stones.

"Not stones — bones," explains Jarek Mensfelt, a linguist and senior guide at the museum. "Tiny fragments of human bones. It is terrible that tourists can tread on human remains."

Cywinski is acutely aware of the deficiencies of the museum, but is constrained by money and the physical limitations imposed by the scale of the site.

HAIR AND SHOES

Various grandiose ideas — including one for a giant dome — have been rejected on grounds of cost, and because any major construction would destroy some of the area and alter it.

Smaller-scale enclosures to protect the buildings would be possible, but even these would be expensive and would have to be agreed by all the groups that protect the site.

"Tens of millions of dollars, more, would be needed to do all the work," said Cywinski. But money is not the main problem: the Polish government has provided large sums and there are a number of international donors.

Time itself is the enemy, eroding the site and its contents.

"Conservationists are like doctors: we can extend life, but not for eternity," said Cywinski, who opposes any suggestion

that decaying original artifacts should be replaced by copies.

Faded and frail, two metric tons of hair shorn from victims is piled up in one cell block: once blonde plaits, black pony-tails and auburn curls, it is gradually decaying and now looks like gray wire wool.

CRY OF DESPAIR

The museum has had more luck with its 80,000 shoes, mostly odd. Chief conservationist Rafal Pioro and his staff of 38 invited school children to help clean and polish some of them.

But there are so many, most still have to be stored in a warehouse without air-conditioning. Slowly, most are falling apart.

"The work is endless and painstaking and can be heart-rending," said Pioro.

"When we were working on the children's shoes, some of us were crying all the time."

Workers at Auschwitz are struggling to slow the aging of the camp and keep it as a lesson on the evils of anti-Semitism.

They aim, in the words of a plaque near the gas chambers, to keep Auschwitz as "a cry of despair and a warning to humanity."

Israel Gutman, a former Auschwitz prisoner and adviser to the Yad

Vashem Holocaust Institute in Israel, is determined the camp will be conserved as long as possible, whatever the cost.

"There are still people who claim the Holocaust never took place," he said. "Auschwitz must be preserved for as long as possible, because it gives those people a chance to go there, to see the real gas chambers."



Millions of "selected" Jews and other unwanted humans (children, elderly, crippled and others unfit for slave labor) were gassed and cremated in Auschwitz' infamous crematoria.

HOW BELGIUM SACRIFICED ITS JEWS TO THE NAZIS

BY ADI SCHWARTZ

The first question that must be asked is, why this has taken so long. About three weeks ago, 62 years after the end of World War II, a committee of historians appointed by the Belgian government published a comprehensive report on the role of the Belgian authorities in the persecution and deportation of the Jews during the war. In other words, the committee was appointed to investigate the extent of the Belgian state's collaboration with Nazi Germany.

"Most Belgians are unaware of the gravity of the persecution experienced by the country's Jews," stated the Belgian Senate in its 2002 decision to establish the committee. "Why was it necessary for half a century to elapse in order for us to discuss this part of our past? It is the Senate's duty to preserve the memory of the genocide, relying on facts that cannot be questioned. This is our obligation to the coming generations."

What, in truth, can possibly explain this delay? Professor Dan Machman, chief historian of Yad Vashem and a specialist on the Holocaust in Belgium and Holland, says Belgium began dealing with the Holocaust later than other nations, but its state-commissioned report is an exception to the rule. He says that such reports have only been published in Romania, Switzerland and Lichtenstein thus far, and similar research is currently underway in the Baltic states. However, in France, for

example, no such project has been launched.

Machman explains that one of the reasons the Belgians held off from dealing with the issue was the fact that King Leopold III remained in the country during the German occupation, unlike the Belgian government, which went into exile in London. This fact gave rise to questions about his collaboration with the Germans; he relinquished his crown after the war to his 20-year-old son, Baudouin.

"The king problem" remained a very sensitive issue in Belgium, and historians preferred, therefore, to concentrate on the German occupiers and not to deal with the Belgian collaborators. In the matter of the Jews, says Machman, the Belgians emphasized acts of saving the Jews and participation in the anti-Nazi underground.

King Leopold's mother, Queen Elizabeth of Bavaria, even received the title of Righteous Gentile from Yad Vashem in 1964 for her intervention on behalf of several hundred Belgian Jews with Belgian citizenship (a small minority in the Jewish population). Today, says Machman, it is

not at all certain she would have received this honor, as her intervention on behalf of a small group of Jews with Belgian citizenship could have been seen as giving the Germans license to deport all the rest without citizenship.

In total, 25,000 Jews were killed, 44 percent of the total number of Jews living in Belgium on the eve of the German occupation.

The title given to the 1,100-page report is "La Belgique Docile" ("Obedient Belgium"), and its conclusions state explicitly that "the Belgian state adopted an obedient approach, and collaborated in a manner unbecoming a democratic country, in various but critical areas, in a devastating policy toward the Jewish population."

The editor of the report, historian Rudi Van Doorslaer, says he and his colleagues identified three crucial moments that marked the Belgian authorities' attitude toward the Jews. The first was in the autumn of 1940, about six months after Belgium surrendered. In November of that year, the occupation regime ordered Belgium to register all the Jews in the country. In terms of the Belgian Constitution, this order was illegal, as it discriminated against citizens according to their religion.



King Leopold III with his first wife Astrid.

According to Van Doorslaer, the Belgians saw the Jews as foreigners, as 95 percent of the community did not have Belgian citizenship. "This action has no explanation apart from that it was an intentional decision that derived from the fact that the Jews were considered foreigners," states the report. Van Doorslaer says much of the Belgian elite was tainted with xenophobia and anti-Semitism and the war led them to prefer "the Belgian interest," which ostensibly did not include the protection of Jews, by virtue of the fact that they were non-Belgians. Paradoxically, states the report, even though the Jews were the most obvious group harmed by the German enemy, the Belgian authorities related to the Jews as though they were themselves the enemies.

In the wake of this registration came a long series of instructions and orders, the aim of which was to separate the Jewish population from the rest of society. In December 1940, all of the Jews who held official positions were fired from their jobs. In July 1941, the Belgian internal affairs secretary-general ordered the word "Jew" added to identifying documents. From that moment on, states the report, "the transition from passive collaboration to active collaboration was accomplished with great rapidity." In October 1941, the authorities declared illegal those textbooks that were edited by Jews, and in December 1941, Jewish children were

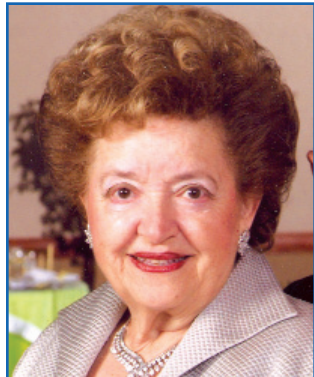
(Continued on page 14)

GLADYS HALPERN

Resistance and Courage in the Face of the Holocaust

The story of Gladys Halpern is one of courage and truly speaks of a *Woman's Legacy* to her family and the cause of Remembrance. Gladys is the daughter of Sala and Ephraim Landau, and was born in the town of Zolkiew, near Lvov, Poland.

Initially imprisoned in the Zolkiew Ghetto, Gladys and her mother escaped and were hidden by a family who has been recognized as Righteous Among the Nations at Yad Vashem, Jerusalem. Sadly, her father perished when the Zolkiew Ghetto was liquidated on March 25, 1943. Gladys is one of only a few survivors on both sides of her family. She survived along with her mother and two of her mother's sisters.



After the war ended, Gladys and her mother made their way to Western Poland. During this time she met, Sam, who would later become her husband. Sam and Gladys were married in Germany in 1946. Gladys and Sam Halpern currently reside in Hillside, New Jersey. They have four adult sons and are proud grandparents and great grandparents.

Gladys Halpern is active in numerous Jewish communal organizations in the United States and Israel. Since its inception, she has been a member of the American Society for Yad Vashem Spring Luncheon Committee and a member of the Annual Tribute Dinner Committee. In addition, Gladys, together with her husband Sam, are Benefactors of Yad Vashem, and have been honored by Israel Bonds for their support of Holocaust Remembrance Activities. She is an active member of many Israel-related and communal organizations, including the Holocaust Museum in Washington, DC, the Jewish Heritage Museum in New York City, the Jewish National Fund (JNF), American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), Hadassah and the Jewish Federation of Central New Jersey, Jewish Family Services of Central New Jersey, and Israel Bonds. Through their involvement in these many organizations, Gladys and Sam have shown their family the importance of supporting the cause of Remembrance for generations to come.

Gladys and Sam Halpern are benefactors of Yad Vashem, Jerusalem and through their support made possible the refurbishment of the Avenue of the Righteous Among The Nations.



GUEST SPEAKER KEVIN HAWORTH

Kevin Haworth was born in Brooklyn, NY in 1971. He earned his B.A. in English from Vassar College and his M.F.A. in Fiction Writing from Arizona State University.

His first novel, *The Discontinuity of Small Things*, was awarded the Samuel Goldberg Prize for best Jewish fiction by a writer under 40. It was also recognized as runner-up for the 2006 Dayton Literary Peace Prize. A two-time resident of the Vermont Studio Center, he is also a winner of the David Dornstein Prize for Young Jewish Writers and the Permafrost Fiction Prize.

He currently resides in Athens, Ohio with his wife, Rabbi Danielle Leshaw, and their two children, Zev and Ruthie. He teaches writing and literature at Ohio University.



RITA LEVY

Remembering the Past, Ensuring the Future

Deeply committed to Israel, Holocaust remembrance, and Jewish cultural preservation, Rita Levy and her family have been active in San Francisco, New York, Washington DC and Jerusalem. They were founding members of the United States Holocaust Museum in Washington DC and the Museum of Jewish Heritage in New York City. Her father was a Member of the Board of the American Society of Yad Vashem and the American Gathering of Holocaust Survivors. Rita and her mother



were founding members of the International Women's Division of YIVO. Rita was a founding member of the San Francisco Jewish Community Federation Working Women's Forum and served on the Strategic Planning Committee of the Brandeis-Hillel Day School.

Rita's husband, David, is currently Vice President of the Board of the Sid Jacobson Jewish Community Center. There she has been involved in cultural activities, such as the Literary Committee and Jewish Film Festival and chaired the Israeli Crafts Fairs. The Levy's are active supporters of Hadassah, UJA, their synagogue, Temple Beth Shalom of Roslyn, including its Yom Hashoah Committee, and, of course, Yad Vashem.

Her children, Rebecca and Matthew, have visited Israel many times, including a UJA-led mission on the occasion of Israel's 50th anniversary, where they danced in celebration with their grandparents. Matthew has participated in the 2004 and 2005 Maccabi Games. Rebecca attended the 2005 International Gathering of Holocaust Survivors, Children and Grandchildren at Yad Vashem in Jerusalem. She has participated and performed at numerous Yom Hashoah ceremonies in Washington DC and in New York. She has also performed with the Folksbiene Yiddish Theater's "Kids and Yiddish."

Rita has an MBA from Columbia University. She and her husband work together in the family's real estate business.

She accepts this award in memory of her late father, Nathan Katz (z"l) and in honor of her mother, Sima Katz. She has always been proud to be their daughter and is committed to continuing their legacy through her own family.

A TALE OF THREE WOMEN – AND A LOST FAMILY

SCHELLY TALALAY DARDASHTI,
THE JERUSALEM POST

Non-stop sleuthing produces a story that twists at every turn: Wilno, Warsaw, the Dead Sea, Tel Aviv, a Righteous Gentile, a hidden slip of paper in a candlestick, the Exodus, American uncles, an illustrious rabbinical family and more.

Enter Warsaw teacher Marianna Hozzowska, 23, who volunteers to assist members of the Children of the Holocaust Society; Maria Kowalska (Masha Fajnsztajn), 68, a toddler saved by her Righteous Gentile nanny Stanislaw Butkiewicz; and former Londoner, researcher Patricia (Trisher) Wilson, 59, of Ra'anana.

In September 1941, two-year-old Masha Fajnsztajn and her parents Yakub and Chana (Zusmanovicz) went into the Wilno ghetto with their extended families, including her cousin, Daniel (Fajnsztajn) Avidar, then aged nine. Chana made contact with Masha's nanny, Stanislaw, somehow

managed to bring the toddler out to her and returned to the ghetto.

Chana told the family that she had given Masha to the nanny, along with money, jewelry and a pair of candlesticks with her brothers' names and American addresses hidden inside.

Masha tells the story in her cousin Danny Avidar's *Kiryat Ono* home: Stanislaw went to one brother, who refused to help. Another brother wouldn't or couldn't help, but sent her to a cousin in a forest 23 kilometers away, who built a special shelter for Masha if the Germans came. A priest gave her a new name – Maria Budkiewicz – and papers, and they lived in the forest for three years.

Stanislaw likely gave the candlesticks and jewelry to the priest who helped her.

Although she tried to retrieve them, she was always told to come tomorrow, and understood they would not be returned.

The nanny, who never married, had a photograph of Masha's parents, told Masha she was Jewish and that no one

had survived. Maria married and Stanislaw went to live with her in *Zielonej Gory*, 60 kilometers from Berlin. She died in 1990 at 88, and in 1992, was proclaimed a Righteous Gentile.

Danny was in several camps: *Kaiserwald* (Riga), *Stuthof* near Danzig, on a two-and-a-half-month death march to *Stettin*, and was saved by the Russians. After the war, he and his siblings returned home to see if anyone had survived: No one had. They asked about Masha and



Danny Avidar and his cousin Masha Fajnsztajn.

Stanislaw; someone remembered they lived in a nearby village, and they ran to look, but the nanny had just left. "We searched and searched and found nothing," recalled Avidar.

Not finding anyone alive, he and his siblings came to Palestine on the *Exodus* emigration ship, and his sister Dina Fajnsztajn Srolowich submitted Yad Vashem Pages of Testimony (PoT).

Marianna had discovered a PoT indicating that Dina Fajnsztajn Srolowicz of Haifa had completed pages for Chana and Jakub (her first cousin); for her own parents Mordechai and Miriam Fajnsztajn, siblings Rywka and Batia; Jakub's parents, Abraham and Ida Fajnsztajn; and her uncle, philosophy professor Daniel Fajnsztajn, wife Rachel and three children.

In her October 27, 2006 posting to a Jewish genealogy discussion group, Marianna wrote, "Maria didn't know about her [Dina] and the family members until yesterday," adding that Maria was traveling to Israel the following day with the

(Continued on page 9)

A TALE OF THREE WOMEN – AND A LOST FAMILY

(Continued from page 8)

Children of the Holocaust Society. “Do any of you know Ms. Dina Srolovicz or anyone from her family?” Maria, she said, would be happy to meet Dina or her children.

Wilson got to work and located two PoTs from 1957 and 1982. She turned to *Bezeq Online*, but Dina wasn’t listed. In Haifa, a short list of Srolovicz appeared and she decided to call each one.

One man wasn’t related, but knew Dina and her husband, with whom he had served in the army. He remembered they had a shop. He retrieved a 1999 phone book with the number.

Wilson called, no one answered; she assumed the shop had closed. She e-mailed Marianna that she would call the cemetery to see and ask about next of kin. The cemetery confirmed Dina had died; her daughter Elana had arranged the funeral, and provided the number. She sent the number to Marianna, who she immediately called from Poland. Elana answered, but neither knew the other’s language. She was suspicious, reluctant to give information, and hung up.

Meanwhile, Marianna had found another PoT from 1982, signed in English by Fruma Nir, for her mother Berta (Batia) Fajnstajn – Dina’s sister – daughter of Mordechai and Miriam.

Wilson contacted Kibbutz *Ma’anit*, Fruma’s residence, and the secretary confirmed she was there. “This is about the Holocaust and I don’t want to upset her,” said Wilson. “Are there children?”

“Yes, her son, Ohad, who is working in the fields now. Here are both phone numbers.” Before she could call, the phone rang – it was Ohad. “He was so excited that there was a possibility – that after all these years, someone might be alive,” she recalls. “Where is Masha? I’ll go get her and bring her to my mother.”

Wilson e-mailed Marianna for the itinerary, and the phone rang again. An older man said, in English, “My name is Danny Avidar and my great-nephew just called me. Fruma is my niece, and the page of testimony was for my late sister. I cannot believe what you are telling me – my cousin is alive?”

“Yes, I believe we have found your cousin Masha.”

“That’s impossible. Not a chance. The last time I saw her was in 1941.”

“Nothing is impossible,” Wilson replied. “How old are you, Danny?”

“In my 70s.”

“I want you to sit down.”

“Where in Poland does Masha live?”

“That’s why I’m asking you to sit down. Masha isn’t in Poland, she’s here, in Israel.”

Utter silence.

“Where is she? I want to go to her. I want to bring her. I’m going to get my car.”

“I don’t know yet, but I’m going to find out.”

Marianna e-mails that the group is at the Dead Sea, and Wilson calls the hotel. But Masha speaks neither Hebrew nor English and Wilson cannot talk in Polish or Yiddish, so a friend who speaks English translates.

“I’ll return to Tel Aviv on Monday and fly to Poland on Tuesday,” she says.

“Your relatives are anxious. They can’t wait until Monday and want to see you now. May I give them your number?”

Avidar calls the hotel. A short time later, he calls Wilson, adding that he suddenly remembered his Polish. “My daughter will

take me to the Dead Sea Friday morning to see Masha. I can’t wait until Monday.”

He says that when he was asked about his family, he always said “My family is my cousin Masha and she is two years old. That’s all I remembered.”

They went to the hotel and found the Polish group by the water. He asked if they knew Masha.

“Yes, see those women coming out of the water? One is Masha.”

Avidar walked up to a woman, and said, “You are Masha!”

“How do you know?”

“You’re the image of your father.”

“I was two, you were nine. How do you know?”

“I remember,” said Avidar.

“There were no words,” he later



From left: Shelly Isaacs, Patricia Wilson, Masha Fajnsztajn, Hall of Names Director Alexander Avraham and Daniel Avidar in the Hall of Names at Yad Vashem.

recalled. “We put our arms around each other and cried.”

They talked for nine hours: “The hardest part was telling her how her parents had perished,” said Avidar.

He said everyone would come to the Tel Aviv hotel on Monday night: his sisters, the children, the grandchildren.

Avidar told Wilson, “What can I say to you? There are no words for what you have done. All I can say is that you will be in my heart forever.”

The Wilson household settled down again. Marianna e-mailed about a Polish newspaper story and that Polish TV wanted to make a documentary, and she had presented a program about Masha’s experience. Once again, Wilson thought the story was finished.

In February, Avidar called about Masha’s March trip, that Polish TV is making a documentary, has filmed in Poland and is coming to Israel. “You must come,” he tells Wilson.

When this writer called Avidar to confirm an interview with Masha at his home, he said “There’s something I’ve never told anyone,” and told about the candlestick with the names of the brothers hidden inside. Chana had said, “If we don’t survive, there are American relatives who will take her.”

I called Wilson with these new clues and she immediately started tracking the brothers, utilizing online resources. Chana Zusmanowicz Fajnsztajn came from *Ashmiany* (50 miles from Wilno). She had two brothers who went to America. The immigration doors closed in 1923, so they must have arrived before. Chana was born in 1914; presumably, the brothers were older.

Wilson went to *stevemorse.org*, and searched for New York arrivals. Two fit the details. Aron Zusnamowitsch arrived in 1902 from *Ashmiany*, married, a cantor. The other was Socher (Yissachar) Zusmanovitz, arrived 1906, single, age 17, from *Ashmiany*, going to Lewin

cousins.

Who would use Zusmanovich in the golden medina? thought Wilson and began looking for shortened names. Naiman or Hyman Zusman popped up in 1906, going to his grandfather Leib. Unfortunately, Leib or Hyman/Naiman cannot be traced, nor Socher.

Aron’s trail was easy to follow: he is Zusman in Milwaukee, naturalized 1905, a “minister,” married to Hattie, four children.

In 1920, in the same neighborhood, he’s a “Jewish pastor,” married to Yocheved with more children.

In 1930, she found son John, and son Samuel in Illinois. She looked for Aron for hours, until she saw Ziesman, “rabbi of a church,” married to Jane, with the same children. Could family still be alive in Wisconsin? Wilson went to the Online White pages. There were Mendel, Danny, and Isidore.

She called Mendel; a feeble voice answered.

“Are you Mendel, son of Aron of *Ashmiany*?”

“Absolutely right – but you should call my brother Isidor in Milwaukee.”

Wilson picked a random number, reaching dentist Dr. Richard Zusman’s voice mail. She left a detailed message, asking him to e-mail, call or fax. At 1:15 a.m., Wilson gave up and fell into bed. It’s Purim and the first e-mail is from the dentist, who confirms his father Isidore, 92, is Aron’s son. Coincidentally, his sister Shelly Isaacs is now visiting *Beit Shemesh* – here’s her phone number.

“I hoped she wouldn’t think this was a *Purimshpiel*,” thought Wilson as she dialed.

Isaacs was stunned as she listened to Wilson’s details. A call to her mother confirmed that Aron was one of two brothers.

On Tuesday night, Isaacs was returning to Milwaukee, and as Danny Avidar and Masha were going to Yad Vashem that morning, they arranged to meet and take pictures.

At the Hall of Names, there was Avidar, arms around Masha, and Shelly Isaacs with Danny’s sister Rachel.

The family visited the Remembrance Hall, and the walls of Righteous Gentiles. Avidar pointed out Stanislaw’s name and told how she had saved Masha.

Masha came from Poland, feels herself Catholic and thought the family in Israel wouldn’t accept her. It was explained that she was Jewish. Her grandchildren have even been to Israel via the *Birthright-Taglit* program. They said they feel Catholic, but in their hearts Jewish because their mother is Jewish. Masha understands that she is Jewish.

Wilson is at her computer every day except *Shabbat*, trying to connect people around the world. “I go to bed every night and say ‘Thank you for another day, for helping me, and let me help someone else tomorrow,’” she says.

“The circle is closing,” says Avidar, whose great-grandfather was Chief Rabbi of Hamburg, and grandfather was a rabbi in Koenigsberg. He rapidly sketches a family tree for Wilson, who’s now looking for clues to Meier in Paris; Yosef in London; and Galia, an Antwerp pharmacist. Other children studied at the *Mir Yeshiva*, at the university in Odessa.

The Polish cameraman asked Wilson for help as they left Yad Vashem. “My wife’s family is Jewish, an uncle came to Israel. Can you help me find him?” She gave him the websites for *JewishGen*, for Yad Vashem and other essential sites, as he scribbled them on an envelope.

As he got into the car, he said sadly, “You know, even today Polish people don’t like Jews.”

SURVIVORS’ DESCENDANTS DEALING WITH IMPACT

STEPHANIE L. FREID,
SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE

“I have nightmares of being chased by guards into the barbed wire fences. Or I’m hiding in cupboards from the Nazis. Sometimes I visualize how I would survive if forced into a desperate situation. It has molded my entire identity.”

Liora Blum, a South Africa native, is sitting in a dimly lit Tel Aviv apartment, speaking, along with others like her. They didn’t directly experience the camps or ghettos, but as second-generation Holocaust survivors, they are traumatized by their parents’ pasts.

Intergenerational trauma is being passed along from immediate Holocaust survivors to their offspring, says Chani Oron, director of Israel’s Central Region Support Organization for Second and Third Generation Holocaust Survivors. And, according to Oron, festering issues stemming from parents’ time spent in hiding or in the camps and ghettos surface at the group sessions she moderates.

“Holocaust survivors endured incredible humiliation and struggle for survival; there was starvation, violence, fear and horror during the war and then, after being liberated, they came to new countries to start over. The second generation experienced a mix of shame for their parents’ lacking language and social skills mixed with guilt over what the parents had endured,” Oron explains.

Illustrating the point, New Jersey native Shirley Karsevar says, “Growing up in a household with the energy of parents who went through severe trauma was totally different than other households. When I was a teenager, a friend showed me pictures of her father’s bar mitzvah party — an upscale, black tie affair. I did the math and suddenly realized that at the very same time her teenage parents were dancing to Benny Goodman, mine were starving in the camps.”

Karsevar’s exposure to her parents’ trauma came early; she remembers her mother began talking about life during World War II when Karsevar was 4. “I’ve met people whose parents never talked about it and I’m like: ‘Lucky you! They spared you. They gave you your childhood and let you have your life,’” Karsevar tells the group.

London natives Nina Hecht and Tricia Wermuth co-founded Second Generation Israel in English in 2005. Both women’s fathers survived the camps, but lost parents and siblings.

As both can attest, children of survivors often suffer from a sense of lost childhood, tremendous pressure to achieve, and guilt.

In a majority of households, survivor parents didn’t discuss their experiences. “Pasts were shrouded in silence. In cases where entire families perished, a silent parent — the sole link to lineage — meant unanswered questions and gaping holes for the next generation,” Oron explains. “The children feel tremendous guilt for not knowing about their roots.”

Stephen Smith, co-founder of Britain’s Holocaust Museum, and an expert on genocide, says, “The problem is one of humanity. Genocide never happens by chance; it is slow, deliberate, and always preventable. It is important we remember all the victims ... To ensure that the racism and victimization committed during the Holocaust and other genocides are neither forgotten nor repeated.”

Faced with Holocaust denial and Iranian threats to eradicate Israel, Second Generation Survivors are alarmed over a potential repeat.



REPORT FROM YAD VASHEM

SON OF SAVIORS OF A JEWISH GIRL ACCEPTS HOLOCAUST AWARD

BY KORIE WILKINS, FREE PRESS

Wally Czubytyj always heard the story of how his parents saved the life of a young Jewish girl during World War II.

But the heroic efforts of his parents, Danyla and Rostyslaw, became all the more real when he accepted an award from the Israeli Consul General on their behalf. His parents are credited with risking their lives to save Hela Rapaport during the Nazi occupation of Ukraine in the 1940s.

"My mother would have loved to see this day," said Czubytyj. She died last February. His father is also deceased. A Jewish friend asked Czubytyj's parents in 1942, asking for help sheltering the teenage girl. Czubytyj said his mother could not refuse.

The Rapaport family had been expelled from their home in the city of Radechov in the Ukraine.

"My parents, to me, always seemed very meek and mild," said Czubytyj. "I wouldn't have thought my parents would do something like this. But they did. My mother

said she did it because it was the right thing to do. They had to do it."

The Israeli consul, Baruch Binah, said the Czubytyj family took a great risk in harboring Rapaport, who was later reunited with her sister and moved to Israel after the war. They could have been killed if the girl's true identity was discovered. "We remember those who have committed the crimes," he said. "But we also remember those few who rose to the highest human level of courage and benevolence-like your parents did."

Czubytyj was given a certificate and a medal, as his parents were given the title of "Righteous Among the Nations," the highest award given to non-Jews by the Israeli government and the Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial. Rabbi Charles Rosenzweig, founder of the Holocaust Memorial Center in Farmington Hills, said the Czubytyjs become the sixth people in Michigan given the honor.

In 1944, the Czubytyj family left Ukraine to escape Communism, settling in Michigan in 1950.

"This is such a huge honor," he said. "It means so much to my family."

HANA'S SUITCASE RECEIVES YAD VASHEM AWARD

BY JENNY HAZAN, CJN

George Brady never imagined he would accept an award for children's Holocaust literature at the Yad Vashem Holocaust Museum in Jerusalem. But the Czechoslovakian-born survivor of Auschwitz did just that in October of last year.

Along with his 22-year-old daughter, Lara Hana, and Tokyo-based teacher Fumiko Ishioka, Brady accepted the 2006 Yad Vashem Award on behalf of first-time Canadian author Karen Levine for *Hana's Suitcase*.

The 2002 book was selected from among 10 children's books, which, other than *Hana's Suitcase*, were written originally in Hebrew by Israeli authors.

Hana's Suitcase is the story of Brady's younger sister, Hana, who, in 1942 at the age of 10, was killed at Auschwitz, and the Japanese educator who told her story to the world. "Never in my wildest imagination did I ever expect that this would happen," says Brady, a plumber in Toronto for more than 40 years. "Not just these awards, but this whole story – it's like a dream."

The award is the culmination of a story that began when Hana was murdered. The only thing the little girl left behind was a suitcase, on which was written her name, her birth date and the German word *waisenkind*, which means orphan.

The mysterious suitcase found its way into the hands of Japanese school teacher Fumiko Ishioka, co-ordinator of the now-defunct Tokyo Holocaust Education Resource Center. Ishioka, who had written letters to several Holocaust museums around the world requesting children's artifacts for her modest collec-

tion at the centre, received the suitcase, along with a baby shoe, a little sock, a baby sweater and a can of Zyklon B gas, from the Auschwitz Museum in Poland in March 2000.

"Although there is a Holocaust museum in Hiroshima, Holocaust education is a very new subject in Japan. In the history textbooks, the Holocaust is only described in a few lines. As a result, most students in Japan have never even heard the word 'Holocaust' before," says Ishioka, who estimates that since the center in Tokyo closed three years ago, she has been able to bring a traveling exhibit about the Holocaust to more than 200 schools in Japan, reaching some 60,000 students.

"*Hana's Suitcase* was the natural choice to win this award," says Haim Gertner, director of teacher training at the International School for Holocaust Studies at Yad Vashem.

"One of the main pillars of the school's educational philosophy is that when you are teaching about the Holocaust, you have to focus on one individual. You have to save the soul of one person among the pile of bodies. You have to see a face, and be involved with a particular person's story," he says.

"Not only does *Hana's Suitcase* focus on one face, but it follows the process by which one educator came to discover that face. The story is unbelievable. It's interesting and it's touching, and it's very important.

"Now that the generation of the survivors is disappearing, we have to give tools to the next generation. This book is an important educational tool that really presents the Holocaust in a touching and sensitive way," Gertner says.



"THEY DON'T TALK ENOUGH ABOUT THE SOBIBOR ESCAPE"

BY AMIRAM BARKAT AND
YULIE KHROMCHENKO

In an unusual documentation project launched five months ago, more than 1,000 elderly immigrants in assisted living facilities have provided testimony about their experiences in World War II. Jewish Agency Chairman Ze'ev Bielski submitted the first batch of testimonies to Yad Vashem Chairman Avner Shalev. Officials at the Holocaust Memorial Authority said that the new testimonies



Group portrait of people who took part in the uprising of Sobibor (picture taken in 1944)

have great research value, especially because they come from areas in the former Soviet Union about which there has been relatively little information regarding the Holocaust.

Siemion Rosenfeld, 84, from Belarus, joined the Red Army in 1940. In August, 1941, he was taken prisoner by the Germans, sent to a concentration camp in Minsk, and from there to the Sobibor death camp in Poland. "They don't talk enough about the escape from Sobibor," he says, "it was like the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, only Sobibor was wiped off the face of the earth, and now there is a plowed field there."

Rosenfeld is one of 80 POWs who took part in the uprising. Only five survived, and live in Israel. After the uprising, he hid out in Polish forests for 10 months, and in 1944 returned to the Red Army. He was badly wounded in the course of his military service, and upon recovery, rejoined his platoon, which reached Berlin. "One of the walls of the Reichstag bore my signature," he says proudly in his testimony. Maria Katzap, 90, resides in an assisted living facility in Be'er Sheva that belongs to Amigur, a Jewish Agency subsidiary. Katzap grew up on the Jewish farming collective, Emmet, that was established in the southern Ukraine by the worldwide Jewish Joint Distribution Committee. In March, 1942, the Germans conquered the area and, shortly thereafter, Katzap's family were executed.

"When I fled the ghetto with my friend, I didn't want to leave my sister behind," she recounts, "but she told me she has nothing to live for. She's 36 and won't be having children and that I'm young and will survive. 'You have to go and tell what happened to us here,' she said to me." Only after she immigrated to Israel did she consent to tell her story in public. "I lived in a region where there were not many Jews and I was afraid of how my story would be received," she says. Now she feels that she has complied with her sister's order, albeit belatedly.

About a third of the three million Jews who lived in the Soviet Union were killed in World War II. A considerable number of these were soldiers serving in the Red Army, but hundreds of thousands were murdered by the Nazis, who conquered Ukraine, Belarus and western Russia.

Dr. Guy Miron of the International Institute for Holocaust Research at Yad Vashem says that relatively little data has been collected on the Holocaust in these regions: "It stems first of all from the fact that the murder there was perpetrated in a very short period and through the method

of mass executions in killing pits. The second reason is that most of the Jews who survived from those areas lived behind the Iron Curtain."

Some 6,500 elderly folks live today in Amigur housing and 90 percent of these are new immigrants from the former Soviet Union. Amigur director Yuval Frankel says the testimony campaign was spurred by random conversations with immigrants during VE Day celebrations. "This is the

most important holiday in the year for immigrants from the former Soviet Union," Frankel says. "At every such event, we would hear stories from the immigrants about their experiences during the war, and we thought these things must be documented before it's too late." Indeed, two of the immigrants died just days after writing their testimony.

Frankel says the immigrants were reluctant to speak about the Holocaust, or "the catastrophe" as they term it. "Bear in mind that the private disaster of Soviet Jews was subsumed by the enormous price exacted by the war, which took the lives of 20 million Soviet citizens."

Many of the immigrants who refused initially to cooperate eventually changed their minds, once they realized the importance of testimony for future generations and as part of the campaign against Holocaust denial. "Yad Vashem was pretty skeptical at first," Frankel says, "but when they saw what was involved, their attitude changed completely, and recently they asked us to distribute to the immigrants 2,000 testimony pages, to try through them to obtain new names of Jews who were killed in the Holocaust."

Frankel is calling on other public housing companies that provide assisted living facilities for immigrants to join the initiative.

Yad Vashem is calling on anyone with additional information to telephone 02-644-3752.



Sobibor chapel used as the Lazarett for shooting elderly or infirm arrivals. Behind this building the victims were shot into a long pit.

NEW HANDBOOK HELPS DESCENDENTS RECLAIM NAZI LOOT

The Nazis were masters at stealing art from Jewish collectors and dealers. Recently, many works have finally been returned — but the legal path can be tricky. A new manual entitled “Nazi Looted Art” aims to make restitution easier.

In the painting, the grande dame of impartiality embodies the unbiased rule of law: eyes bound, flowing robe, scale dangling from her left hand. But Carl Spitzweg’s masterpiece “*Fiat Justitia*,” which forms part of the German president’s art collection, is anything but a symbol of justice — quite the contrary.

The piece was sold at a cut-rate price by its Jewish owner in the mid-1930s to finance his escape attempt from Nazi Germany. Seven decades later, his descendants have still not been compensated for its loss.

But that may soon change. In recent years

there have been growing efforts to find and compensate families of art collectors disappropriated by the Nazis during World War II. And an important new contribution to that project was revealed in Berlin Tuesday: a new book called “Nazi Looted Art: A Handbook to Art Restitution Worldwide” — with Spitzweg’s “*Justitia*” gracing the cover.

Over 500 pages long, the encyclopedic tome is filled with case studies of valuable artworks either being taken from their

owners by the Nazis, or sold at below-market prices to finance escapes. But more than that, the book provides a detailed, country-by-country look at the laws in place intended to help descendants get their art back — in effect, an instruction manual for those dispossessed by the Nazis.



“*Architettura Capriccio*,” by Bibiena Giuseppe Galli, will be returned to its rightful owner by the Courtauld Institute of Art in the UK.

“This book gives the victims the possibility to take legal action without having to hire a lawyer,” says Gunnar Schnabel, a Berlin property lawyer who co-authored the book with Monika Tatzkow, a Berlin historian who specializes in tracking down lost art.

“There have already been hundreds of pictures returned in recent years,” he says. “But there are likely hundreds more in the basements of museums in Germany, Austria, the US and elsewhere.”

NAZI HUNTERS PICK UP THE TRAIL ONLINE

BY OREN DORELL, USA TODAY

Bill Gray was working as a student intern at the Simon Wiesenthal Center in Jerusalem when he decided to use the Internet to find fugitive Nazis.

Within a few hours he found five, all living in the USA.

“To think of the horrible crimes that these people committed,” said Gray, 24, a Harvard student from Munster, Ind. “And to think that they were living in the United States for so long, so happily.”

The Nazis whom Gray found were already known to the Justice Department. Some had been deemed too ill to prosecute, and Justice is taking a second look at the others, the center said.

Gray’s use of Internet-based search engines and databases, such as voting records, comes at an important time. The Wiesenthal Center is making an intense push, known as “*Operation: Last Chance*,” to find fugitives of the Holocaust and bring them to justice before they die. The center, renowned for finding scores of ex-Nazis, is also seeking collaborators, camp guards and leaders of paramilitary groups who helped round up and kill Jews and others during the Holocaust.

The effort has rolled across Europe and collected hundreds of allegations and names from Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Poland, Romania, Austria, Hungary and Germany. This year, the program will expand to Argentina, Brazil and Chile.

The suspects are all older than 80, so any time saved by using the Internet is critical.

“It helps make my job easier,” says the world’s chief Nazi hunter, Efraim Zuroff, director of the Wiesenthal Center’s

Jerusalem office. “It helps me get up-to-date whereabouts on the current suspects.”

The questions that surround people identified as suspects are seen in the case of Sandor Kepiro, an officer in a Hungarian police unit that rounded up and machine-gunned more than 1,000 Jews, Serbs and Gypsies in *Novi Sad*, a Yugoslav area occupied by Hungary in 1942. Kepiro was convicted in the massacre, but freed by Hungary’s fascist regime shortly after his trial in 1944. He fled to Argentina. In 1946, the communist government of Hungary tried him again in absentia, and sentenced him to 14 years. He returned to Budapest in 1996 and has denied taking an active part in the executions.

Due to *Operation: Last Chance*, authorities are now deciding whether he should be re-arrested.

Zuroff says that over the years he has tracked down more than 2,000 people suspected of Holocaust crimes. He hopes that the new methods will help locate a notorious fugitive: Aribert Heim.

Heim was a doctor at the Mauthausen and Buchenwald concentration camps who was suspected of killing hundreds of inmates. He slipped from U.S. detention and was practicing gynecology in Germany until 1962, when state prosecutors issued a warrant for his arrest, and he disappeared. A reward of more than \$250,000 has been offered for Heim, who Zuroff believes is hiding in South America.

Gray says it should not matter that the suspects are old.

“If they’re healthy, I think that these bastards have to pay for what they’ve done,” he says.

UNANSWERED QUESTIONS FROM HOLOCAUST CAN FILL VOLUMES

BY MARILYN H. KARFELD

In the summer of 1942, nearly 500 middle-aged men, new recruits in German Reserve Police Battalion 101, agreed to shoot Jews in the head, brutal one-on-one killings, even though their commanding officer offered to assign them to a less difficult job.

Over the next nine months, these men killed 89,000 Polish Jews. Only 10 or 12 policemen asked to be relieved of the duty, and none was punished, writes historian Christopher R. Browning in *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland*.

Why did some Germans and Poles agree to become murderers, while others refused, or at least hesitated? How many German police were involved in killing Jews and never were held accountable for their crimes? What about the fate of the collaborators?

These are among the unanswered conundrums that remain from the Holocaust, says David Silberklang, a Brooklyn-born senior historian at Yad Vashem, the Holocaust Remembrance Authority of Israel.

Over 60 years have passed since liberation of the Nazi concentration camps in Europe. In that time, scores of scholars have researched and written about the persecution and killing of Europe’s Jews. The Hall of Names at Yad Vashem holds testimony and short biographies of over two million victims, about a third of the

Jews who perished.

Yet, despite the voluminous research, there are countless unanswered questions from the Holocaust, says Silberklang.

Since 1953, Yad Vashem has been gathering pages of testimony about the Jews who were killed. Just over half of the victims have been identified thus far. Perhaps a million more names will eventually be collected.

“The Nazis obliterated the rest, their lives and their deaths,” says Silberklang.

Other puzzles include the victims’ response to the Holocaust, Silberklang says. Why did some Jews try to save themselves from mass deportations and near-certain death, going into hiding or organizing Jewish resistance, while others did not?

The date of the decision to launch the “Final Solution” also eludes scholars, says Silberklang. Did Hitler ever actively order the extermination of all the Jews of Europe? While some scholars argue that he must have made that determination, others insist there was no formal decision. Instead, they theorize that the Final Solution policy evolved over time.

In July 1941, Poles, not German Nazis, killed 1,600 Jews, their fellow townspeople, in the small community of Jedwabne. These were their schoolmates, well-known shopkeepers and familiar tradesmen. In his 2001 book *Neighbors: The Destruction of the Polish Community at Jedwabne, Poland*, Jan T.

Gross tries to explain why.

“Was Jedwabne a singular or representative event?” asks Silberklang. “Was it unusual, what these Poles did? We don’t know. We don’t know enough to reach a conclusion.”

To this day, the editor of the journal *Yad Vashem Studies* points out, no book tells the comprehensive story of the Holocaust in Poland, where three million Jews were killed. An 84-year-old scholar in Israel has been working on such a book for over 25 years.

“He’ll never finish the book,” Silberklang maintains. “The problem is, he’s one of the few people in the world with the necessary language skills and knowledge about Poland. If he can’t finish, who can?”

By the end of 2007, Yad Vashem expects to publish its *Lexicon of the Ghettos*, a compendium of articles detailing over 1,000 Jewish ghettos established by the Nazis and their collaborators during World War II. The project, which began two-and-a-half years ago, has required the labor of a team of researchers.

Silberklang, who serves on the project’s editorial board, says experts with the ability to read and ensure the accuracy of the ghetto lexicon are very hard to find.

Furthermore, there were hundreds, if not thousands, of Jewish communities in Poland for which there is no research. “There is information but no analysis, no looking at patterns. We’re in diapers. We’re just beginning.”

Similar questions remain about the Jews in Greece, Romania and the former

Soviet Union. Cutting-edge research has set the framework of what needs to be investigated, but there is so much that scholars simply have not explored.

For example, Silberklang says, there is no book on Greece in the Holocaust, in part because of the Greek government’s reluctance to allow scholars complete access to its archives.

In the republics of the former Soviet Union and Russia itself, the task is perhaps more daunting. Despite some interviews with local people, Silberklang says, there are so many small killing sites that still remain unknown.

While the number of books published on the Holocaust grows every year, Silberklang insists that there is no shortage of research topics for interested students to pursue.

With the collapse of communism 16 years ago, the defunct Soviet Union opened its archives throughout most of its former republics. In Moscow’s Special Archive, documents are housed in a building five stories tall, with nine more stories underground, says the Yad Vashem historian. The Soviets didn’t destroy a single piece of paper.

According to Silberklang, Shmuel Spector, the late Yad Vashem scholar, visited the Moscow archive in 1992 and said: “If scholars live to be 120, work six days a week, 12 hours a day, it would take them 100 years just to turn the pages, let alone digest anything.”

First published in the *Cleveland Jewish News*

“I AM A LIVING EYEWITNESS”

BY SHAHAR ILAN

The best-known scene in Elie Wiesel's book *Night* is apparently that of the execution. Three prisoners, two of them adults and the third a little boy, were hanged at the Buna camp in Auschwitz after being implicated by the Gestapo in the discovery of a weapons cache. The adults died immediately. But the little boy, who did not weigh much, hovered between life and death for more than half an hour.

“Where is God?” someone standing behind Wiesel asked, and Wiesel relates in the book that a voice from inside him replied: “Here, He is. He is hanging here on the gallows.” More than eight million copies of *Night* were sold in the United States alone. Oprah Winfrey chose it for her Book Club, and articles appeared saying the hanging scene never happened in reality, or that there was no child there. The leading questioner of the scene's veracity was Prof. Raoul Hilberg, one of the world's preeminent Holocaust scholars. Hilberg told *Haaretz* correspondent Daphna Berman that he was convinced the hanging had taken place but that “I don't know whether there was a child there.”

Hilberg bases his claim, inter alia, on the testimony in the Auschwitz archives naming the three persons hanged but does not mention that one was a child. In Hilberg's opinion, the question of whether there was a child among them is of great significance to Christian readers because the scene in which two adults and a child are hanged represents for them the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. In an interview I had with Wiesel he said that “everything written in *Night* is factual. Even the silence

between the words is factual. God forbid, everything in this book is true.” He added that he had met the brother of the boy who was hanged in the United States. Subsequently, Rabbi Dov Edelstein, a survivor of Auschwitz, contacted *Haaretz*. “I was present at the hanging of the two adults and the boy,” he says. Edelstein, a Conservative rabbi, is now a pensioner who lives at *Alfei Menashe* and is a member of the *Hod Vehadar* Conservative congregation in *Kfar Sava*. He had been the rabbi of Conservative congregations in Michigan, Wisconsin and Georgia. He says: “I remember the exact details. There is no doubt about this. I am a living eyewitness. The story is absolutely true.”

In the article, I mentioned that the number tattooed on Wiesel's arm is A-77133. Edelstein notes that “there are 155 numbers between his number and mine.” He says: “Every day when we returned from work, the minute we returned, everyone went to his own block. On that particular day they told us no one was to go away. We went to the Appelplatz, the huge roll-call square in the center of the camp. In the middle of the Appelplatz was a structure with three wooden posts that resembled the goals on a football field. I saw it and didn't understand what it was. “We waited and waited and meanwhile the orchestra played,” he recalls. “Suddenly I saw three figures approaching under a heavily armed SS guard. They brought them to the three strange structures that I couldn't identify and then there was a ceremony. We had to put our hats on and take them off.” Edelstein says that “the Nazis told us what the three had done. They had stolen explosive materials from work and blown up the crematoria at

Birkenau. I think they even killed some SS men,” he adds. “I was a youngster then, about 16-plus. It was the first time I had seen a hanging, and it was extremely shocking to see the young boy being hanged. After that, I saw a great many.” Edelstein does not remember how long the boy remained alive.

THE HOLY VIOLIN

A very mystical scene in *Night* takes place toward the conclusion of World War II, during the death march that set out from Auschwitz. At night, in a place called Gleiwitz, Juliek, one of the members of the camp's orchestra, pulled out his violin and played a fragment of a concerto by Beethoven: “The sound of the violin in this dark shed, where the dead were heaped on the living...How could I forget that concert given to an audience of dying and dead men?” Since then, Wiesel writes, he always thinks of the death march when he hears a Beethoven concerto.

The violin scene has also been doubted. In this case, the question is whether someone would have been bothered to take with him such an awkward and heavy instrument as a violin in the horrific conditions of the death march. Edelstein says of the death march: “We walked on foot all night and people fell down dead. Anyone who couldn't walk was shot. Simply got a bullet. The way was strewn with body after body.” He continues: “The story about the violin sounds possible to me. The orchestra used to play for us every day. For a member of the orchestra, the violin was more than holy, it was the greatest treasure in the world. It had saved his life when he was in the camp. He had stayed alive by virtue of the violin. It created a deep emotional bond.”

Edelstein says that in the commotion that existed on the day they left for the death march, it was reasonably possible to have been able to secretly remove a violin from the camp.

The survivors of the death march were taken on the train for 10 days from Poland until they reached Germany. They got no food and lived merely off snow. They looked like skeletons and Wiesel relates that the residents of the German villages through which they passed stared at them in astonishment. From time to time, the train would stop so that the bodies of the dead could be thrown from the wagons.

BATTLES FOR BREAD

One day, when they stopped, a German laborer pulled a piece of bread from his bundle and threw it in the direction of the train. Wiesel tells how in that wagon people began attacking each other like wild dogs, tearing each other apart and biting each other. The laborers gathered round and suddenly started throwing pieces of bread into the different wagons, he says. These onlookers watched as “the skeletons” began literally killing one another just to get a piece of bread.

Wiesel recalls how an old man crawled out of the wagon on all fours with a piece of bread in his hand. His son attacked him and took the food away from him. Two other people fell on the son and when the tumult was over, the father and son were dead.

Edelstein, who does not know Wiesel personally, also was in one of the wagons. “Wiesel believes the laborers threw the bread because they wanted to have fun and see how the Jews would fight over it.

(Continued on page 15)

WAS CHURCHILL ANTI-SEMITIC – AND DOES IT MATTER?

BY RAFAEL MEDOFF, DIRECTOR OF THE DAVID S. WYMAN INSTITUTE FOR HOLOCAUST STUDIES

A newly-discovered unpublished article by Winston Churchill, written in 1937, claimed that Jews were “partly responsible” for the mistreatment that they suffered.

Does the article prove that Churchill was anti-Semitic? And does it matter if he was?

The article, titled “*How the Jews Can Combat Persecution*,” was found recently by Cambridge University historian Dr. Richard Toye in the Churchill archives. In it, Churchill denounces the “cruel and relentless” persecution of the Jews. But he then criticizes German Jewish refugees in England for their willingness to work for less pay than non-Jewish laborers, which – he claims – caused anti-Semitism.

Churchill's article also justifies anti-Semitic responses to Jewish moneylenders: “Every Jewish moneylender recalls Shylock and the idea of the Jews as usurers. And you cannot reasonably expect a struggling clerk or shopkeeper, paying 40 or 50 per cent interest on borrowed money to a ‘Hebrew Bloodsucker,’ to reflect that almost every other way of life was closed to the Jewish people.” Churchill biographer Martin Gilbert believes the article may have been written not by Churchill himself, but by his ghost-writer. Even if true, that does not really absolve Churchill, since a public figure

must bear responsibility for what he permits to be written in his name. This particular article was authored in 1937 and then withdrawn from consideration by Churchill three years later, following a dispute over which publication would use it. It is unknown if Churchill had second thoughts about the article's contents.



Winston Churchill

Franklin D. Roosevelt

Some of Churchill's earlier statements about Jews and communism indulged in anti-Semitic stereotypes, such as referring to the Russian Bolshevik leadership as “Semitic conspirators” and “Jew Commissars.” Yet Churchill genuinely sympathized with pogrom victims and strongly endorsed Zionism.

Churchill was not the only public figure whose sometimes less than flattering private views about Jews were accompanied by support for Zionism.

A recently-discovered account of a 1939 conversation between President Franklin Roosevelt and then-Senator Burton Wheeler quoted FDR as saying, “You and

I, Burt, are old English and Dutch stock. We know who our ancestors are. We know there is no Jewish blood in our veins ...”

A recent book about the owners of *The New York Times*, by scholars Susan Tiftt and Alex Jones, quoted FDR complaining about a “dirty Jewish trick” which he claimed the Times' owners had used to keep their newspaper within the family. It has also long been known that Roosevelt told French military leaders in North Africa in 1943 that limits should be placed on local Jews entering some professions, lest there be a recurrence of “the understandable complaints which the Germans bore towards the Jews in Germany”... Harry Truman, too, had some less than pleasant

things to say about Jews. A Truman diary found four years ago included this passage: “The Jews, I find, are very, very selfish. They care not how many Estonians, Latvians, Finns, Poles, Yugoslavs or Greeks get murdered or mistreated as D[isplaced] P[erson]s as long as the Jews get special treatment. Yet when they have power, physical, financial or political neither Hitler nor Stalin has anything on them for cruelty or mistreatment to the underdog.”

It is difficult to know if the private statements by Truman, Roosevelt or Churchill about Jews affected their public positions on Jewish issues.

Truman urged the British to admit Holocaust survivors to Palestine, but he never seriously pressured London to do so. He is fondly remembered for granting diplomatic recognition to the State of Israel minutes after the state was created, although he refused to send Israel weapons to defend itself against the invading Arab armies.

Roosevelt expressed sympathy for the Jews being massacred by the Nazis, but refrained from taking meaningful steps to help them. On occasion, FDR told the British they should open Palestine to Jews fleeing Hitler, but he was never willing to really lean on Churchill to do so. Churchill supported the Zionist cause throughout his career, often vigorously so and in the face of fierce opposition within his own cabinet. Yet, when it mattered most, his support was more in the realm of rhetoric than action. As prime minister during the Holocaust period, Churchill left in place the harsh White Paper policy that kept all but a handful of Jews from entering Palestine, thus trapping them in Hitler's inferno.

Prof. Henry Feingold has asked, “Is it conceivable that a policy that severely curtailed Jewish immigration and land sales in Palestine... [at a time when] to deny its availability meant that death was almost certainly the alternative... was not at least partly motivated by anti-Semitism?”

We may never know the answer to that question, but in the end, it may not even matter. Whatever his motives, Churchill's policies spoke for themselves.

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POSTWAR GERMAN GOVERNMENT AND CIA SHIELDED NAZI CRIMINALS

(Continued from page 5)

the Federal Republic of Germany, including his role, between 1948 and 1952, as chairman of the board of the *Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau* (Loan Corporation for Reconstruction), and afterwards as a financial adviser to Konrad Adenauer and executive board member of the Deutsche Bank.

Theodor Maunz, who under Hitler was an influential constitutional lawyer, wrote the first commentary on the 1949 post-war German constitution. He did so with his student, Roman Herzog, who later became president of the Federal Republic of Germany. This commentary by Maunz and Herzog is still cited today. Maunz has also provided legal advice to the self-proclaimed Hitler admirer Gerhard Frey, who founded the German Peoples Union and publishes the German National and Soldiers Newspaper. Maunz has written articles for this neo-fascist newspaper. When the first German *Bundestag* (post-war federal parliament) met, more than half of the deputies had been members of Hitler's NSDAP (Nazi Party) prior to 1945. In the Foreign Ministry in 1952, two-thirds of the senior officials were former NSDAP members. Among section heads, the number was four-fifths.

Hans Filbinger, a member of the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) after the war, and formerly a member of the NSDAP, resigned in 1978 as state premier in Baden-Württemberg when it was revealed that he had authorized the death sentence in several trials as a naval judge during the Second World War.

Hans Speidel, who had been a professional soldier since World War One, becoming a major general in the *Wehrmacht* under Hitler, was a military advisor to Adenauer and played a central role in the formation of Germany's post-war *Bundeswehr* (Armed Forces). He died at 86, a highly decorated officer, having been awarded the Knight's Cross in 1944 and elevated to the rank of four-star general in 1957.

Without the cooperation, or at least approval, of the US government and its

intelligence services, the Adenauer government could not have proceeded in this way. The thousands of pages newly released from the American national archives also cast light on the work of US agencies. The material makes clear that the US maintained a vast spy network of former Nazis during the Cold War.

Probably of greatest significance was Reinhard Gehlen, Hitler's chief of the military secret service on the Eastern Front. From 1942 to 1945, he led the espionage department in the Army general staff. Immediately after the war, Gehlen and his entire organization, consisting of SS or SD (SS security service) people, were placed in the service of the American secret service, the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), predecessor to the CIA.

Gehlen was assigned to develop Germany's foreign secret service, to be directed against the Soviet Union. "It was important to use every swine, as long as he was an anti-communist," the former boss of CIA operations in the Soviet Union, Harry Rositzke, wrote. He added, "The necessity of recruiting fellow combatants required a not-too-critical look at their past." Thus, Germany's foreign secret service (BND) absorbed whole departments from the Nazis security service.

At first, the Adenauer government was not informed of the CIA's collaboration with Gehlen, who had his first contact with the new federal government only at the end of 1950. It was Hans Globke who made the first official contact with the general, who was working with his agents in Pullach, near Munich. "I immediately found a good contact and gained the impression that he correctly saw the significance of my organization," wrote Gehlen on this first meeting with Globke.

Gehlen led the BND till his retirement in May 1968. Even in 1970, between 25 and

30 percent of BND employees were former members of the SS, the Gestapo or the Nazi security service.

Therefore, it was natural that the CIA was interested in covering up for Globke in 1960.

In January 1963, Adenauer was asked by a US press agency correspondent whether it had been an error to make people like Hans Globke one of his closest collaborators. Adenauer answered, "I have heard this question and also other names again and again. But note this well, my dear sirs, one needs capable and reliable people in order to develop a democratic state. Democracy lives by the will, the readiness and the abilities of people to secure liberty and morality within the legal order."

This seems to have remained the attitude of German governments to the present day. The historian Naftali complains, "It is very difficult to illuminate international history from only one side. It is a genuine disgrace that the Federal Government refuses to publish its information on this topic. I do not understand why Berlin does not want to release the BND files on the Eichmann case. Why not? I would be very curious to see what information the West German government had about Eichmann, and how the decision was reached about what should happen with Eichmann, taken in the highest circles between Adenauer and Globke.

The German establishment has no interest in this chapter of German history being debated once again in public. The new exposures about Eichmann and Globke have received little coverage in the German press. They are all the more inconvenient at a time when the German government is again engaged in military operations around the world, and is promoting "a healthy patriotism" on the basis of 60 years of "experience with democracy."



Reinhard Gehlen

LACK OF WILL HAS LEFT HOLOCAUST-ERA PROPERTY UNRETURNED

BY ASHLEY PERRY, EJP

A lack of political will by the post-WWII US government led to a slowdown in the return of goods stolen from Jews by the Nazis, according to a new research on Holocaust restitution.

In the study, *"Restitution of Holocaust Era Assets: Promises and Reality"* by former CIA economist Sidney Zabudoff, the author claimed that while the US instructed its occupation forces to impound much of the property, as the Cold War began in the 1950s "restitution became one of many back-burner post-war issues that evolved into mundane discussions and actions lasting for years."

Zabudoff added that the Eastern European governments were also to blame. "The issue disappeared with the regimes' nationalization of residences and businesses, as well as financial institutions and insurance companies, that held much of the Jewish wealth," he wrote. Despite numerous international agreements made during World War II and immediately thereafter, Zabudoff wrote,

at least 115-175 billion dollars remain unreturned.

No obligation was felt to deal with the extraordinary circumstances created by the Holocaust," concluded Zabudoff. While the issue of Holocaust restitution died down for many decades, it resurfaced in the 1990s. According to Zabudoff, this was a result of the "duplicity of the Swiss banks" which held many accounts of Jews since WWII, "the coming of age of the 'third' generation after the Holocaust," and "the increased availability of archival material in Russia and Eastern Europe after the demise of the Soviet Union." Although there was much activity on behalf of restitution by major Jewish organizations and the US and Israeli governments, the study concludes that "only about three percent of the unpaid Holocaust assets was restored during the ten years since 1995.

According to Dr. Manfred Gerstenfeld, editor of the *Jewish Political Studies Review*, although some of the property was destroyed during the war, much is still being held by European governments and individuals.

HOLOCAUST RECORDS "READY FOR RESEARCH WITHIN A YEAR"

Nearly the entire collection of a long-closed archive of Nazi death camp records will be ready for research within a year.

The archive's director said he was seeking approval at a meeting in the Netherlands of its 11-nation governing body to prepare the documents for international access.

Reto Meister, head of the International Tracing Service, which runs the archive in the German spa town of Bad Arolsen, said the core documents — incarceration records, death catalogues, concentration camp registries and transportation lists — will be digitally scanned and ready for transfer to Holocaust institutions within two months.

"It's been going even faster than anticipated," Mr. Meister said before the start of the two-day meeting in The Hague.

But the 11-nation governing committee must give its approval for the complex technical preparations for transferring digital copies to organizations such as the US Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington and to Israel's Yad Vashem memorial in Jerusalem.

The entire collection of 30 to 50 million pages, filling 16 miles of shelf and cabinet space in six buildings, will be 95 per cent scanned by the end of the year, Mr. Meister said.

After years of pressure from survivors, the member countries of the governing International Commission agreed last May to unlock the archive to scholars. But that decision, amending a 1955 treaty, must be ratified by all 11 countries, which normally could take many years.

The United States, Israel and Poland have completed the process. Officials said they believe Germany, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Britain and Greece will ratify the agreement before the next meeting in two months.

The Tracing Service has handled 11 million inquiries for personal information in the last 60 years, but survivors have complained it has taken as long as three years to receive answers, and often, the information was minimal.

I WAS A CHILD OF HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS

(Continued from page 4)

writes. And, "If it is impossible for the truth to be held in one's pocket, I always filled my own with objects that could facilitate passage to a place and a time."

But sometimes, Eisenstein's sentences tighten and her description comes through sharp and clear, as when she envisions her father as John Wayne, tying his horse to a piece of barbed wire and sauntering into Auschwitz to howl away the menacing guards and free the prisoners. She's full of confidence when she adds to her drawings the part-Yiddish, part-English dialogue spoken by her parents and their survivor friends. She leaves silences between the voice balloons and lets us fill in the transitions from our own experience. In one comic-strip section, she recalls the Yiddish-speaking world in which she grew up. The panels are disjointed, impressionistic and nonlinear — and warm, human and effective.

Her figures float, boneless, not quite weighted down by gravity. They have a distinctive look and the cartoonish style allows her people to look simultaneously funny, poignant and noble. Though some of her drawings looked rushed — I wanted her to go back and improve them —

they put a friendly arm around our shoulders and draw us in. Especially attractive are the small number of colored drawings. The final painting hints at how much more powerful this book might have been had most of the art been in color.

With her words and pictures working together, Eisenstein captures the insular world her parents shared with their group of other Holocaust survivors. Together, they presented a closed circle that, for the young Eisenstein at least, was an emotional barrier it has taken years to surmount. Some of her descriptions will haunt me: At a Toronto bar mitzvah circa 1960, we meet Carola, sheathed and shiny in her tightly fitting brocade dress and lacquered hair, moving with special grace on the dance floor. And then the younger Carola, falling through the air, having just jumped from a rumbling freight train that is transporting her family and neighbours to almost sure death at Treblinka. *I Was a Child of Holocaust Survivors* may be marred by some weak writing and drawing, but Bernice Eisenstein's story is an important addition to the graphic memoir/history/documentary library.

First published in *The Globe and Mail*

CLAIMS CONFERENCE PRESSING POLAND FOR RESTITUTION LAW

Leaders of the Claims Conference and the World Jewish Restitution Organization (WJRO) met with the Prime Minister of Poland and the Speaker of the Sejm, the Polish Parliament, to press for legislation on the restitution of private property stolen during the Holocaust.

At the meetings in Warsaw, Prime Minister Jaroslaw Kaczynski committed to legislation by the end of the year, but indicated that compensation will be based on 15 percent of the value of the confiscated property. The Claims Conference and WJRO will be working intensively in an effort to ensure the best possible law be passed and that the program be established rapidly.

Poland is the only major country in the former Soviet bloc that, in the 18 years since the fall of Communism, has not taken any measures to help former property owners or heirs recover private property stolen since 1939 that is still within the country's borders.

The Claims Conference is working in coordination with groups representing non-Jewish former property owners who lost their assets under Communism. The groups are PUWN (*Polska Unia Wlascieli Nieruchomosci* – Polish Union of Real Estate Owners) and the Landowners Association of Poland.

In September, 2006, the government of Poland submitted draft legislation proposing compensation for confiscated private property. However, it did not provide for the return of any actual property, excluded the substantial and valuable properties located in Warsaw from its reach, and offered limited compensation at best.

HOW BELGIUM SACRIFICED ITS JEWS TO THE NAZIS

(Continued from page 6)

expelled from the schools. In June 1942, Jews were prohibited from working as doctors.

The second crucial moment featured in the report took place in the summer of 1942 when the Jews were deport-

ed to the East - to Auschwitz. Since 1940, Van Doorslaer says, there had been administrative collaboration with the Nazis; the Belgians carried out the Germans' instructions. In the instance of the deportations, however, there was a clear difference between Brussels and Antwerp, the two largest cities in Belgium where most of the Jewish population was concentrated. The report states



Queen Elizabeth of Bavaria.

that the Brussels police did not take part in rounding up and deporting the Jews, whereas in Antwerp the police helped the German forces close off streets to carry out the deportations. One out of a total of three deportations, on the 28th and 29th of August 1942, was even carried out in its entirety by the Antwerp police. In this deportation, 1,243 Jews were caught and sent to the death camps.

The explanation for this difference between Brussels and Antwerp derives,

according to Van Doorslaer, from the long-standing division of Belgium between the Flemish north and the Francophone south. On the Flemish side, he says, there was more collaboration, both passive and impassive. This difference did not derive from any love of Jews, he explained, but rather from patriotic and nationalist sentiments.

The third crucial moment described in the report occurred at the end of the war. At that stage, the Belgian legal system was weighing whether to try German collaborators. It was decided, for example, that the Antwerp police who participated in the deportation of the Jews would not be tried. Van Doorslaer says the issue was too sensitive, because if the police officers bore responsibility then so did their commanders - and if the latter had superiors, then the entire system was responsible.

This possibility meant opening a Pandora's box at a very delicate moment in Belgian history. "The Belgian state decided at the end of 1945," states the report, "that the Belgian authorities bore no legal or other responsibility for the persecution of the Jews."

First published in the *Haaretz*

ALLIES MAY HAVE KNOWN OF HOLOCAUST PLANS

DECLASSIFIED DOCUMENTS REVEAL FACTS OF HITLER'S "FINAL SOLUTION"

THE CHILEAN DISPATCH

American and British WWII military intelligence authorities may have been aware of Adolph Hitler's "Final Solution" plan for the "eradication" of the Jews of Europe as early as 1942, according to documents just declassified under the Nazi War Crimes Disclosure Act of 1998.

According to a National Archives press release, by March 20, 1942, a surreptitiously obtained document appears in the files of the United States Coordinator of Information (COI), a predecessor to the Central Intelligence Agency, clearly discussing the Nazi intent to eradicate European Jewry. The document is a translated copy of a dispatch filed by a Chilean diplomat on November 24, 1941.

The document sheds new light on the longstanding question of how much the Western powers knew of the Holocaust. According to Thomas H Baer, "Warnings from the allies to the Jews of Europe of a planned genocide never came. The Nazi murders depended on secrecy and subterfuge. Warnings would not have stopped the Holocaust, but they could have saved lives." Baer is a public member of the Interagency Working Group (IWG), a group that coordinates the government-wide effort to declassify federal records related to Nazi and Axis war crimes.

Another IWG member, Elizabeth Holtzman, added, "This recently declassified document helps pinpoint how much officials within our government knew about the Holocaust and when they knew it. The next question is why our government — not to mention the British — did nothing in response. It is unbearable to think that plans to 'eradicate' a Jewish population were a matter of such indifference."

During German occupation, Prague was no longer a capital of a country, and most foreign diplomats had departed. The former Chilean consul, Gonzalo Montt Rivas, however, was able to resume his post because of friendly relations between Nazi Germany and neutral Chile. His location and good connections provided a unique vantage point for discerning the Nazi agenda and actions in Nazi-occupied territories, a perspective not afforded to most Western diplomats.

Prompting his dispatch was a decree to be issued by Nazi Germany on November 25, 1941, announcing that Jews who had left Germany and were living abroad could not be German subjects (they had lost their citizenship by laws issued in 1935) and that all remaining assets of these Jews automatically were forfeited to the Reich.

The diplomat wrote to the Chilean government, translating part of the decree and making the following observations about Nazi policy in general:

"The Jewish problem is being partially solved in the Protectorate [Reich Protectorate of Bohemia-Moravia], as it has been decided to eradicate all the Jews and send some to Poland and others to the town of Terezin, whilst looking for a more remote place.

"The German triumph [in the war] will leave Europe freed of Semites. Those [Jews] who escape with their lives from this trial will certainly be deported to Siberia, where they will not have much opportunity to make use of their financial capabilities.

In proportion to the U.S.A. increasing its attacks on the Reich, Germany will expe-

dite the destruction of Semitism, as she accuses international Judaism of all the calamities which have befallen the world.

"The exodus of the Jews from the Reich has not had the results prophesied by the enemies of Germany: on the contrary: they have been replaced by Aryans with obvious advantage to everything and in everything, except in the usury line in which they are past masters."

The West received partial information about the Holocaust from a multitude of sources, but Montt's November 24, 1941 dispatch came to the West in early 1942, which was very early in the flow of information. The report, was one of a set of despatches from Chilean diplomats in Europe to the Chilean Foreign Ministry in Santiago that were acquired by British intelligence and shared with American intelligence during the war.

THE DECLASSIFICATION EFFORT

Since 1999, the Nazi War Crimes and Japanese Imperial Government Records Interagency Working Group (IWG) has overseen the identification, declassification review, and release of formerly classified U.S. Government records as required by the Nazi War Crimes Disclosure Act. Under the auspices of the IWG, U.S. Government agencies have declassified more than 3 million pages to date. The records are available for research at the National Archives. In its recent passage of the Japanese Imperial Government Disclosure Act of 2000, Congress endorsed the IWG's effort to finish the European war crimes phase and move into the Japanese and Far East phase and thus complete the full task set forth in the Disclosure Act.

HOLOCAUST HEROINE'S SURVIVAL TALE

(Continued from page 5)

officer with a large backpack full of dollars. On the drive to her execution site the officer knocked her unconscious. He stopped the car and left her bleeding on the roadside.

"It is beyond description to tell you what you feel when traveling to your own execution and, at the last moment, you find you have been bought out," she said.

The following day, unaware the execution had not taken place, the German authorities put up posters all over the city announcing she had been shot. Mrs. Sendlerowa read them herself.

She went into hiding and continued to work for *Zegota*. Several weeks later, her mother died. SS officers turned up at the funeral, demanding to know where her daughter was.

On August 1, 1944, the Polish underground rose up against the Germans in the Warsaw Rising. As the street fighting raged, Mrs. Sendlerowa buried the bottles containing the children's names in a colleague's garden. Against overwhelming odds and with precious little help from Poland's allies, the underground fought on for 63 days before finally capitulating.

When the Red Army liberated Warsaw in January 1945, she dug up the bottles and handed over the lists to the Jewish Committee. The information was used to

return the hidden children to any surviving relatives.

MODESTY

One of the rescued was Elzbieta Ficowska, who now heads the Children of the Holocaust Association in Warsaw. As a five-month-old baby, she was smuggled out of the ghetto in a wooden tool box on a lorry truck carrying bricks.

"To me and many rescued children, Irena Sendlerowa is a third mother. Good, wise, kind, always accepting, she shares our happiness and worries. We drop in for Irena's advice when life presents us with difficulties," she said.

Another of those rescued was Michal Glowinski, now a literature professor.

"If being a saint is a complete devotion to a cause, bravery and altruism, then I think Mrs. Sendlerowa fulfills all the conditions. I think about her the way you think about someone you owe your life to," he said.

But like many of the Righteous, Mrs. Sendlerowa is modest about her achievements.

"Let me stress most emphatically that we who were rescuing children are not some kind of heroes. Indeed, that term irritates me greatly. The opposite is true. I continue to have pangs of conscience that I did so little," she said.

PROFILE IN COURAGE

When the Germans occupied Tarnopol, Poland (now Ukraine) in 1941, Bronia Felberbaum and her parents, Sophie and Jacob, were taken to the ghetto in Velyki Birky. Jacob knew many Christian families in Velyki Birky and was able to make contact with Helen Balyk. Helen promised to hide the family on her parents' farm, provided the Felberbaums were able to get there.

One day, the Gestapo officer for whom Bronia's mother worked as a maid told her the ghetto would be liquidated that night. He allowed the entire family to spend the evening at his home. The next day, the Germans burned the ghetto to the ground, killing everyone inside. Those who tried to escape were shot.

After hiding for several days in different barns, the Felberbaums reached the farm of Helen's parents, Franciska and Josef Balyk. The Balyks hid and cared for the Felberbaums. Josef built a hiding place next to the stable. The Balyks' daughter,



Vira Vertepna Stochanska with her husband.

Lucia, and granddaughter, Vira, would bring food to the family each day. It was not easy for the Balyks to obtain food, but they never let the Felberbaums go hungry.

After liberation, Bronia's family moved back to Tarnopol, which became part of Ukraine. Immediately after liberation, the borders were open but Jacob refused to leave the Balyks. They had become family.

Following Jacob's death in 1958, Bronia and her mother left Ukraine as part of the repatriation agreement with Poland. In 1960, they came to the United States. Franciska and Josef Balyk died years ago.

As Bronia wrote to Yad Vashem, "While my parents have died, I am forever grateful to these kind, noble people, who risked everything they had to take in three

Jewish strangers, when no one else would."

Lucia passed away in July 1998. Vira is in her 70s and lives in Romanivka, in the same house where her family hid the Felberbaums.

JEWISH HEIRS URGE KARSTADT TO PAY COMPENSATION

American heirs to a property empire confiscated by the Nazis said they would fight for restitution from *KarstadtQuelle* after the German retailer contested a court order to compensate them.

Karstadt, one of Germany's leading retailers, sold the Berlin real estate that once belonged to the Wertheim family in 2000 for 145 million euros (\$183.5 million).

In August, a German court ordered *Karstadt* to pay the proceeds to the Jewish Claims Conference (JCC), which represents Wertheim heir Barbara Principe and her family.

"I am here to hold *Karstadt* accountable for its conduct," the 73-year-old Principe told a news conference at a Berlin hotel built on land at the center of the dispute.

Following the court decision, *Karstadt* said they would exhaust all legal avenues

to contest the ruling, even if that meant taking it to the highest European court.

Principe said she was saddened by the firm's response.

"It is clear to me that *Karstadt* do not seriously expect to win," she said. Her two grandsons would continue the fight if she could not do so herself, she added.

Originally named Wertheim, Principe was a young girl when her family were forced into exile in the 1930s and the Nazis confiscated their business and property.

After WW II, the real estate was awarded to retailer *Hertie* by the occupying authorities.

During the Cold War the property in question lay in no-man's land between East and West Berlin.

In 1994 *KarstadtQuelle* bought *Hertie* and assumed ownership of the disputed territory.

"I AM A LIVING EYEWITNESS"

(Continued from page 12)

I don't agree with him at all," he says. "I remember the faces of the laborers. They appeared to be in shock and were at their wits' end; they were people who had never seen such a sight in their lives. There was rationing at the time, and this was their daily ration of bread. You wouldn't throw away bread like that. I was surprised at Wiesel for seeing them in such a negative light."

Ten thousand prisoners, including "kapos" and commanders of the blocks, participated in the Rosh Hashanah prayer service, held in the Buna forced labor camp at Auschwitz in 1944, Wiesel relates in "Night." The *hazan* chanted "Blessed be the name of the Eternal," and the crowd responded with the benediction. This, for Wiesel, was not a prayer service like any other. "Why, but why should I bless Him?" he asks in the book. "In every fiber of my body, I rebelled. Because He had had thousands of children burned in His pits? Because He kept six crematoria working night and day, on the Sabbath and on feast days?" On that day, Wiesel relates, "I had ceased to plead. I was no longer capable of lamentation. On the contrary, I

felt very strong. I was the accuser, God was the accused... We stayed for a long time at the assembly place. No one dared to drag himself away from this mirage. Then, it was time to go to bed and slowly the prisoners made their way to their blocks. I heard people wishing one another a Happy New Year!"

WAS THERE A PRAYER?

Edelstein confirms the scene of the hanging but is totally in disagreement over that of the prayer service and the possibility that 10,000 people would gather in Auschwitz openly to hold a forbidden prayer service.

"Even the imagination cannot conceive of such a service," he says. "I wonder what could have happened to Wiesel that he would write such a thing. It's simply hallucinatory. He must have been dreaming."

Edelstein who also wrote a book about his experiences in the Holocaust, cites the opposite kind of example. On the eve of Yom Kippur, when the *Kol Nidrei* prayer is recited, he says, "we got together with the utmost secrecy, and quietly, in whispers, recited our prayers."

JEWISH ARTIST CREATES MEMORIAL FOR KIELCE POGROM

BY RUTH ELLEN GRUBER, JTA

The American son of Holocaust survivors is creating Kielce's first permanent public memorial to Poland's most infamous episode of postwar violence against Jews.

The monument, designed by New York-born artist Jack Sal, is to be unveiled July 4, the 60th anniversary of the so-called Kielce pogrom, an attack by a Polish mob that killed 42 Jewish Holocaust survivors and injured another 50 or so.

The Kielce pogrom was the worst of a series of Polish attacks on Jewish survivors returning to their homes after the Holocaust. Kielce had 27,000 Jews before the war, but only a few hundred survived.

Sparked by rumors that the returning Jews had killed a Christian child to use his blood for ritual purposes, the pogrom became a landmark in fostering the image of ingrained Polish anti-Semitism, and sparked the mass emigration of some 100,000 Polish Holocaust survivors.

Nine people were hastily tried and executed for the murders by Poland's Communist authorities, but the pogrom remained a festering and bitterly divisive memory for decades.

Many Poles refused to accept that ordinary people could have carried out such carnage and blamed the attack on provo-



Mourners and local residents shovel dirt into the mass grave of the victims of the Kielce pogrom during the public burial.

cation by Soviet-backed secret police. Public discussion of the affair during the Communist era was virtually taboo.

The Polish government made an official apology for the pogrom 10 years ago, on the 50th anniversary of the attack, but during that ceremony, Nobel laureate Elie Wiesel bluntly raised the issues and questions that had blighted the memory of Kielce for half a century.

"True, the killing was perpetrated by hoodlums," he said. "But what about the soldiers who reportedly took part in them? And what about the others, the onlookers, the bystanders? And where were the 'solid citizens' of the town? How many of them even tried to stop the massacre?"

"What happened in this place showed that normal citizens could be as cruel as the killers of any death camp," he said. "Auschwitz, Majdanek, Treblinka, Belzec, Chelmno" were "German inventions; Kielce was not. Kielce's murderers were Poles. Their language was Polish. Their hatred was Polish."

The affair has remained a touchy issue.

Privately placed plaques on the building on Planty Street commemorate the victims, but Kielce itself had not erected a public memorial. Monuments placed at the former synagogue honor the more than 25,000 Holocaust victims from the city, as well as Poles who saved Jews during the war.

Partly because of the reluctance to deal



A group of mourners at the burial site of the Jews killed in Kielce.

openly with the issue over the years, Sal, who describes himself as a conceptual artist, calls his monument to the pogrom victims "White/Wash II."

The memorial will be shaped like a big number seven, lying on its side, as if fallen, to recall both the address on Planty Street and the month of July — the location and time of the pogrom.

More than 750 square cement blocks will make up the exterior surface. Forty-two of them will be covered with lead sheets and placed at random across the face of the work, representing the 42 victims.

Next to the seven, there will be a column bearing a commemorative plaque with inscriptions in Polish, English and Hebrew. The entire surface of the monument will be painted with a white lime-wash, which will be maintained by the city.

This recalls that before the war, Jews in Kielce were active in the quarrying and manufacture of lime, Sal said.

The Kielce monument is not the first time that Sal has dealt with the Holocaust in his work, and he readily acknowledges that his family history has influenced him.

Sal's father, born in Lithuania, was liberated from Dachau after surviving the Holocaust in numerous Nazi concentration camps. His mother, born in what is now Ukraine, survived the war by hiding with her parents in the forest for two years.

The two met after the war's end in a displaced persons camp near Munich and eventually moved to New York, where Sal was born in 1954.

In 1998-2000, Sal created a sculptural installation in Munich, outside the apartment building where his newly married parents lived after the war.

The work, sponsored by the Munich Public Art Commission, entailed a bronze cast slab, approximately the size of two large paving stones, with its surface mostly covered by scored markings. The remainder was smooth, as if it had been wiped clean — or eradicated.

HILLEL HOSTS FLORIDA PREMIERE OF YAD VASHEM'S "NO CHILD'S PLAY" EXHIBIT

BY ILANA LIPSON, THE DIRECTOR OF MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS AT THE SAMUEL SCHECK HILLEL COMMUNITY DAY SCHOOL

Through children's toys, games, artwork, diaries and poems, South Florida families recently learned about the Holocaust in way that spoke directly to the younger generation. This display of chil-



Eli Zborowski, Chairman of the American Society for Yad Vashem, addressing people gathered at the opening of the "No Child's Play" Exhibit. Also pictured, Rabbi Michael Druin.

dren's treasures is Yad Vashem's "No Child's Play" exhibit, which showcases the creative results of imagination tainted by fear and loneliness, magnified by innocence.

In February, The Samuel Scheck Hillel Community Day School, the largest

Jewish day school in the southeastern United States, hosted the regional premiere of "No Child's Play." The week was highlighted by an opening night welcome from Eli Zborowski, Chairman of the American and International Societies for Yad Vashem. Mr. Zborowski spent the following two days with Hillel's middle and high school students, walking through the exhibit and sharing his story of survival and struggle.

"Rarely can our children so easily relate to their history, yet "No Child's Play" directly connected them to their past," said Dr. Adam Holden, Hillel's head of school. "Hillel is grateful to Yad Vashem and Mr. and Mrs. Zborowski; the time, images and stories they shared made an inspirational, everlasting imprint on our students."

Unlike other Holocaust exhibitions, "No Child's Play" does not focus on statistics or physical violence. Instead, it provides a glimpse into what children's lives were like during the Holocaust and how everyday items became sources of comfort and companionship.

From early childhood through high school, Hillel is a Jewish community day school structured to cultivate and inspire students' interests and talents and to pre-



Eli and Elizabeth Zborowski (center) presented to Hillel's Dr. Adam Holden (left) and Rabbi Michael Druin a gift of an Israeli postage stamp of the image of a survivor's teddy bear.

pare them for college admission. By engaging students in meaningful cultural and religious experiences, Hillel strives to deepen their commitment to Judaism, the Jewish people and the State of Israel.

The American Society for Yad Vashem has recently expanded its Cultural and Education Departments, and we are pleased to be able to offer several traveling exhibits to your community upon request. We are currently working with several schools which will be showing the No Child's Play exhibit. This exhibit is available for 2-3 week showings. The other two exhibits currently available are the Auschwitz Album and Tolkatchev At the Gates of Hell. The Auschwitz Album documents one of the last Hungarian transports to arrive at Auschwitz, and

shows in detail the intake process they experienced at the camp. The Tolkatchev Exhibit depicts through a series of paintings created by Private Zinovii Tolkatchev, a Jew in the Russian Army, the images he saw upon his arrival at the camp.

Our Education Department holds an Annual Educators' Conference in New York City. We are currently looking to expand our reach nationwide, so that schools across the country will have access to Yad Vashem's one-of-a-kind educational tools.



Hillel parent Stefanie Wolf walked through the "No Child's Play" exhibit with her daughters Shoshi and Alexandra.

If you want more information on the availability of any of the exhibits, please feel free to contact Elizabeth Zborowski at 212-220-4304. For Educational materials or programming, please contact Ilana Apelker at 212-220-4304.

BOXCAR TRIGGERS PAINFUL MEMORIES OF THE HOLOCAUST

BY ROBERT NOLIN

Occupying a corner in an orderly exhibit hall, stark under a bank of spotlights, the old Nazi boxcar seemed robbed of much of its menace.

Instead, the focus fell on the triumph of the old men and women who milled around the rusting railcar. They were the Holocaust survivors who lived to recount the inhumane cruelty of being transported to death camps on railcars just like this one.

"It's painful," said Philip Eisenberg, of Pembroke Pines. "When I look at it, I choke up."

The 83-year-old retiree spent 18 days traveling in the same type of boxcar in 1945. More than 100 other people were packed into the car. Only six climbed out alive.

Eisenberg's tale was similar to that of many among an estimated 500 Holocaust

survivors who converged at the end of February on the Broward County Convention Center to witness the formal unveiling of the Nazi-era railcar.

Historians have yet to confirm whether the decaying railcar with the faint black swastika actually ferried victims to camps in Germany and Poland, but it serves nonetheless as a grim reminder of horror from another age.

"I was on a car like that when they took us to Auschwitz," said Leo Adler, 85, of Hallandale Beach. "I was in the car for eight days."

Death rode the car as well. There was no food or water, and a bucket served for



Boxcars like one shown in the picture were used by Nazi to transport Jews to the death camps.

sanitation. As death thinned the ranks of the roughly 100 people inside, the living used the bodies of the dead as benches. Even the German troops who opened up the car were surprised to find only 22 alive, Adler said.

The railcar, its paint faded and peeling, will serve as a teaching tool. It will be partially restored for visitor safety and on public view once it is installed on unused railroad tracks about a half block from the Holocaust Documentation & Education Center that will open next year in Hollywood. It's one of eight such railcars in the United States. Museum officials organized the unveil-

ing, which they estimated was attended by about 1,000 South Floridians. There were speeches about Holocaust remembrance and Jewish songs and prayers. Michael Berenbaum, a Holocaust historian who procured the railcar from Gydna, Poland, came from Los Angeles to attend. "Look at that car and understand its sheer horror," he said. "Appreciate the valor and anguish of those who were in it and imagine the unbridled, absolute evil of those who put the Jews in this car."

Audience members blinked back tears or simply wept outright, as Leo Shniderman of Aventura, recalled a days-long trip in a similar rail car in 1944. The journey ended at a death camp, where his mother was torn from his arms to sure death. "This car comes from a world upside-down," Shniderman said.

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Eli Zborowski, Editor-in-Chief
Yefim Krasnyanskiy, M.A., Editor

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