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HOLOCAUST VICTIMS REMEMBERED AT THE UN EVENT

Holocaust survivors, their families, and delegates of their cause flooded the General Assembly Hall of the United Nations on January 25, when the international body commemorated the victims of Nazism with a day of remembrance on the 68th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz.

The ceremony opened with a moment of silence, followed by a taped message from Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, who promised that the UN, founded out of the principles of humanity highlighted by the Holocaust, would “never again” let such an atrocity occur.

through exhibits, film, educational activities, and today’s ceremony.

“Acts of genocide illustrate the depths of evil to which individuals and whole societies can descend, but the examples of the brave men and women we celebrate today also demonstrate the capacity of humankind for good, even during the darkest of days,” Mr. Ban said.

He noted that this year marked the 50th anniversary of the Righteous Among the Nations Program at the Yad Vashem memorial in Israel, which is devoted to identifying and rewarding such heroes.

Following the airing of Mr. Ban’s

to save. These rescuers reasserted their commitment to an ethical-bound humanity that was being challenged by one of the brutest and immoral forces that has stained the annals of civilized life,” said Mr. Mordecai Paldiel, the former head of the Righteous Department at Yad Vashem and the keynote speaker at the event.

“To date, at this 50-year celebration of the Righteous program, some 25,000 names of rescuers adorn the Yad Vashem memorial, and a 10-volume encyclopedia published by Yad Vashem describes their humanitarian and life-risking actions that caused them to be remembered and to serve as role models for generations to come. The Commission’s work is ongoing, with many names added annually to this unique roster of knights of the spirit. They represent a various collection of men and women from different walks of life and education; blue-and white-collar workers; farmers and city dwellers; clerics and lay people, as well as diplomats such as Raoul Wallenberg of Sweden and Aristides de Sousa Mendes of Portugal: the former, who handed out Protective Letters, and the latter, transit visas, thus making possible the rescue of thousands of Jews.... What they all share was a commitment to help others in need, when challenged to do so, in spite of the risks to themselves in the event of discovery by the Nazi authorities and their collaborating agencies,” continued Mr. Paldiel.

“Those lucky enough to be rescued by sometimes total strangers — it helped them to regain and reaffirm their own commitment to a universe guided by moral principles. As stated by Primo Levi, that through his help in Auschwitz by Lorenzo Perrone, an Italian civilian construction worker, in Levi’s words: ‘I managed not to forget that I myself was a man’ — this, in spite of Auschwitz.

“Or consider the answer given by the Dutch rescuer Johtje Vos to her mother, who one day came visiting her daughter, and was stunned to find there a Jewish child. The mother said: ‘You shouldn’t do it, even though I agree with what you’re doing, because your first responsibility is to your children.’ To this, Johtje Vos responded: ‘That’s exactly why I’m doing it!’ She added in her testimony, ‘I thought we were doing the right thing, giving our children the right model to follow.’

“And thus, they all acted according to the dictum of that ancient Jewish sage, Hillel, who stated: ‘If I am only for myself, then what is my merit?’ A later Talmudic passage underlines this point in even stronger ethical terms: ‘Whosoever saves one life is as though he had saved an entire world.’

“That is a lesson worth repeating, and a plea and summons to anyone in this audience who has not yet accounted for his or her rescue due to the selfless help of others, to do so while there is still time.”

Israeli Ambassador Ron Prosor also spoke to the hall, reminding those in attendance that, from the very same venue in which he stood, leaders of nation-states have denied a moment in history that included the documented, systematic killing of more than 6 million Jews.

“We live in a world filled with prejudice and violence. A world in which anti-



Keynote speaker Mordecai Paldiel and Israeli Ambassador Ron Prosor.

Semitism is sponsored, taught, and spread by governments, clerics, and schoolteachers,” Prosor said. “Every year, from this very podium, the Iranian president denies the Holocaust while threatening to carry out another one.”

At a breakfast before the ceremony held to mark the day, B’nai B’rith International president Allan J. Jacobs said that denials would continue as more time passes and more witnesses pass on.

“We know that’s going to happen,” Jacobs said. “There is certainly a dichotomy that exists. And we’ll continue to fight that in every venue we can, including at the UN.”

Throughout the somber event, which included a cantor’s prayer and a melancholy performance by a chamber ensemble, the loudest moment came in the form of applause at the end of Prosor’s speech.

“From the hills of Jerusalem, to the camps of *Treblinka*, to the halls of the United Nations, we say — as we have said for a hundred generations before us, and our children will say long after us — *Am Yisrael Chai*. The people of Israel will live,” he said.

One man in attendance, Bernhard Storch, 90, lost his entire family in Nazi concentration camps as he fought in the Polish army, through the reoccupation of Warsaw in 1945.

He comes every year to honor them, he says, wearing the medals he won fighting for their freedom.

“As President Obama has said, ‘We must tell our children — but more than that, we must teach them. Because remembrance without resolve is a hollow gesture,’” US Ambassador Susan Rice stated in a media release. “We cannot bring back the victims of the *Shoah*. But we can rededicate ourselves to expanding the reach of human decency, human dignity, and human rights — today and all days.”



Ceremony at General Assembly.

Those who risked their lives to save Jews and others from mass extermination in the Second World War are inspiration for the courage to fight for a better world, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and other United Nations officials said.

“Let us be inspired by those who had the courage to care — the ordinary people who took extraordinary steps to defend human dignity,” Mr. Ban said in a video message at a General Assembly ceremony to mark the International Day of Commemoration in memory of the victims of the Holocaust.

This year’s observance of the International Day is built around the theme “Rescue during the Holocaust: The Courage to Care,” profiling individual rescuers — who defied not only the Nazis, but often also multiple governments —

remarks, profiles of rescuers punctuated the proceedings, ranging from Irene Sendler, a Polish woman who smuggled children out of the Warsaw ghetto, to the Veseli family, Albanian Muslims that hid a Jewish family on their farm, to an unknown platform guard that saved a Dutch Romani boy.

“In my 24-year work as head of the Righteous Department, at Yad Vashem, I was instrumental in identifying and honoring thousands of other non-Jewish rescuers of Jews from the Nazis; men and women from various countries and walks of life, who in saving Jews stood the risk of losing their own life — for the Nazis threatened retribution by warning that rescuers of Jews, if caught, would meet the same fate as the Jews they tried

IN THIS ISSUE

International Holocaust Remembrance Day 2013.....	1, 2
An unfinished journey from the Holocaust to Israel.....	5
How 150 Czech Jewish teens escaped the Holocaust.....	6
“Tehran Children” survivors win suit against state.....	7
New York museums have not returned Nazi-seized art.....	8
Could the BBC have done more to help Hungarian Jews?.....	9
Yad Vashem archives rediscover heroic rescue.....	10
Rare <i>Shoah</i> images from Nazi albums.....	11
Hitler ordered reprieve for Jewish man.....	12
New insight into the Warsaw ghetto uprising.....	14
Photographer haunted by images of Jewish prisoners.....	15

INTERNATIONAL HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE DAY 2013

Israel — The 2013 observance of the International Day of Commemoration in memory of the victims of the Holocaust is built around the theme "Rescue during the Holocaust: The Courage to Care," honoring those who risked their own lives to save Jews and others from near-certain death under the Nazi regime during the Second World War in Europe.

Marking International Holocaust Remembrance Day, a new display opened on January 27, 2013, in the lobby of the Library and Archives Building at Yad Vashem. "Gathering the Fragments — Behind the Scenes of the Campaign to Rescue Personal Items from the Holocaust" displays the process of collection, research, registration, and digitization performed in the framework of the nationwide project to rescue personal Holocaust-related items. The opening was attended by Holocaust survivors whose personal items are displayed in the exhibition.

Exhibition curator Michael Tal explained, "The majority of items donated to Yad Vashem during the campaign have come via second- or third-generation descendants of the survivors and others who possess items from their families in



Honor for rescuers of Jews as International Holocaust Remembrance Day 2013 is marked.

Europe. Therefore, most of the information we receive about the items is, at best, only partial. The exhibition therefore showcases the research work carried out at Yad Vashem in order to reconstruct the full story behind each item. We are committed to learning as much as possible about everything that comes to us, and to sharing new insights with the greater public."

Poland — Holocaust survivors, politicians, and religious leaders marked International Holocaust Remembrance Day with solemn prayers and warnings to never let such tragedies happen again.

Events took place at sites including Auschwitz-Birkenau, the former Nazi death camp in southern Poland liberated by Soviet forces on January 27, 1945.

At least 1.1 million people were murdered in Auschwitz, mostly Jews. In Warsaw, prayers were also held at a monument to the fighters of the Warsaw ghetto uprising of 1943.

Pope Benedict warned that humanity must always be on guard against a repeat of murderous racism.

U.S. President Barack Obama vowed to prevent genocide while honoring "the six million Jews and millions of other innocent victims whose lives were tragically taken during the Holocaust." He called Holocaust Remembrance Day a "time for action."

Also, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe urged renewed efforts to fight intolerance, stressing the



Former prisoners arrive in Auschwitz-Birkenau to lay wreaths and flowers at the death wall of the Auschwitz concentration camp and to remember the victims of the Holocaust on January 27, 2013, during a ceremony marking the 68th anniversary of the camp's liberation by Soviet troops.

importance of youth human rights education. The OSCE urged member states to develop educational programs to instill the memory of the Holocaust in future generations to prevent another genocide.

Switzerland — The United Nations office in Geneva hosted the opening ceremony of an exhibit co-organized by the Israeli and Bulgarian missions to the UN: "The Power of Civil Society: the Fate of Jews in Bulgaria" — 21 posters with photographs, document copies and text showing the sequence of the events under consideration and social and political processes in Bulgaria and the world that took place in parallel to them.

This exhibition was first presented by the State Institute for Culture of Bulgaria on November 26, 2008, at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in the presence of diplomats, community leaders, representatives of the Jewish community in Bulgaria, and researchers studying the events that took place in 1943. Since then the exhibition has been travelling all around the world.

The exhibition was prepared in cooperation with the Center for Jewish Studies at the St. Kliment Ohridski University in Sofia.

Italy — Former Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi has been condemned by Jewish groups after he defended Fascist dictator Benito Mussolini at an event commemorating victims of the Nazi Holocaust.

Speaking on January 27 on the sidelines of an event in Milan marking International Holocaust Remembrance Day, Berlusconi also defended the Italian wartime dictator's decision to ally with Adolf Hitler.

"It's difficult now to put yourself in the shoes of people who were making decisions at that time," said Berlusconi, 76, who is campaigning ahead of elections in February.

"Obviously the government of that time, out of fear that German power might lead to complete victory, preferred to ally itself with Hitler's Germany rather than opposing it," he said. "As part of this alliance, there were impositions, including combating and exterminating Jews. The racial laws were the worst fault of Mussolini as a leader, who in so many other ways did well."

In 1938, Mussolini passed laws barring Jews from academia and many professions. After 1943, when Germany occupied parts of the country, more than 7,000 Jews were deported to Nazi concentration camps, with many perishing at Auschwitz.

Angela Merkel, the German chancellor, said that Germany had an "everlasting responsibility" for Nazi crimes, but Berlusconi said Italy "did not have the same responsibility," adding that the country's collusion in the Holocaust was initially "partly unwitting."

Reacting to the three-time prime minister's statement, Rabbi Marvin Hier, founder of the Los Angeles-based Simon Wiesenthal Center, called it "the height of revisionism to try to reinstate an Italian dictator who helped legitimize and prop up Hitler as a 'reincarnated good guy.'"

European Parliament — The European Jewish Congress (EJC) and the European Parliament held the first annual International Holocaust Remembrance



A woman lights a candle during a memorial ceremony for International Holocaust Remembrance Day at Raoul Wallenberg Square in Stockholm.

Day event in Brussels on January 29.

The entrance of this event into the official European Union calendar is due to the cooperation and coordination between the EJC and European Parliament President Martin Schulz.

Dr. Moshe Kantor, the president of the European Jewish Congress, opened the event.

"I am delighted that, with our partners in the European Parliament, we have managed to place such an important event on the official EU calendar," Kantor said.

"Holocaust memorialization is a massive undertaking, not least in a time when Holocaust survivors are becoming fewer and anti-Semitism and intolerance are rising.

"Furthermore," he said, "with the political gains of the far-right and neo-Nazi parties in European parliaments, the fact that this event is warmly embraced by the most prominent European institutions sends a strong message against hate, racism, and anti-Semitism."

"I am deeply touched that we are commemorating the International Holocaust Remembrance Day in the European Parliament once more, a location that is highly symbolic of peace and reconciliation between former arch-enemies," said Schulz.

"It is an honor for the institution that I lead to mark this day in such a dignified manner.

"The Holocaust must always be fresh in our minds and souls, in the conscience of humanity, and should serve as an incontrovertible warning for all time: Never again!" The theme of the event is a tribute to the fighters of the Warsaw ghetto uprising, whose struggle took place 70 years ago, and to Swedish diplomat Raoul Wallenberg, who saved thousands of Jews during the Holocaust.

A new room in the European Parliament in honor of Wallenberg was inaugurated by Cecilia Malmström, the EU commissioner for home affairs.

Kantor spoke at the event about the greater need for combating racism and intolerance, and drew a parallel between the situation today and the 1920s and 1930s in Europe before the rise of Nazism.

"From the late 1920s all the way through to the gas chambers of Auschwitz, most of Europe chose to excuse the fact that populations facing economic hardship could be bought off by scapegoating minorities, by turning inwards to the hatred of the other," Kantor said. "This all sounds too familiar.

"Today, amid economic turbulence on this continent, national parliaments contain increasing numbers of racists and anti-Semites.

"And it is to the immense shame of all of us that this European Parliament also contains such people."

Germany — People across Germany attended memorial ceremonies on January 27 to remember the millions who perished under Hitler's regime. German Chancellor Angela Merkel called on Germans to use the day to combat intolerance.

Chancellor Merkel emphasized the importance of the Day of Remembrance for Victims of National Socialism during her podcast posted online.

"We must clearly say, generation after



A woman lays a flower at a memorial at former concentration camp Buchenwald, near Weimar, Germany.

generation, and say it again: with courage, civil courage, each individual can help ensure that racism and anti-Semitism have no chance," she said.

Because the number of eyewitnesses to the crimes against humanity perpetrated by the Nazi regime dwindles every year, people must take the opportunity to listen to survivors, she added.

"Naturally, [Germany has] an everlasting responsibility for the crimes of National Socialism, for the victims of World War II, and above all, for the Holocaust."

In 1996, then German President Roman Herzog proclaimed January 27 the Day of Remembrance for Victims of National Socialism, in order to stress the importance of vigilance toward intolerance and hatred. The date was chosen for its significance in Holocaust history. On January 27, 1945, Soviet troops liberated Auschwitz-Birkenau, the largest concentration camp, where over one million men, women, and children were killed.

The United Nations designated the same day in 2006 as the International Day of Commemoration in memory of the victims of the Holocaust.

NY COMPROLLER TO HELP LOCATE HOLOCAUST VICTIMS' ASSETS

New York State Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli has agreed to help track down property that belonged to Jewish victims of the Holocaust.

Project HEART, a Holocaust restitution taskforce set up by the Jewish Agency for Israel and the government, said the ombudsman agreed to search his state's financial database for lost bank accounts opened by Jews known to have died in Europe during World War II.

DiNapoli said he would search through information for 48 million lost accounts, dating back to 1943, for names of known Holocaust victims.

"The issue of restoring Jewish property to its owners is still key even though 70 years have passed since the war's end," said Lea Nass, Israel's deputy minister of pensioners affairs.

"In order to advance this cause we must exert the utmost international pressure to return Jewish property to the families of the victims."

HOLOCAUST TO BE PART OF AUSTRALIA'S NATIONAL CURRICULUM

Teaching the Holocaust will be mandatory in schools across Australia.

The Holocaust will be taught in all states and territories to students in years 9 and 10, or aged 14 to 16, as a major world event of World War II, a spokesman for the Australian Curriculum, Assessment, and Reporting Authority said last week.

The state of New South Wales will be the first to introduce the lesson, beginning in 2014, with the other states and territories to follow.

The move follows a submission first lodged by the Executive Council of Australian Jewry in 2010 for the framework of the new national curriculum.

"We have found that many schools opt to teach the Holocaust, whether in the city or in regional areas, so there is definitely an active awareness among Australian educators of its importance," said Vic Alhadeff, chief executive officer of the New South Wales Jewish Board of Deputies. "This momentous decision vindicates and endorses that awareness and is warmly welcomed."

"The Holocaust stands as the ultimate warning to mankind of where racial hatred can lead, and we congratulate our education authorities on this great decision and for their vision and foresight."

HOLOCAUST OPERA PREMIERED IN AUSTRIAN PARLIAMENT

An opera focusing on Nazi atrocities against children premiered at an unusual venue — Austria's parliament.

The opera was performed for the first time at the parliament on January 25, marking International Holocaust Remembrance Day.

Spiegelgrund. Dead Children like Scattered Dolls deals with the killings of hundreds of children considered genetically, intellectually, or physically inferior by the Nazis by medical personnel of a Vienna psychiatric ward. It is composed by Peter Androsch.

Many Austrians were fervent Nazis, but the country has made significant progress in dealing with its role in crimes committed under Hitler.

BRITISH PRIME MINISTER SALUTES HOLOCAUST SURVIVOR

British Prime Minister David Cameron met with a Holocaust survivor to mark UK Holocaust Memorial Day, which took place January 27.

According to Freda Wineman, a French Jew who survived Auschwitz, *Bergen-Belsen* and *Theresienstadt* before emigrating to Britain in 1950, the two discussed "never becoming complacent, because the evils of prejudice, discrimination, and intolerance continue to exist in Britain and elsewhere, making the lessons we can learn from the Holocaust relevant to our lives today."

During the meeting, Cameron also signed the Holocaust Educational Trust's Book of Commitment, which is placed in the Houses of Parliament each year and records the pledges of members of Parliament to remember the Holocaust and fight other forms of prejudice and hatred.

"We commemorate the lives lost in the

Holocaust and think also of those killed more recently in Rwanda, Cambodia, Darfur, and Bosnia," the prime minister wrote. "The tragedy is that so many did



British Prime Minister David Cameron greets Freda Wineman, a French-born Holocaust survivor.

suffer from persecution and prejudice, but your work will make sure we never give up this fight, and build a better world."

Holocaust Memorial Day has been

marked in the UK since 2000, following the initiative of Andrew Dismore, the MP for Barnet and Camden, a heavily Jewish London constituency, who had visited Auschwitz.

The HET, which was closely involved in developing the idea, each year offers to take two students from each school in England, Scotland, and Wales to visit Auschwitz-Birkenau. During the meeting, Cameron met two students from a Church of England school who had taken part in the program.

William Pinder and Hannah Hardman are now Holocaust Educational Trust ambassadors who have committed to teach the

lessons of the genocide to their peers. They have already created a hand-print memorial to victims, and made presentations to their school.



15th Annual Professional Development Conference on Holocaust Education

Holocaust Documentation and Memory: Preserving the Past and Guarding the Future

The Education Department & Young Leadership Associates of
The American Society for Yad Vashem

&

The Association of Teachers of Social Studies of the
United Federation of Teachers (ATSS/UFT)

&

UFT Jewish Heritage Committee/ Educators' Chapter of the
Jewish Labor Committee

&

The Manhattanville College School of Education

Invite all Superintendents, Principals and Educators of History, Judaic Studies, Humanities
and Global Studies to this program

DATE: Sunday, March 10th, 2013
TIME: 8:30 AM - 3:15 PM

8:30 AM Breakfast
9:00 AM Program Commences

PLACE: Manhattan Day School
310 West 75th Street (btw West End Avenue and
Riverside Drive)
New York, New York 10023

REGISTRATION: Free of Charge, registration required*

Workshop topics include ~ Holocaust Poetry and Literature as Educational Resources in the Classroom
~ writings and documents from the Holocaust and how to incorporate these resources into lesson plans ~
Understanding children of Survivors from personal accounts ~ Using Survivor testimonies in the classroom

Educators who attend and complete the program will receive a certificate for In-Service credit
All registered participants will receive COMPLIMENTARY educational resources
Complimentary Kosher Breakfast and Lunch will be served

*To register for this conference, please contact:
Marlene W. Yahalom, PhD, Director of Education
American Society for Yad Vashem

500 Fifth Avenue, 42nd Floor, New York, NY 10110-4299
RSVP Tel: 212.220.4304 / Fax: 212.220.4308 / MWY@yadvashemusa.org



BOOK REVIEWS

BEYOND COURAGE

Beyond Courage: The Untold Story of Jewish Resistance During the Holocaust.

By Doreen Rappaport. Candlewick Press, Somerville: Massachusetts, 2012. 228 pp. \$16.55 hardcover.

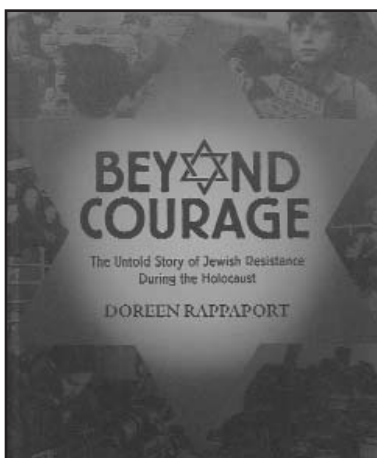
REVIEWED BY DR. DIANE CYPKIN

Each and every book on the Holocaust that adds to the documentation of that unimaginable period is of infinite importance. Doreen Rappaport's beautifully illustrated and compassionately written volume, entitled *Beyond Courage: The Untold Story of Jewish Resistance During the Holocaust*, is such a volume. For — just as its title promises — it brings to light the lesser known fully deserving of remembrance, even as it adds interesting detail and nuance to the known.

Thus we learn of the courageous Marianne Cohn, active in *Annemasse*, occupied France. On May 31, 1944, twenty-two-year-old Marianne, a member of the Jewish Scouts smuggling Jewish children into Switzerland, was caught leading twenty-eight children across the border to safety. The Nazis interrogated her. They beat her; but she never abandoned her "duty" to her charges, nor dreamed of leaving any of them . . . even when she

could have escaped! Why? Marianne knew that the commandant would exact revenge by killing them. So she stayed, to give her life for these children . . . who survived thanks to her steely devotion and indefatigable bravery!

We learn of the *Novogradok* labor camp in occupied Belorussia and the miracle of the tunnel to freedom built there by its Jewish slave inmates. Certain that their own death was quickly approaching, almost all of the 250 of them were in on it, all of them doing their part. Unyielding and determined, they relentlessly dug three feet a day, making do with whatever tools they could improvise. Electricity was diverted from the main switchboard to get light in the tunnel. Dirt was dumped everywhere — including the toilets. This last particularly confounded the Germans. In fact, no setback dissuaded the inmates! Then, on September 26, 1943, they made their escape. Many died . . . but many, too,



reached the partisans.

We learn of the twelve-year-old orphan and partisan Mordecai Shlayan, "Motele," from *Ovruch* in occupied Ukraine. He was sent by his partisan leader to watch "suspicious" happenings in town. His cover? He masqueraded as a violin-playing beggar in front of the town church. As luck would have it, Motele's playing was so good that a German officer soon had him performing at a restaurant especially popular with fellow German soldiers.

Needless to say, this position was perfect for gathering intelligence so very important to the partisans. But, in fact, Motele would do much more: in time he planted a bomb in that very restaurant, killing a sizeable number of high-ranking SS unexpectedly passing through!

Meanwhile, as noted earlier, Ms. Rappaport also presents us with more information on the known. For example, most students of the Holocaust already

know about the touching art and sensitive poetic work created by the Jewish children of *Theresienstadt* ghetto in Czechoslovakia. The fact, though, that one of these children — fourteen-year-old Petr Ginz from Prague — created a magazine called *Vedem* ("The Vanguard") and diligently edited and handwrote the "only copy of each edition" from December 18, 1942, to July 9, 1944, is new to this reviewer, as it must be to many. Finally, the very picture of Petr, as Rappaport describes, "reminding or hounding his staff to meet their weekly deadlines," and then imagining Petr sitting "cross-legged in his lower bunk, correcting spelling and grammar," must give one pause, sad pause . . . to think about who this little boy might have been had he survived. The world only knows of Anne Frank, but there were so many more like her, so many, many more who could have been writers and doctors and teachers . . .

Indeed, Hitler and his ruthless cohorts destroyed a world — an Eastern European Jewish world of learning, of culture, of dreams, of courage. Ms. Rappaport does her part most worthily in memorializing it!

P.S. Interestingly, "Motele's" violin is now in the care of Yad Vashem.

A SMALL TOWN NEAR AUSCHWITZ

A Small Town near Auschwitz: Ordinary Nazis and the Holocaust.

By Mary Fulbrook. OUP: Oxford, UK, 2012. 440 pp. \$34.95 hardcover.

REVIEWED BY JONATHAN YARDLEY, THE WASHINGTON POST

Mary Fulbrook, a distinguished scholar of German history who teaches at University College London, has written in *A Small Town Near Auschwitz* a richly and painfully detailed examination of "those Germans who, after the war, would successfully cast themselves in the role of innocent 'bystanders,' even claiming they 'had never known anything about' the Holocaust. Her specific focus is on a man named Udo Klaus, but she casts a far wider net:

"These people have almost entirely escaped the familiar net of 'perpetrators, victims, and bystanders'; yet they were functionally crucial to the eventual possibility of implementing policies of mass murder. They may not have intended or wanted to contribute to this outcome; but, without their attitudes, mentalities, and actions, it would have been virtually impossible for murder on this scale to have taken place in the way that it did.

"The concepts of perpetrator and bystander need to be amended, expanded, rendered more complex, as our attention and focus shifts to those involved in upholding an ultimately murderous system."

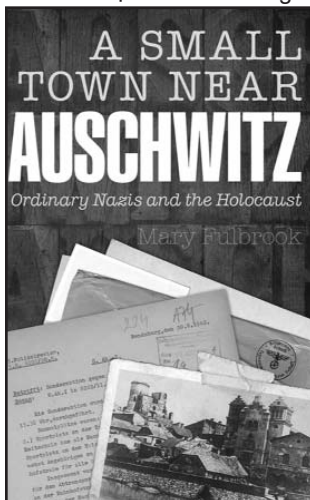
Klaus served for part of the war as *Landrat*, or chief executive, of the *Landkreis*, or county, of *Bedzin*, in southern Poland, not far north of what are now

the borders with the Czech Republic and Slovakia. Nazi Germany seized *Bedzin*, along with the rest of Poland, in 1939 and promptly began the ghastly process of rendering it *Judenfrei*, or free of Jews. At the start of the war, "nearly one-half (some 24,495 or more) of the town's 54,000 inhabitants . . . were Jewish." The Nazis went about their business efficiently: "Within less than four years after the German invasion, virtually half the population of the town of *Bedzin* — the Jewish half . . . were dead." A survivor of Auschwitz returned to *Bedzin* in 1945 and reported that "only 160 [Jews] were registered . . . and I assume that even these figures are too high."

By any civilized measure, it is an appalling story. To Fulbrook it became even more so because the *Landrat's* wife, Alexandra, "had been the closest school-friend of my own mother; in due course, the former *Landrat's* wife became my own godmother, and indeed, in one of my middle names, Alexandra, I am even partly named after her." She "knew Klaus personally, and all my life have been connected to the Klaus family in ways that, once I discovered Udo Klaus's former role, made me acutely uncomfortable."

Her mother, a "committed Christian" but "of Jewish descent," fled Germany before the war, living in Spain before settling in England; her friendship with Alexandra revived after the war, and they remained close, though certain subjects apparently never were discussed. In considering Klaus's career as *Landrat*, Fulbrook has labored mightily to strike the proper balance between professional historian and

(Continued on page 12)



A CANDLE IN THE HEART

A Candle in the Heart: Memoir of a Child Survivor.

By Judith Alter Kallman. Wordsmithy: New Milford, NJ, 2011. 315 pp. \$18.95.

REVIEWED BY DONALD H. HARRISON, SAN DIEGO JEWISH WORLD

This is an unusual Holocaust memoir because it moves from a child's terror to her comfort, back to terror and then to reassurance, in a journey that takes readers from Czechoslovakia to Hungary to Great Britain to Israel and finally to the United States.

Judith Mannheimer's childhood memories include the peace and tranquility of Shabbat in her home in *Piestany*, Czechoslovakia, where she was born in 1937. They also include living on the run after the pro-Nazi *Hlinka* took over the country. In 1941, the child Judith had to use an out-house situated over a stream and fell through the seat into the mucky waters below. Somehow she was able to climb back up to safety, but the terrifying experience made her wary of using strange toilets. In 1942, she was at nursery school when her parents and other family members were arrested at their home. Separated from their parents, Judith and three remaining siblings were farmed out to relatives. Nevertheless, they watched in horror as their parents were loaded on the trains, never to return.

From then on an orphan, five-year-old Judith, two older brothers, and a sister were smuggled to Budapest, Hungary, where they divided into pairs. Judith and her brother Bubi were captured and put

into the Conti Street prison. Word of the little girl in prison spread through Budapest's Jewish community, and Maurice and Ilonka Stern, owners of the well-known Stern's restaurant in the Jewish quarter, took the little girl in, showering her with affection, and giving her a home in which to recover.

Only it couldn't last; the Nazis overthrew the Hungarian government in 1944, and Judith, now 7, was forced with her brothers and sister to wear a yellow star and to live in the ghetto that was built in the vicinity of the Sterns' home. Eventually, the Sterns moved with Judith into hidden quarters in the "Glass House," a former glass factory that Switzerland's representative Carl Lutz set up as a sanctuary north of the Jewish quarter. The Sterns took over responsibility for cooking for 3,000 Jews who were hiding in tunnels and byways near the Glass House, as well as for another 12,000 Jews in other safe houses established by the Swiss.

On December 31, 1944, members of the Arrow Cross began pulling people out of Glass House hiding places, lining them up, and shooting them one at a time. Stern and Judith were forced into that line, but before the executioners could reach them, a convoy of the Swiss Red Cross and the Swiss diplomatic corps pulled up, forcing the Arrow Cross to hastily depart.

On January 18, 1945, Russian troops liberated Pest, and a month later the Soviets captured Buda, across the Danube River. Judith's former life with the Sterns resumed all too briefly; Ilonka Stern

(Continued on page 13)



A SPANISH SCHINDLER IN BUDAPEST

BY MACARENA TEJADA-LÓPEZ,
THE VOLUNTEER

Francisco Franco declared during World War II that Spaniards would maintain a neutral position toward Germany, but his dictatorship actively supported the Nazi regime in a variety of ways. Spain's support of wartime Germany included the exportation of tungsten (wolfram), a hard metal used by the Nazi military to harden artillery shells; the sale of food, even though Spain suffered a famine after the Spanish Civil War; and, on the battlefield, sending a reinforcement of 48,000 soldiers of the Blue Division (La División Azul) to fight the Soviets. For the most part, this Spanish-German relationship has not been incorporated into Spanish public memory of World War II and the Holocaust. Nor is another memory of the consequences of Franco's alliance with Hitler, the approximately 10,000 Spanish Republican exiles who died in Nazi concentration camps.

Not every aspect of Spain's participation in the war proved tragic. One remarkable and little-told episode of Spanish aid to European Jewry is that of the Franco regime's foreign minister stationed in Hungary, Ángel Sanz Briz, who managed to save 5,000 Hungarian Jews in his capacity as chargé d'affaires of the Legation of Hungary in Budapest.

Sanz Briz, known as "the Spanish Schindler," was born on September 28, 1910, in Saragossa to a family of merchants. He studied law in Madrid and later obtained a degree in diplomacy, graduating the same year the Civil War started. His support for King Alphonse XIII and his conservative ideas motivated him to enroll

with Franco's rebels during the war in Ávila. Once it ended, he was assigned to the Spanish Legation in Egypt, and later to Budapest, where he arrived in 1942.

Hungary joined the Axis powers in 1940 under German pressure, after having absorbed Fascist ideas during the previous decade, but it was not until March 1944 that the country was besieged by its neighbor. From the first day, Jews in Budapest suffered various forms of maltreatment and humiliation from Germans and Hungarians, especially the Arrow Cross Party led by Ferenc Szálasi. The murder of the Hungarian Jews increased when Heinrich Himmler commanded Adolf Eichmann and an *Einsatzgruppen* to carry out the "Final Solution," meaning the segregation of Jews in ghettos, transportation to concentration/death camps, and extermination. In the city, books written by Jews or about Jewish men and women were burned by Nazi and Arrow Cross Party soldiers. In this desperate situation, a Spanish Jewish community in *Tétouan* asked for the protection and transfer of 500 Jewish children in Budapest and, later, the protection of 700 adults. Unfortunately they were not allowed to leave the country, but remained under the protection of the Red Cross.

Ángel Sanz Briz, outraged by horrors he witnessed and disenchanted by the non-responsiveness of his own government, calculated how he might save members of the Jewish community in Budapest. There was word from Madrid only once, from then Secretary of Foreign Policy José Félix de Lequerica, who urged Sanz Briz to save "as many as he could." The diplomat decided to carry out his own salvation plan without the knowledge or approval of the Spanish and Hungarian governments.

Although Sanz Briz's actions were carried out clandestinely, he was not necessarily taking an illegal course of action. The Spanish Constitution included a decree signed by General Primo de Rivera on December 20, 1924, that allowed all Spanish Jews in Europe to apply for Spanish citizenship. Thus Sanz Briz found a way to grant Spanish citizenship to



Ángel Sanz Briz, known as "the Spanish Schindler."

Sephardic Jews in Greece, Hungary, Bulgaria, and Romania.

Many Ashkenazi Jews also managed to receive Spanish citizenship, as did some non-Jews. Sanz Briz appears to have saved thousands of Askenazi Jews by placing them in safe houses and teaching them basic Spanish so they could pretend to be Sephardim. As promising as it sounded, the decree was only enforced for six years and just 200,000 visas were processed. Citizenship was not meant for political asylum, but extended the rights of

Spanish citizenship and the protection of Spain to citizens abroad. Sanz Briz utilized this decree to its fullest extent.

The specific *modus operandi* was as follows: from the Legation, he issued visas and protection letters to all Jews who claimed to have any sort of relationship with Spain. But Sephardic Jews numbered only about 500 in Budapest. Sanz Briz was determined to save more. The Jewish population lived in the walled ghettos established by the Nazis in the outskirts of the city. In a documentary aired in Spain in December 2008, the journalist Fernando "Gonzo" González visited the locations of the ghettos where the Nazis confined 70,000 Hungarian Jews. The documentary underscores the contrast between the terrible conditions in the ghettos and the more centrally located buildings to which Sanz Briz moved all Jews under Spanish protection in 1944. The ghettos and protected buildings are also described in detail in a recent television docudrama, *El ángel de Budapest* (2011). In this film, we see how Sephardic Jews spread the word about Sanz Briz's strategy to save both Sephardic and Ashkenazi Jews. Before long, many Jews seeking potentially life-saving Spanish visas took the long, risky walk from their ghettos to downtown Budapest, specifically to Eötvös Street, where the Legation was located.

The plan ran into trouble when Nazi and Hungarian soldiers began inspecting the visas, prompting Sanz Briz to turn individual visas into family visas and add letter sequences (1A, 1B, 1C, etc.) to increase the number of people protected. This way, if two members of the same family were inspected the same day, the

(Continued on page 14)

AN UNFINISHED JOURNEY FROM THE HOLOCAUST TO ISRAEL

BY OFER ADERET, HAARETZ

On Kitty Getreuer's tombstone in Haifa, the inscription reads, "Mother arrived with nothing and built grandly — all in memory of her parents who were murdered in the *Shoah*." After Getreuer died about two years ago, her children found a journal and numerous letters, which she had kept in a closet for many years. Now, having read them and learned of her parents' tragic story, they want to add the following words to the end of the epitaph: "on their way to the Land of Israel." In this way, they want to commemorate the journey of their grandparents, Berthold and Fanny Hahn, from Vienna to Palestine — cut short when they were captured and murdered by the Nazis.

Kitty, a Jewish girl from Vienna, came to live in Palestine at the end of 1938, alone, on the illegal immigrants' ship *Draga*, after Austria was annexed by Nazi Germany and anti-Semitism spread.

A few months later, her parents set out by ship on the journey that was to have reunited them with their daughter. Their letters came from various stops. In a letter from Zagreb on January 2, 1939, Fanny Hahn wrote to her daughter: "You are terrible for leaving us without any news of you for such a long time. Do you have a picture of both of you yet? How can you get married and not send a picture to your parents? Papa is very proud that [you] 'took' a man who is similar to him, and forgives that you are 'disloyal' to him. We are happy that you don't need to work so hard."

She asked her daughter about her new husband: "Rudi cooks??? Where does he have this ability from? Is he my competition?"

On October 14, 1939, her mother wrote: "We are letting you know we are healthy — the aunts are, too. Where are you employed now? ... We are thinking a lot about you and hopefully everything will be good again."

Her father added in the same letter: "Dear little daughter! The most heartfelt kisses from me, too, and you really don't need to be worried about us. We only



Austrians waiting to immigrate to Israel in Kladovo, Yugoslavia.

hope that we will get some news from you very soon."

Kitty Getreuer and her husband Rudi both worked in Haifa — he for the Zim shipping company and she as a dog groomer. In the 1960s, Getreuer opened Israel's first dog-grooming salon.

Getreuer's son and daughter entrusted their mother's journal and the correspondence between her and her parents to

Dvora Margalit, a volunteer at *Atlit*, south of Haifa, where a British Mandate detention camp has been reconstructed and turned into a museum. The letters were translated into English by volunteers from Israel and Germany. The full story of Kitty Getreuer's parents can now be presented, as part of the tragic story of the illegal immigrants of *Kladovo-Sabac*.

"This is a painful affair, which was pushed to a footnote of history," says Rina Offenbach, who is in charge of the database at *Atlit* that tells the story of illegal immigration to Palestine between 1934 and 1948.

The story begins in late 1939, when 1,200 refugees set out from Austria on their way to Palestine. They sailed down the Danube on riverboats toward the Black Sea, where they hoped to board a ship to their destination. They were stranded for 18 months, including a horrific winter, but the hoped-for ship never came. Getreuer's parents and

the other refugees were shunted between two communities in Yugoslavia, first to *Kladovo* in the south and then to *Sabac*, near Belgrade. In March 1941, 200 young people managed to set out overland for Palestine after receiving certificates that would allow them to enter Palestine legally. The others, including Getreuer's parents, were caught by the Nazis in April 1941 and murdered between October

1941 and the spring of 1942.

In a letter Getreuer's parents sent on December 4, 1940, they wrote: "Our luggage and everything was already loaded and 14 hours before departure we were told that it wouldn't take place. Papa already sold his warm clothes and his wedding ring in order to buy food. This is the third time this is happening to us. I cannot explain how much we are suffering." The letter ends with the words, "We are happy that you have such a nice life in your apartment and we wish you a lot of happiness there."

Why did the ship never come? Aliyah Bet, the organization directing the illegal immigration, did buy a ship, but the Jewish community's leaders in Palestine sold it to the British to help in the war effort. "They abandoned them," says Ron Gilo, Getreuer's son. Because of the historical circumstances, Gilo says he blames no one, but wants the facts to be known.

Twenty years ago, a book by Prof. Dalia Ofer with Dr. Hannah Wiener was published in Hebrew by Am Oved, entitled *The Uncompleted Voyage: Jewish Refugees in Yugoslavia, 1939-1942*. In December, renewed commemoration work began with a gathering at Kibbutz *Gan Shmuel*, near Haifa, of about 1,000 of the families of the victims and a few of the survivors.

"Mother didn't want to talk about it," Getreuer's daughter, Ilana Peretzman, said. "She said she got back the letters she sent them and from this she realized they had been killed. She didn't want to know what happened to them."

SURVIVORS' CORNER

HOW 150 CZECH JEWISH TEENS ESCAPED THE HOLOCAUST

BY MICHAL SHMULOVICH,
THE TIMES OF ISRAEL

In the fall of 1939, a group of 150 Czech Jewish teenagers said goodbye to their families and friends, and boarded a train to Denmark. For many, it was the last time they'd see or hug their parents — because their families, the ones who stayed behind in then-Czechoslovakia, for the most part, perished.



A few of the teenage Czech Jewish refugees enjoying the Danish winter in the early 1940s.

At the ages of 14 to 16, the youngsters had started a new life. Their escape was planned by the youth division of the Jewish Agency (*Aliyat Hanoar*, or *Jugend Aliyah*) in affiliation with Zionist youth groups like *Maccabi Hatzair* as well as a Danish peace league and several Jewish communities.

They were taken in by ordinary Danish families; they lived in foster homes and worked on farms. Why farms? It was more than a means of escape. One of the goals of the youth groups was to prepare a class of Jewish land-tilling pioneers for future settlement in the State of Israel. (The plan worked. Many of those who made their way to Mandate Palestine or Israel ended up working in natural sciences or on the large farms of *kibbutzim* in the north.)

In Denmark, life was relatively good for the lucky ones: They were spared the fate of so many other Jews during the Holocaust, and they didn't need to wear a yellow star. Nonetheless, they were refugees, and as the war raged on, the Nazis were ever-present.

They grew to be like a tight-knit family. Those who lived in the southern farming region of *Sjælland*, for example, met at least once a week in the city of *Naestved*, offering one another a modicum of stability and continuity in a sea of change.

Some became best friends, and others met their future spouses in the group.

But in 1943, the Nazis suddenly announced that the 7,000 Jews in Denmark were no longer free. Until then, Germany had somewhat respected Danish institutions, calling the nation a protectorate. Now the Jews were to be arrested and deported. Many of the youngsters were smuggled out on tiny fishing boats to Sweden, which was neutral — and many Danes risked their lives to get them out. Other Jewish teens were chosen to go to Palestine.

The group was shattered. In an era when mass communication was not yet the norm, the friendships were instantaneously lost. They moved on. Many began over, again, in South Africa, Israel, the US, Canada, or Britain, never knowing what became of their childhood companions. With the years, the memories started to fade. Until last year, when a relentless and meticulous Prague-based journalist, Judita Matyasova, began piecing together

the histories of this extraordinary group, setting into motion a reconnection process for many.

In November of 2011, at a bright and airy house in *Neve Ilan* outside Jerusalem, six of the former refugees, and relatives of others who passed away or couldn't make the voyage, met for an emotional reunion. For most of them, it was one of the first times they reopened the chapter of their World War II past — when staying alive meant leaving their families, and when childhood was fleeting and mass killing raged.

At the gathering, two recently reunited friends — Anne Marie “Nemka” Steiner (née Federer) and Judith Shaked — sat outside, on a big deck overlooking the Judaeen hills. They laughed as they sipped their black teas. They spoke in low tones, the way sisters do when they're sharing a secret, and their heads were tilted toward one another. Their conversation flowed, nonstop, as if not a year had gone by since they last saw each other.

“I haven't seen her in about 70 years!” exclaimed Shaked. Nemka was her best friend in Denmark, but they hadn't had any contact since they parted ways, when Shaked came to Palestine and Nemka escaped to Sweden. “But we were so close.... Really, we were,” Shaked said, adoringly looking up at her friend.

Flying in from South Africa, Linda Fine — the daughter of Edita Moravcova (known by her diminutive, Dita), one of the refugees who had passed away — put it this way: “It wasn't easy [for the teens' parents], you know.... Some families had several kids around the ages of 15 who were active in the Jewish youth groups [which planned the children's escape] — but they could only send one child on the train to Denmark. Can you imagine having to make such a choice? Knowing your other [children] may die?”

Other families at the reunion confirmed

Fine's heartbreaking account of events, and the impossible choices people had to make.

Dita was wise beyond her years. Her mother had died when she was only 9. She was 14 when she left Prague. She sold her mother's jewelry collection to pay for the train fare, and went to the Jewish Agency youth office on her own to arrange the details of her escape.

After Denmark and Sweden, Dita came to Palestine, where she worked as an air hostess for a Czechoslovakian airline. Unbeknown to her, she helped smuggle documents for the Stern Gang via those flights. She was arrested by the British, and wrote in her diary that she had felt used “by her own people,” Linda Fine recounted.

“I think that's one of the reasons she didn't stay in Israel,” Fine added. “After all she had been through, escaping the Holocaust, it was painful for her.”

Dita experienced “wonderful years” in Denmark, but the cost of being saved carried bittersweet memories, the reuniting refugees said.

“The brave ones were our parents,” said Dagmar Pollakova, one of the six survivors at the intimate gathering. “They were so brave to say goodbye to us, only children, never to know if they were going to see us again.” In fact, most of them didn't.

Dan H. Yaalon (a Hebraicized version of his Czech name, Hardy Berger), an erudite geologist formerly of the Hebrew

University, whose son Uri hosted the reunion, said the memory of saying goodbye to his mother is the most vivid of all his memories.

“I was 10 when my father passed away,” Yaalon said. It was the first time during the conversation that raw emotion peeped through his otherwise jovial appearance. “Then, just a few years later, I had to say goodbye to my mother, a widow, and depart for Denmark,” he said, tears welling up.

He was able to communicate with his mother for a period, via the Red Cross letter forms, which only had space for 25 words, but that soon stopped as the Nazis took control of Denmark.

Some of the teens did find their parents after the war — they were the happy exceptions. Dina Kafkova found her father, one of the few Jews who escaped from Prague in 1941. Kafkova's daughter, Barbara Rich, a lawyer from London who flew in to represent her mother at the gathering, said she wished her mom was still alive so she could ask her more about her wartime experiences.

“You know how kids are, your parents are infinitely boring when you're a teen.... And my mother never spoke about the war,” said Rich. “Perhaps it wasn't as acceptable to speak about the Holocaust as it is now.” Or maybe the experiences — a remnant from a previous life — were still too fresh, and speaking about them proved too painful.

This meeting in Israel was instigated by a random chain of events: Years ago, Kafkova befriended a stranger at a London tube station, a woman who, many years later, noticed an ad in a local Jewish paper. That ad was taken out by a man named Yaalon asking if anyone had information on Czech Jews who had lived in Denmark during the war. When the ad was passed on to Kafkova, she closed a gap that had spanned over 40 years. Although she had known him by his Czech name, Berger, Kafkova recognized Yaalon right away, and she wrote to him.

They got in touch, and she even came to Israel for a visit — but the entire group



The reunion of the Czech Jewish refugees and their families in *Neve Ilan*.

was still not yet aware of who else was out there.

“This [reunion] would have meant the world to her,” Rich said of her mother.

Matyasova (who works without funding) says the effort to reconnect the members of this group and capture their untold stories — not just for their sake, but for their living family members, and for generations to come — is far from over.

“A few individuals, or even one individual, is more than just a number,” she said at the meet-up. “There are more Czech teens who were saved by Denmark during the war, and I want to find them all.”

“TEHRAN CHILDREN” SURVIVORS WIN SUIT AGAINST STATE

BY JOANNA PARASZCZUK,
THE JERUSALEM POST

The Tel Aviv District Court made legal history in August, ruling that the state must pay out compensation totaling NIS 17 million to a group of 217 Holocaust survivors who sued for unpaid reparations.

The claimants, mostly in their 80s, belong to a group of survivors known as the Tehran Children, Jewish orphans who fled Poland for the then Soviet Union in 1939 after the Nazis massacred their parents.

The Soviets first incarcerated the children in a Siberian gulag, but later allowed them to travel to Iran with the Polish Anders Army. The orphans lived in a refugee camp in Tehran until the Jewish Agency rescued them and brought them to Israel in 1943, where their arrival and tragic personal testimonies caused shock waves throughout the Jewish community.

Over 200 of the Tehran Children first sued the state in 2004, arguing that they are entitled to their rightful share of reparation monies paid to Israel by West Germany under the 1953 Reparations Agreement.

The court ruling, which the group's lawyer, Gad Weissfeld, said made “moral and legal history,” brings to an end the survivors' nine-year legal battle, but also shines light onto a decades-long bitter struggle between Holocaust survivors and the state.

The civil suit centered on whether the

Tehran Children, as Holocaust survivors, are personally entitled to receive compensation payments from the monies Israel received under the Reparations Agreement.

Under that agreement, signed in Luxembourg on September 10, 1952, West Germany agreed to pay Israel some three billion deutsche marks in annual installments over 12 years in the form of goods and services — plus another DM 450 million over 12 years “to be used for the relief, rehabilitation, and resettlement of Jewish victims of Nazi persecution.”

“[Then Prime Minister] Ben-Gurion's interpretation of [the agreement] was that the state should take the money itself, and use it for public projects,” said Prof. Zeev Schuss, one of the Tehran Children, who testified in the trial as an expert witness.

However, Schuss said the state never rehabilitated the Tehran Children, as it pledged to do under the Reparations Agreement.

Schuss, who was just five years old when he came to Israel in 1943, said that instead the Israeli government “disassociated itself” from the Tehran Children.

Most of the orphans were drafted into the IDF and fought in the War of Independence, Schuss said.

But when the war was over, the orphans

found themselves with nowhere to go and, as the state had not trained them in any profession, nothing to do.

“Some of the Tehran Children testified that after the war they slept in empty buses or in Meir Park in Tel Aviv, because they had nothing, no families and no homes,” Schuss added, noting that the state did not even officially recognize the Tehran Children as Holocaust survivors until 1997.



Henrietta Szold chats with Tehran Children.

One of the complainants, 83-year-old Moshe Schreiber, was 13 when he came to Israel as one of the Tehran Children in 1943. Like many of his fellow children, he fought in the War of Independence, and afterwards the state had not helped him find a place to live or a profession, he said.

Schreiber said he was happy about the court ruling but angry at the way successive governments have dealt with survivors.

“It's taken us nearly 60 years to get justice,” he said. “All of Israel's governments, starting with Ben-Gurion's and ending with this current government, they all refused us reparations. All of them turned their backs on the very weakest element in our society — Holocaust survivors, children and orphans.”

In her 41-page ruling, Judge Drora Pilpel slammed the state's argument that if the court ruled in favor of the Tehran Children, the floodgates could be opened for more Holocaust survivor lawsuits, which could lead to an economic crisis in Israel if the state had to pay out.

The court ruled that all the Tehran Children — not just the 217 who sued — were entitled to a compensation payment of NIS 50,000 each. To that sum must be added interest, increasing the compensation payment to NIS 78,000 each.

“The payment is bupkes [Yiddish for ‘absolutely nothing’], it's purely symbolic, and the state's fears that the court ruling will ruin it are groundless,” Schuss said, noting that of the around 400 Tehran Children still alive, most are very elderly and only a handful are likely to step forward and claim their compensation.

It is not yet clear whether the state will appeal the ruling in the Supreme Court, an act Schuss said would be “unbecoming,” and would likely make the court case drag on for many more years.

“The state should pay. It's time it put a stop to this poor treatment of survivors,” he concluded.

HOLOCAUST TRACING SERVICE STILL REUNITING FAMILIES

BY DAVID CROSSLAND,
SPIEGEL ONLINE

Wilhelm Thiem was two years old when an SS man pulled him from his mother's arms. It was in 1942, and she was sent from their home in Lodz, in occupied Poland, to become a forced laborer in Germany. He never saw her again.

Wilhelm spent an unhappy childhood with a reluctant foster mother who brought him to Germany in 1944 and gave him her surname. Since then, Wilhelm has agonized about what became of his mother, who his father was and whether he had any real relatives left. He has spent a lifetime wondering why all this had to happen — and who he really is.

“I have this abiding memory of being held in the arms of a strange woman and being carried through a stone brick arch,” Thiem, 72, told *Spiegel Online*. “I've always felt alone, like an outsider. People always demanded to know who I am and where I came from and I just didn't know. It was like I never really had a face. I grew up with a sense that I don't belong in this world. It has dogged me all my life.”

But Thiem's life may be about to change. In November, he received a letter from an organization called the International Tracing Service (ITS) in the town of *Bad Arolsen*, just 40 kilometers from his home in the central German town of *Brilon*.

“They told me I have an aunt in Lodz who's still alive and who knew me,” Thiem said. “They also sent me my birth certificate and that of my mother. Now I know for sure for the first time when my birthday is. It has overwhelmed me emotionally. My aunt should be able to answer a lot of questions. I feel a new certainty growing in me,” said Thiem.

Or rather Zbigniew Kazmierzak, which is his real name.

The striking aspect about Thiem's case

is that it's not that unusual. Even after all these years, the ITS still helps to reunite 30 to 50 families per year. It gets about 1,000 requests per month from people trying to find out what happened to their ancestors in the war. Actual tracing requests involving survivors still account for around 3 percent of enquiries.

The ITS is the world's biggest archive of original documents relating to the Holocaust and the millions of so-called Displaced Persons who were dragged away from their families in World War II to be put in concentration camps, or conscripted into forced labor to keep the Nazi war machine going.

In many cases, those looking for family members were children taken away from parents being sent to prison or condemned to forced labor, as happened to Thiem. They feel a need at the end of their lives to find out what happened to their parents and to establish their true identities.

Another typical request comes from families in Russia, the Baltic States, Ukraine, or Belarus that were torn apart when relatives who survived the Holocaust were stranded in western Europe at the end of the war. Many of them then opted to emigrate to America or Australia rather than be repatriated to Stalin's Soviet Union, where they would have faced an uncertain future and possible imprisonment for alleged collaboration with Nazi Germany. In the 1990s, the ITS was overwhelmed by hundreds of thousands of requests from former forced laborers seeking official confirmation of their status so that they could claim compensation under a new scheme offered by the German government.

After the war ended in 1945, the Allies faced the monumental task of repatriating an estimated 10 million former forced laborers and concentration camp survivors, and enlisted the International Committee of the Red Cross, which had expertise in tracing via its global network,

to help find their families.

A Tracing Bureau had already been set up with the British Red Cross in London in 1943. In 1946, the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration took charge of caring for non-German refugees. The sedate little town of *Bad Arolsen*, home to an SS officer training school, was picked as the base for the ITS because of its central location between the four zones of occupation and because it had come through the war with its infrastructure virtually unscathed, including a line of SS officers' villas along its main street.

Any file that could be found with a name on it — concentration camp registers, lists of forced laborers, Gestapo secret police records, birth certificates — was carted to *Bad Arolsen* to create a database that now contains some 30 million documents on 17.5 million people. It has processed some 12 million requests since its inception.

The papers include a carbon copy of Schindler's List typed by Mieczyslaw Pemper, a Holocaust survivor who had helped compile the famous register of Jewish workers employed by Oskar Schindler, the ethnic German industrialist who saved over 1,100 Jews from being killed by employing them in his companies.

They also include forms filled out by displaced persons after the war in which they were asked to describe their experiences. One wrote: “Every day people were incinerated.”

The Red Cross was formally put in charge of the ITS in 1955 because the Allies still didn't trust the young West German republic to control an archive brimming with evidence of the nation's guilt. The directors of the ITS have all been Swiss nationals. At the end of last year, the Red Cross withdrew from the management, reflecting the gradual transition of the archive from a tracing service to a priceless, untapped source of materi-

al for historical research into the Nazi era, the Holocaust, and the immediate aftermath of the war

As the number of survivors dwindles, databases like the ITS will become even more important because of the silent stories they will tell. Millions of personal fates are recorded in those yellowed, brittle documents, punched with cold bureaucratic typescript or scratched in shaky handwriting by prisoners scared for their lives and stunned by their ordeal.

“I have no great fear that we will forget the Holocaust, you can't forget that, but there is a risk of the banalization of commemoration,” said Jean-Luc Blondel, the outgoing director of the ITS. “I have heard many speeches on the memorial days like January 27 and November 9, they all sound very proper, but I miss the passion and the conviction. One talks about it a lot, but one doesn't think about it. That is why education is such an important part of our work now. We don't confront young people with images of piles of corpses. Our approach is to say, ‘What ended in Auschwitz started in your street.’”

Blondel, a Red Cross executive, will be succeeded by Professor Rebecca Boehling, an American expert on the Holocaust and World War II at the University of Maryland. The Red Cross will continue to help the ITS with tracing requests, and Germany's national archive will provide advice on restructuring the database.

The ITS only opened its archive to researchers in 2007 after years of pressure from historians, as well as Holocaust survivors in the US and Israel, angered at the long time it was taking to obtain information.

The archive had increasingly been seen as hamstrung by its statute, overseen by an international commission of 11 countries, that placed the emphasis on the privacy of the data and restricted access to information to its own staff and to prosecu-

(Continued on page 15)

NEW YORK MUSEUMS HAVE NOT RETURNED NAZI-SEIZED ART

BY ISABEL VINCENT AND
MELISSA KLEIN, NEW YORK POST

Between 1933 and 1945, the Nazis seized an estimated 650,000 works of art, taking them from Jewish families and grabbing so-called “degenerate” art — including works by Picasso, Matisse, Chagall, and van Gogh — off the walls of German museums. Many of the plundered paintings and other works were destroyed, but others were sold abroad with the cash going back to the Nazi war machine.

It took 50 years, but Jewish families thought they might finally receive some justice for this massive theft.

More than 40 countries gathered in Washington, D.C., in 1998 to discuss looted art and sign a set of principles about identifying such work and settling claims.

The United States endorsed a declaration to investigate ownership of work that may have been in Europe during the Nazi era. The principles called for a “just and fair solution” to be reached if prewar owners came forward to reclaim their art.

Glenn Lowry, director of the Museum of Modern Art, pledged that MoMA “does not and will not knowingly exhibit stolen works of art.” MoMA and other New York museums promised to investigate their collections.

More than a decade later, MoMA has returned nothing.

The heirs of German painter George Grosz tried to get three works back but said the museum played dirty, trouncing them on a legal technicality. MoMA successfully claimed the family had filed its 2009 lawsuit too late.

“We had hoped for a settlement and that they would make nice, some kind of an attempt,” said Lilian Grosz, widow of George Grosz’s son. “The big thing was that they hung the whole thing on a date. It was a moral issue for us.”

Today, one of the Grosz paintings, “The Poet Max Herrmann-Neisse,” is hanging in the museum’s European painting

gallery, but the other two are relegated to storage.

In a final blow, MoMA insisted last year that museum documents obtained by the Grosz family in the lawsuit be returned or destroyed.

Raymond Dowd, the Grosz family lawyer, had hoped to donate the papers to Holocaust museums for future use by scholars in the ongoing quest to right the wrongs of the Nazi era.

“This is perhaps the greatest property crime in human history, and our courts of law are rubber-stamping it for the duplicitous museums who are getting to keep



“The Poet Max Herrmann-Neisse” by George Grosz.

the benefits of Hitler’s crimes and to continue to display stolen art to American schoolchildren,” Dowd said.

MoMA began its “Provenance Research Project” in 2001, finally delving into works that it acquired after 1932 that could have been in Europe during the Nazi era.

Other New York City museums, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Guggenheim, Jewish Museum, and Brooklyn Museum, started similar research efforts.

The MoMA Web site says it found some 800 works that met the target definition, but said the majority “have provenance records that are sufficiently complete to eliminate the likelihood of Nazi misappropriation.”

Yet the museum’s Web site describes at least one piece, an André Derain painting called “Valley of the Lot at Vers,” as being seized as “degenerate art” and “sold by the Nazi government.” The museum bought it in 1939 through a gallery owned by a Nazi agent.

The museum maintains the work wasn’t considered stolen because the German museums were state institutions “and the art in them was owned by the German government.”

At the Met, where almost 500 works were said to be in Europe during the Nazi era, the museum has settled five claims and returned six pieces. One settlement allowed it to keep a disputed Monet.

The Brooklyn Museum’s provenance research turned up almost 200 works with Nazi-era ties, but the museum said it has received no claims and returned nothing. The Jewish Museum, with about 275 works fitting the time period in question, also said it had no claims.

The Guggenheim, which documents almost 300 works with European ties during the Nazi period, refused to comment on whether it has returned anything.

Museums have lost their sense of urgency in researching Nazi-looted art, according to the Claims Conference, a Manhattan-based organization that seeks restitution for Holocaust survivors and the return of stolen assets.

A 2006 survey by the Claims Conference concluded museums were far from the goal outlined in Washington in 1998 of identifying all art confiscated by the Nazis.

“As the generation of Holocaust survivors slips away, it is urgent that the task of provenance research of items of artwork in US museums rapidly be complete,” the report says.

Wesley Fisher, director of research for the Claims Conference, said museums were turning to the courts to settle claims.

“Things should be judged on their facts and merits,” Fisher said. “There’s a major

problem in the US. Instead of pursuing discussions, museums have brought lawsuits using technical legal solutions.”

When Swedish scholar Julius Schoeps came forward in 2007, asking for a Picasso back from MoMA and one from the Guggenheim, the museums joined forces and sued him.

Schoeps claimed the famed paintings belonged to his family and were sold against family’s will during the Nazi regime. The museums argued that Schoeps had no right to the works.

The legal battle went on until 2009, when a settlement was reached on the morning a trial was to start. The terms of the settlement were secret, but both museums got to keep the paintings.

The Grosz family came forward in 2003 asking for the return of the three paintings in MoMA’s collection.

Grosz, an Expressionist painter and Hitler critic known for his caricatures of German life, fled Nazi Germany in 1933, leaving many of his works in the hands of his Jewish art dealer, Alfred Flechtheim. The dealer left Germany, taking with him several Grosz paintings, which the family maintains he did not own.

Flechtheim died of blood poisoning in London after stepping on a rusty nail. Art dealer Charlotte Weidler claims she inherited the portrait of Max Herrmann-Neisse, a claim the Grosz family disputes.

The portrait later ended up for sale at the New York City gallery of Curt Valentin. Valentin was a Jew who had been authorized by the Nazis to sell German art in foreign countries, according to scholar Jonathan Petropoulos, an expert witness for the Grosz family.

Valentin sent the money back to Karl Buchholz, a Nazi agent and German gallery owner who passed on the revenue — minus his 25 percent commission — to the Nazi government, Petropoulos said.

“Valentin proceeded to sell hundreds of works purged from German state museums in America,” said Petropoulos, a pro-

(Continued on page 14)

FORGIVENESS IS FREEDOM, SAYS HOLOCAUST SURVIVOR

BY JOHN POPE,
THE TIMES-PICAYUNE

For two weeks in 1944, Eva Mozes lay near death in a hospital barrack at the Auschwitz death camp, feverish and covered with egg-size welts because the notorious Dr. Josef Mengele had injected something into the 10-year-old as part of



Eva and Miriam Mozes are pictured after being liberated from Auschwitz by the Russians. They are at center and right, in striped jackets.

his notorious experimentation on twins. Because Eva was expected to die, no one was allowed to treat or feed her. To get water, she had to muster all her strength to crawl to a faucet at the other end of the building.

She and her twin, Miriam, survived. A half-century later, Eva — now Eva Mozes Kor — did something that might seem

unthinkable: She forgave the Nazis, even though her parents and two older sisters had perished at Auschwitz.

The act of forgiveness “gave me back the power that was taken away from me as a victim,” Kor, 78, said in a telephone interview. “As long as we hold on to the anger, those who victimized us still have a hold on our lives. ... You don’t forgive because the perpetrator deserves it.

You do it because you, the victim, deserve the right to be free again.”

Kor grew up in the Romanian village of Portz, where the Mozeses were the only Jews. In 1944, the family was loaded onto a cattle car crowded with other Jews for the 70-hour trip to Auschwitz.

On the camp’s infamous train platform, where guards decided who would die, all the Mozeses were consigned to the gas chambers except Eva and Miriam. They were spared because they were twins, which were an object of fascination to Mengele.

Because of the Nazis’ preoccupation with blue-eyed blonds, one of Mengele’s procedures involved injecting female twins with a substance that he hoped would result in blue-eyed offspring. Kor said she and her sister were spared because blue was their natural eye color.

The Mozes twins were involved in an

experiment that, Kor said, probably was designed to develop a cure for spotted fever, an infectious disease with the symptoms Kor described that was running rampant in the death camp.



Eva Mozes Kor.

In each set of twins, one was given an injection of the disease-causing germ. Had Kor died, she said, she would have been autopsied, and her sister would have been killed, too, so doctors could compare the ways their organs worked.

During Kor’s ordeal in the hospital, she said Mengele once stopped at her bed-

side, looked at her fever chart and said: “Too bad. She’s so young. She has only two weeks to live.”

When her fever broke, she was returned to the twins’ barracks, where she was reunited with her sister. On January 27, 1945, when the Soviet Army liberated the camp, about 200 children were found, most of whom were still alive because they had been Mengele twins. Eva and Miriam Mozes were among them.

The sisters were in three refugee camps before moving in with a Romanian aunt. In 1950, they emigrated to Israel, where Miriam died in 1993.

While in Israel, Eva met and married Michael Kor, an American tourist and Holocaust survivor. She became an American citizen and the mother of two children. They settled in Terre Haute, Indiana, because that was the hometown of the commander of the Army unit that liberated Buchenwald, where Michael Kor had been imprisoned. The officer helped Michael Kor move to America.

In the late 1970s, Eva Kor started looking for other survivors of Mengele’s experiments. She found 122 living in 10 countries on four continents. She also founded CANDLES — Children of Auschwitz Nazi Deadly Lab Experiments Survivors — and built a museum that an arsonist torched in 2003. A new building was opened in 2005.

COULD THE BBC HAVE DONE MORE TO HELP HUNGARIAN JEWS?

Nearly half a million Hungarian Jews were killed in a matter of weeks in 1944 soon after German forces invaded their country. Mike Thomson reveals how the BBC's Hungarian Service could have warned them of their likely fate in the event of such an invasion, but did not do so.

In 1942 the BBC European Service was the front line in a propaganda war. The language services were broadcasting all over the continent to help the Allied war effort and convince those listening that the Allies were winning.

The BBC's foreign broadcasts at the time were not independent as they are now. They were being overseen by an organization called the Political Warfare Executive (PWE). It ran the battle for European hearts and minds from the floor it occupied in Bush House, the World Service's then headquarters in London.

That battle was particularly delicate in Hungary. Historically sympathetic to Germans, the Hungarians were allied with them but not fully settled in the Nazi camp.

The PWE — through the BBC broadcasts — sought to win over Hungarians and foment trouble in their alliance with Germany. It hoped to encourage resistance and bog German troops down in Hungary as an occupying force.

And to this end the BBC broadcast every day, giving updates on the war, general news, and opinion pieces on Hungarian politics. But among all these broadcasts, there were crucial things that were not being said, things that might have warned thousands of Hungarian Jews of the horrors to come in the event of a German occupation.

A memo setting out policy for the BBC Hungarian Service in 1942 states: "We shouldn't mention the Jews at all."

It was brought to my attention by Professor Frank Chalk, Director of the Montreal Institute for Genocide and Human Rights Studies at Concordia University in Canada, and was written by Carlile Macartney, Oxford academic, ex-MI6 officer, and the Foreign Office's top adviser on Hungary. And he was also on air as the BBC's top broadcaster on the Hungarian Service.

Macartney believed that to champion the Jews would alienate the majority of the Hungarian population who at that time, he argued, were anti-Semitic. Given that British propaganda directors wanted to draw German troops into Hungary as an occupying force, the argument was that anti-Semitic Hungarians wouldn't help the Allies if they seemed too pro-Jewish.

Hungary was home to one of Europe's largest Jewish populations, comprising around 750,000 to 800,000 people. They were subjected to anti-Jewish laws and widespread anti-Semitism among the wider population — and thousands of Jewish Hungarians died after being forced to serve in labor battalions on the war's eastern front.

Yet the Hungarian government had resisted Nazi demands to hand over its Jewish population, and it was largely intact until 1944.

TAKEN OFF AIR

From December 1942 the British government, the PWE, and the BBC Hungarian Service knew what was happening to European Jews beyond

Hungary, and the very likely fate of the Hungarian Jews if the Germans invaded.

No one could have expected the staff at the Hungarian Service to predict the Germans' March 1944 invasion of Hungary. But PWE documents do show that it was the aim of some of its broadcasts to provoke such an invasion.

Either way, the Hungarian Service continued following Macartney's advice and did not broadcast information about the exterminations taking place in Poland and elsewhere.

And this was despite increasing unease about Macartney. Internal BBC and British government memos show senior figures in the propaganda war querying Macartney's role, attitudes, and status.

He was also subject to a campaign by Hungarian exiles criticizing the BBC's

one had told them. But there's plenty of evidence that they could have known," said David Cesarani, Professor of History at Royal Holloway, University of London.

"The destruction of the Jews in Europe really moves into a high gear in the summer of 1942, with deportations from all over Europe, from the great concentrations of Jewish population in Poland, to the extermination camps. That is when news begins to filter into Hungary.

"But they did not know that the Germans would occupy Hungary and bring with them the machinery of destruction. All of this was beyond their most horrible nightmares, and people faced by such nightmares tend to go into denial — and that, I think, is what many Hungarian Jews did."

Tony Kushner, Professor of the History of Jewish/non-Jewish Relations at the

1943 telling the Jews of Hungary of the extermination program unfolding beyond their borders, might lives have been saved?

Tony Kushner argues that: "Up to 200,000 Jews did survive, which is a fraction of the 800,000 who were present in 1944. But it's still an indication perhaps that more could have been saved inside Hungary."

And Frank Chalk argues that at least a few thousand Hungarian Jews could have been saved. They had no inkling of the annihilation of the Jews elsewhere, in his view, but "the opposite might have been the case if the BBC had warned them."

"Then they would have hidden, they would have sought escape routes, they would have fought.... Warnings from the



approach. They were worried that he had become too sympathetic to the Hungarian government, too willing to overlook its pro-German positions.

Eventually, Macartney became so controversial that the PWE chief Robert Bruce Lockhart demanded that he be temporarily taken off air.

And yet his policy of silence on the Jews was followed right up until the German invasion in March 1944. After the tanks rolled in, the Hungarian Service did then broadcast warnings. But by then it was too late.

The German occupiers instigated the Final Solution in Hungary, and nearly half a million people were killed in a matter of weeks by the Nazi extermination operation at its most chillingly efficient.

The European Service as a whole is credited with transmitting warnings of the fate of the Jews. By 1943, the BBC Polish Service was broadcasting about the exterminations. So could warnings from the BBC Hungarian Service in 1943 have helped Hungarian Jews?

The question of what Hungarian Jews already knew has become a vexed historical issue.

"Many Hungarian Jews who survived the deportations claimed that they had not been informed by their leaders, that no

University of Southampton, argues that: "One of the major and most painful controversies from the survivors is 'we didn't know.' Now, we can dispute that to some extent."

"But there is a difference between knowing and believing, and had there been more attention to what was going on beyond its borders, perhaps that inertia of Hungarian Jews, but much more importantly of the Hungarian population as a whole, may have been to some extent challenged," he adds.

A "FANTASY"

The *Document* program spoke to Marianne and Yves, two Hungarian Jews who lived in Budapest during the war. Today, they remember listening to Macartney's broadcasts, and told us that at the time they thought of the BBC as a "drop of water in the mud."

Yves, who survived deportation to a labor camp, recalls: "I didn't know about Auschwitz. I knew there were deportations, that there were concentration camps, but this extermination, the use of gas chambers? I don't remember. That comes after the war."

If, with the backing of the PWE, which was controlling its broadcasts, the BBC had transmitted warnings throughout

BBC Hungarian Service to the Jews of Hungary and calls on the Christians of Hungary to support the Jewish population by offering sanctuary, false papers, help escaping to Romania, would have been of great significance."

But David Cesarani is unconvinced: "This is a fantasy. It wasn't the job of the BBC to warn Jews that the Nazis were coming to get them. The responsibility lay elsewhere. The BBC was doing everything it could to help win the war."

"Some could have built bunkers, hideaways, some could have tried to get false papers. But we're talking about 750,000 people, surrounded by a hostile population, by countries either allied to the Nazis, or occupied by the Germans; there was nowhere to hide, nowhere to run," he adds.

Whatever later became clear about what the Hungarian Jews did or did not know about the extermination program unfolding beyond their borders, the question remains: given that the PWE and BBC did know, should they have abandoned Macartney's policy and mentioned it in broadcasts to Hungary — whether or not it would have done any good?

Then again, can such a judgment ever be fairly made in times of peace — so many decades later?



REPORT FROM YAD VASHEM

YAD VASHEM ARCHIVES REDISCOVER HEROIC RESCUE

BY OFER ADERET, HAARETZ

A year and a half ago, an e-mail arrived at Yad Vashem's Righteous Among the Nations department. The sender, a resident of Germany, wished to inquire whether a deceased relative of his, a Wehrmacht soldier named Gerhard Kurzbach, was worthy of being granted recognition as one of the Righteous Among the Nations.

In response to the e-mail, the department's director, Irena Steinfeldt, opened an investigation in the Yad Vashem Archives. "And suddenly a fabulous story started coming together for me," she related.

Thanks to advanced software that makes it possible to conduct a search that focuses on various cross-sectional data, she was able to locate testimonies from the 1940s, 1950s and 1970s of various Holocaust survivors.

"All of a sudden, loads of testimonies popped up, which described a rescue story we had not been familiar with previously, at whose center was Gerhard Kurzbach, the Wehrmacht soldier," she said. With the material in hand, Steinfeldt applied to a German archive in Berlin, where the personal files of the millions of soldiers of the Third Reich are maintained to this day. The archive's staff tracked down Kurzbach's file for her.

Master Sgt. Kurzbach, born in 1915, was drafted into the German military in August 1939 and, shortly before World War II broke out, was assigned to the artillery corps. In May 1941, he was appointed commander of a workshop for refurbishing military vehicles in the town of *Bochnia*, near *Krakow*, Poland. The plant employed hundreds of Jewish forced laborers from the *Bochnia* ghetto.

Survivors from *Bochnia* recounted that Kurzbach saved a large number of Jews from roundup and deportation by concealing them in the plant he managed. He even was able to smuggle a few into hiding places. One testimony came from Romek Marber, an 87-year-old survivor who today lives in Britain. Marber, who was born in Poland, was deported to *Bochnia* in 1939 from *Turek*. Two years later, together with 200 other Jews, he was sent to work at Kurzbach's plant.

"On August 23, 1942, the day of the big *Aktion* in the ghetto," said Marber, "we were told that we had to stay during the night and work, since there was more work than expected: more lorries to be finished than planned. The gate of the factory was also closed, which was very rare. Usually it was always open."

The next day, when the workers returned to the ghetto after work, they found it was empty. "We realized that Kurzbach had actually saved us from the *Aktion* and from deportation," he said. "I never saw him again," Marber added.

Anyone who was not hidden at the plant was sent that very night to the *Belzec* death camp. For example, that was the fate of Marber's mother, sister, and grandparents. Later in the war, he was moved around among various camps, including *Auschwitz*. Marber did not know what happened to Kurzbach, who had saved

his life. All he recalled was that Kurzbach disappeared in March 1943.

In fact, Gerhard Kurzbach had been transferred suddenly to another unit. The last sign of life from him came from Romania, in a letter he sent to his family in 1944. He died in 1945 in a Red Army prisoner-of-war camp. The question of why he was transferred from his post and whether he was sent to the front as punishment for having saved Jews remains unanswered to this day.

When the war was over Marber reunited with his father and brother, who had emigrated to the United Kingdom. He managed to rebuild his life and became a successful graphic designer. Among other things, he designed the covers of Penguin books (including 200 titles from the Penguin Crime line) and covers for both *The Economist* and *New Society* magazines.

"If you live constantly with hate, you will eventually destroy yourself," said Marber. "The tragedy is so big, but you continue. Without forgetting," he said.

In early 2010, Marber published a memoir, *No Return: Journeys in the Holocaust*, in which he mentions Kurzbach and his



Gerhard Kurzbach at his 1940 wedding.

efforts in saving Jews.

Yad Vashem's Righteous Among the Nations department has a staff of 10 employees, and is multilingual. In an average year, they review the cases of several hundred candidates for the distinction. The criteria are clear: a candidate, who need not be alive, must be a non-Jew who saved Jews in the Holocaust, at the risk of his or her life, and not for monetary gain. Every year some 500 new righteous gentiles are added to the list. In the course of the 50 years some 24,500 people have made the list.

Kurzbach met the criteria, and Marber's testimony played a key role in the decision to name him a Righteous Among the Nations. In accordance with protocol, the case was sent for approval to a public committee that consists of Holocaust survivors and is headed by retired Supreme Court Justice Jacob Turkel (not a survivor himself). After it was decided to grant the distinction to Kurzbach, Yad Vashem, with the help of the Israeli embassy in Berlin worked to locate his relatives.

It turned out that Kurzbach's family is split between two German states — Bavaria and Brandenburg — and that the two branches had never met. "It is hard for me to describe the excitement that took hold of them when I got in touch with them," said Sandra Witte, a staffer at the Israeli embassy in Germany, which is in charge of organizing the ceremonies for German Righteous Among the Nations. "None of them had known Kurzbach, but they began

to cry." Kurzbach's daughter died early this year. Her son and daughter — Kurzbach's grandchildren — were located, along with other relatives.

One of the latter, Kurzbach's nephew, sent Yad Vashem photos of his uncle and a rare and special document: a letter Kurzbach's wife received in 1943 from the Jews he saved, immediately after he had left the workshop and vanished. "Two hundred people mourn his departure. We bade farewell not only to our supervisor, whom we loved and respected, but also to one who was like a father and a good friend to us. Each of us owes him gratitude," they wrote to her.

Last November, during a vacation in Israel, Romek Marber got a surprising telephone call from the Israeli embassy in Berlin, in which he was informed that Kurzbach would be named Righteous Among the Nations at a ceremony in Berlin. Such ceremonies are usually held abroad to facilitate the participation of family and friends. As the only person still living who knew Kurzbach, he was invited to be the guest of honor at the event, and to meet the family of the man who saved his life.

"I did not agree to it at once," said Marber. "I had to think about it. So many years had gone by since then. One must not live the past."

The decision to attend the ceremony in Berlin was not an easy one: Marber had not visited Poland or Germany since the Holocaust. In the end, however, he decided he must go. "I'm pleased that he is getting this *Hasid Umot Olam*," explained Marber, using the Hebrew term for the honor. "I guess he could not live with what was done to the Jews," he said.

Thus, in Berlin, Marber joined 26 of Kurzbach's relatives at the ceremony at which Kurzbach was named Righteous Among the Nations, under the auspices of the Israeli embassy. Along with the ambassador, Yaakov Hadas-Handelsman, the ceremony was attended by Germany's president, Joachim Gauck, who rose from his seat to embrace Marber.

"I stand here before you today, thanks to the man in the picture on the screen [projected on the stage]," Marber said. "Kurzbach managed to save me and other Jews, but the fact that he tried to save is even more important than that he succeeded. He did this with great personal courage ... We learn from this that those who hate and spread an ideology of hate lose in the end. There is no future for hatred."

Hundreds of German high school students attended the ceremony. "They were riveted, and gave Marber a standing ovation when he was done speaking," reported Itay Tagner, spokesman of the embassy. "Most of them were 15 or 16 years old — the age Marber had been when he worked in Kurzbach's plant."

Added Sandra Witte: "I have organized quite a few of these ceremonies, but I never saw anything like this in my life."

For her part, Irena Steinfeldt commented that "I have a habit of saying that I've seen it all, but really each case is exceptional. And when a story like this falls into your hands — it is unbelievable."

NEW RESEARCH BY YAD VASHEM BALANCES HISTORICAL HOLOCAUST-COLLUDING CRITICISM OF VATICAN

Yad Vashem has sought to clarify an update made to explanatory text in its Holocaust History Museum in Jerusalem which describes the attitude of the Vatican to the persecution of Jews during the Holocaust.

The renowned institute for Holocaust research had previously criticized WWII-era Pope Pius XII's refusal to publicly condemn the mass extermination of Jews by Nazi Germany, describing his response as "controversial." This stance had threatened to create an irreversible rift between the Vatican and Israel as well as significantly tarnishing the Catholic Church's image for global Jewry.

In 2007, the papal envoy in Israel, Antonio Franco, even threatened to skip the annual Holocaust Remembrance Day commemoration at the museum in protest at the panel's text, eventually agreeing to attend.

However, citing more advanced research into the wartime activities of the Vatican and Pope Pius XII, the museum has updated its representation of the reaction of the Vatican, providing more detail about the opposing historical positions. The controversial panel now balances the criticism with a more measured viewpoint:

"The Pope's critics claim that his decision to abstain from condemning the murder of the Jews by Nazi Germany constitutes a moral failure: the lack of clear guidance left room for many to collaborate with Nazi Germany...His defenders maintain that this neutrality prevented harsher measures against the Vatican and the Church's institutions throughout Europe, thus enabling a considerable number of secret rescue activities to take place at different levels of the Church."

Yad Vashem itself has been keen to assert that the changes were made following recommendations from its own research institute and not in response to Vatican pressure, maintaining that the updated text reflects facts in its possession as of 2009, and insisting in a statement that "many questions (remain) open. Only when all material is available will a clearer picture emerge."

Franco, for his part, welcomed the institute's altered stance as a "positive evolution." He went on to say of the balanced text: "For the Holy See, for the church, it's a step forward in the sense that it evolves from the straight condemnation to the evaluation."

Yad Vashem reserved an element of its former criticism of the Vatican, by reissuing its public plea for Rome to open its famed archives "to researchers so that a clearer understanding of the events can be arrived at."

Reiterating that research on "many aspects of Holocaust history" was ongoing, the museum stressed it would continue to implement "corrections" and "any other updates necessary in the Museums" as and when new information came into its possession.

RARE SHOAH IMAGES FROM NAZI ALBUMS

Pictures of daily Jewish life during the Holocaust have been hidden in private albums of Wehrmacht soldiers for years. Dariusz Dekiert, a Christian from Poland, locates and hands them over to Shem Olam Institute. "I see it as rectification," he tells Yedioth Ahronoth.

YEHUDA SHOHAT, YNETNEWS.COM

Like children their age all over the world in recent decades, these children too stood in front of a photographer, followed his orders, and smiled. The result appeared almost routine, but there is nothing routine about this photo.

It is a picture of Jewish children during the Holocaust. The photographer is a German *Wehrmacht* soldier. One frozen moment in the hell Europe's Jews went through.

The *Shem Olam* Institute launched a special project in the past year, collecting photos of Jews from the Holocaust. These are not the famous propaganda pictures, but rather photos kept in the private albums of German troops, who documented their service like any other soldier.

Most album owners, *Shem Olam* officials say, seek to get rid of the pictures linking their family members to Nazi Germany.

Some of the pictures have the original captions written by the soldiers. In other cases, an inquiry was required to understand them. Some of the soldiers documented the same people time and again, teaching us quite a lot about the daily life of the photographed Jews. Others just documented the people and stories they came across.

In some pictures the Jews seem unafraid of the soldiers. In others, their facial expressions point to fear, embarrassment, and humiliation.

The story of the man who found these pictures is as fascinating as the photos themselves. Dariusz Dekiert, a 39-year-old Polish citizen who visited Israel this week as a guest of the *Shem Olam* Institute, is a devout Christian. Locating more and more items from those dark days has virtually become his life's work.

"I have a feeling that this world has chosen me," he says. "All I wanted to do was learn, and the science of Judaism was the subject I found easiest to get into. So I started learning and was drawn in."

Dariusz quickly learned Hebrew, Yiddish, and even Aramaic, in a bid to translate the Talmud into Polish in the future. After completing his studies he settled in *Lodz*. He worked as a lecturer at the university, and after being authorized by the Polish justice minister to work as a professional translator, he founded a company offering Hebrew-to-Polish and Polish-to-Hebrew translations.

His current job, he tells *Yedioth Ahronoth*, combines his great loves — history, geography, and Judaism.

"As part of my work I locate documents, photos, objects, and historical material which were left in Poland and are now in private hands, and hold negotiations to obtain them," he says. "It involves a lot of patience and negotiation skills. In Poland and Germany there are tens of thousands of pictures of Jews taken by German soldiers who have already aged or died."

What is the most emotionally moving item you found?

"A suitcase that arrived from the *Lodz* ghetto, which I bought from a private person. It was empty and appeared to have been through hardships, and it had a clue leading to a name I couldn't identify. The person who sold it to me said his father



This picture shows Jewish children being forced to give German soldiers a Nazi salute. The children are smiling, perhaps having no other choice, and appear not to understand that they have become pawns in the hands of soldiers who have lost their humanity.



During the invasion of Poland, photographer Leni Riefenstahl was in the town of *Końskie* while 30 citizens were being executed in revenge for an alleged revolt against German soldiers. According to her memoirs, Riefenstahl tried to stop the execution but an angry German soldier threatened to shoot her on the spot. She claimed she did not know the victims were Jewish. This picture shows the building next to which the Jews were shot to death.



Warsaw ghetto. Hundreds of pictures of the ghetto's streets were found during the search, revealing the Jews' daily life.

had stolen it from Jews who got on the train to Auschwitz. After searching for a long time, the *Shem Olam* Institute managed to locate relatives of the suitcase owners in Israel, and the fact that it was returned to Jewish hands moved me to tears.

"Another object I was moved by was a jewel created from two Polish coins combined together. The bridge of the *Lodz* ghetto was sketched on the rear side of the coins with the inscription, 'To my beloved mother.' Unfortunately, we have no way of locating the source of the jewel."

Today Dariusz lives near the Jewish community in *Lodz*. "I see my work as rectification," he says, "especially when it comes to returning the pictures of Jews during the Holocaust to Jewish hands."



A German soldier with a Jew. From time to time, the German soldiers ran into a Jew whose appearance matched the Nazis' brainwashing. When they came across colorful people, they rushed to pose for a picture with them in order to present the Aryan race next to the "inferior race."

DISSOLVE MY NOBEL PRIZE!

It's 1940. The Nazis have taken Copenhagen. They are literally marching through the streets, and physicist Niels Bohr has just hours, maybe minutes, to make two Nobel Prize medals disappear.

These medals are made of 23-karat gold. They are heavy to handle, and being shiny and inscribed, they are noticeable. The Nazis have declared no gold shall leave Germany, but two Nobel laureates, one of Jewish descent, the other an opponent of the National Socialists, have quietly sent their medals to Bohr's Institute of Theoretical Physics, for protection. Their act is probably a capital offense — if the Gestapo can find the evidence.

Inconveniently, that evidence was now sitting in Bohr's building, clearly inscribed "Von Laue" (for Max von Laue, winner of the 1914 Prize for Physics) and "Franck" (for James Franck, the physics winner in 1925) — like two death warrants. Bohr's institute had attracted and protected Jewish scientists for years. The Nazis knew that, and Niels Bohr knew (now that Denmark was suddenly part of the Reich) that he was a target. He had no idea what to do.

On the day the Nazis came to Copenhagen, a Hungarian chemist named Georgy de Hevesy (he would one day win a Nobel of his own) was working in Bohr's lab. He wrote later, "I suggested that we should bury the medal(s)," but Bohr thought no, the Germans would dig up the grounds, the garden, search everywhere in the building. Too dangerous. So Hevesy's thoughts turned to chemistry. Maybe he could make the medals disappear. He took the first one, he says, and "I decided to dissolve it. While the invading forces marched in the streets of Copenhagen, dissolving medals."

This was not an obvious solution, since gold is a very stable element, doesn't tarnish, doesn't mix, and doesn't dissolve in anything — except for one particular chemical emulsifier, called "aqua regia," a mixture of three parts hydrochloric acid and one part nitric acid.

It must have been an excruciating afternoon. De Hevesy, in his autobiography, says that because gold is "exceedingly unreactive and difficult to dissolve," it was slow going, but as the minutes ticked down, both medals were reduced to a colorless solution that turned faintly peach and then bright orange. By the time the Nazis arrived, both awards had liquefied inside a flask that was then stashed on a high laboratory shelf. Then, says science writer Sam Kean, in his book *The Disappearing Spoon*: "When the Nazis ransacked Bohr's institute, they scoured the building for loot or evidence of wrongdoing but left the beaker of orange aqua regia untouched. Hevesy was forced to flee to Stockholm in 1943, but when he returned to his battered laboratory after V-E Day, he found the innocuous beaker undisturbed on a shelf."

Back in Denmark, de Hevesy did a remarkable thing. He reversed the chemistry, precipitated out the gold, and then, around January 1950, sent the raw metal back to the Swedish Academy in Stockholm. The Nobel Foundation then recast the prizes using the original gold and re-presented them to Mr. von Laue and Mr. Franck in 1952. Professor Franck got his recoined medal at a ceremony at the University of Chicago, on January 31, 1952.

Niels Bohr also had a Nobel medal, but he'd put his up for auction on March 12, 1940, to raise money for Finnish Relief. The winning bid was anonymous, but later, Mr. Anonymous gave Bohr's medal to the Danish Historical Museum of *Fredrikborg*, where it can be seen today.

HITLER ORDERED REPRIEVE FOR JEWISH MAN

An estimated 6 million Jews died at the hands of the Nazis and their allies during the Holocaust. Hundreds of thousands more suffered, but somehow survived, in concentration camps. And some escaped, savoring freedom they otherwise never would have known.

Then there's Ernst Hess, who was a decorated World War I soldier, a former judge, and, despite being raised a Protestant and marrying someone of that faith, a "full-blooded Jew" in the eyes of the Nazi regime.

According to a groundbreaking report, Hess was granted a reprieve despite this designation thanks to none other than Adolf Hitler.

Susanne Mauss, editor of the *Jewish Voice from Germany* newspaper, found the August 27, 1940, note from the Gestapo (the infamous Nazi secret police) that saved Hess — albeit temporarily. The order was revoked the next

year, and Hess spent years doing hard labor in Nazi concentration camps and work sites.

Still, given Hitler and his colleagues' extreme views and actions on Jews, even the temporary amnesty granted in the letter that Mauss unearthed in a file kept by the Gestapo in *Düsseldorf* about Hess is extraordinary.

Written by the notorious SS figure Heinrich Himmler, the note calls for saving and protecting Hess "as per the Führer's wishes," referring to Hitler, who had led Germany since 1933.

The letter, a copy of which is posted on the *Jewish Voice from Germany's* website, also states that Hess should not be inconvenienced "in any way whatsoever."

Hitler and Hess had crossed paths before, serving in the same infantry unit

during World War I. In fact, for a short time Hess had been Hitler's commander — though the *Jewish Voice from Germany* said Hess, whose now 86-year-old daughter was interviewed for their story, didn't personally know Hitler, and their comrades described the future Nazi leader as quiet, with no friends in the regiment.

But Hess himself was close to many of his fellow veterans, including Fritz

as Jews and exposed to general contempt."

That appeal was denied, though the Hess family was able to move to a then German-speaking part of Italy for the next several years. In that time, Hess still got part of his military pension, and his passport wasn't stamped with a red J to brand him as Jewish, the *Jewish Voice* reported.

But after a pact with Italy that ceded that area to the Nazi regime, and after the family's attempts to flee to Switzerland and Brazil failed, they landed back in Germany in 1940.

The reprieve, credited to the Führer, came in the summer of that year.

But in 1941, Hess submitted the letter of protection, only to have it swiped away. The special order revoked, he landed soon thereafter in a concentration camp, and then began

working for a timber processing company helping build barracks for Nazi soldiers.

"The slave workers were forced to live outdoors and were treated terribly, and of course they were watched by members of the SS," said Ursula Hess of her father, who besides being a soldier, judge and "sportsman," had once been a concert violinist. "Had he not been as fit as he was, he would never have survived."

When the war ended and he gained his freedom, according to the *Jewish Voice* report, Hess was asked to become a judge yet again. He turned down the offer. A year later, Hess launched a new career and gained new prominence as a railway executive.

By then, he'd rejoined his wife and daughter. But not all his family: His sister Berta was killed in 1942 in Auschwitz.



This image dated around 1918 shows Ernst Hess, a judge at the district court of *Düsseldorf*.

Wiedemann, according to daughter Ursula Hess. And Wiedemann, who became a top aide to Hitler from 1934 to 1939 before becoming Germany's consul in San Francisco through 1941, helped connect Hess to Hans Heinrich Lammers, the head of the Reich Chancellery during Hitler's reign.

Hess, who was forced to retire as a judge in 1936 — the same year he was beaten up by special police in front of his home — had pleaded for leniency before. According to the *Jewish Voice*, he had petitioned Hitler to make an exception because his daughter Ursula would be considered a "first-degree half-breed" under Nazi doctrine.

Highlighting his patriotism and Christian upbringing, Hess wrote, "For us, it is a kind of spiritual death to now be branded

A SMALL TOWN NEAR AUSCHWITZ

With bodies and blood in the streets of *Bedzin*, with the unspeakable horrors of Auschwitz-Birkenau "a mere 25 miles away down the railway tracks," Klauska surely was fully aware of what was happening in what was at least nominally his jurisdiction. Yes, he tried repeatedly to get into the armed forces and thus presumably to get away from the systematic murder all around him — yes, too, his wife repeatedly mentioned in letters home that he was in a "nervous state," again presumably because of the murders — but he was a good Nazi to the end, and afterward, as "a loyal and committed civil servant in the Federal Republic of Germany: a convinced democrat, a well-respected administrator, and an upstanding citizen," he continued to insist that his hands were clean. Fulbrook writes:

"In short, those who had been involved in running the German system in a wide variety of capacities in the area later professed that they had seen and heard nothing at all while an estimated 85,000 people in total were deported in stages out of the towns, villages, and surrounding localities and through the ghettos of *Bedzin* and *Soisnowiec* on their way to labor camps and the gas chambers of Auschwitz. These Germans all claimed, however implausibly, that they had been working late, were engaged in other duties, away on holiday, attending a son's

wedding — or, in Klauska's case, had 'disappeared' to the front — at the time of any violent incident or deportation that they might have been expected to have witnessed; and they had supposedly only at a later date gleaned — or at second hand, by being told — something of what had allegedly taken place."

Fulbrook is quite right to say that "the tragedy, for Klauska, as for so many rising civil servants of this generation, was that he came to maturity at precisely the moment Hitler came to power." In trying to lead an ordinary, decent life — and we have no reason to believe that he wanted to do otherwise — Klauska was given a terrible choice: to choose another career and abandon his hopes for himself and his young family, or to go along, "putting the policies of Hitler, Himmler, and Heydrich into effect — with particularly virulent implications in the eastern territories of the Reich."

Fulbrook, torn between her obligations as a historian and her longing "to protect family friends, the surviving members of Klauska's family," ultimately reaches what seems to me the only conclusion that is both fair and honest:

"I can see no evidence whatsoever of Klauska having tried in practice to temper or alter the direction of Nazi policies, and much to suggest that he behaved in ways that more than satisfied his superi-

FINLAND'S JEWS ADVISED NOT TO WEAR KIPPA

Finland's Jewish community members have been advised not to wear a skullcap in public for fear of anti-Semitic attacks.

The recommendation was revealed by the security officer of the Jewish community in Helsinki in an interview to Yle, Finland's national public-service broadcasting company in the Swedish language.

The security officer added that the community faced six to 10 anti-Semitic incidents a month.

Yaron Nadbornik, president of Helsinki's Jewish community, said in response that the advice was not issued by the community leaders but rather given by the security officer to several individuals in private conversations.

"The situation for Jews in Finland is vastly better than in other Nordic countries and has historically been very good. I personally walk to synagogue with a *kippa* regularly and have not felt or heard any kind of harassment," Nadbornik added.

Only 1,500 Jews live in Finland today, many of them descendants of the Jewish soldiers who served in the Russian army in Finland in the mid-19th century, when Finland was an autonomous grand duchy of the czarist empire.

The soldiers eventually gained the right to settle in the Nordic country and created the basis for the Jewish community, establishing a synagogue in Helsinki in 1906. When Finland became independent in 1917, Jews were given full civil rights.

During World War II, Jews served along with Finns in the national army, fighting aggressions from both the Soviet Union and, later, Nazi Germany. Despite repeated pleas from one-time ally Germany, the Finnish government refused to take action against Jews or deprive them of their civil rights during the war.

Besides the Helsinki house of worship, complete with Jewish school, there is also a synagogue in the western city of *Turku*, where some 200 Jews live.

(Continued from page 4)

family friend, and she has succeeded: The judgment she reaches is unequivocal but fair.

Born in 1910 "in a traditionally Prussian area of Silesia," Klauska wanted "to follow in his father's footsteps in the German civil service" and succeeded as a quite young man: "Intelligent, hard-working, ambitious, articulate, and charming in manner, conventionally handsome and with appropriate social connection," Klauska "was in some senses paradigmatic of many who considered themselves to be 'decent Germans' and who sustained the Nazi regime, while distinguishing themselves from those they saw as the 'real' or 'fanatic' Nazis, and then realized only too late just what depths of criminality this regime actually entailed." He "was not an independent initiator of Nazi policies, but he faithfully implemented directives passed on to him by his superiors." Like Adolf Eichmann, he just followed orders.

Whether Klauska ever had on his own hands the blood of Jewish or other victims of Nazi violence is not known, though Fulbrook considers it possible, but he certainly was one of the many who "did indeed just go along with Nazism out of a diffuse sense of not wanting to stand out against the herd, not wanting to miss career opportunities, not wanting to draw adverse attention to themselves."

ors. According to his son, Udo Klauska's real value to the regional government was in his superior administrative abilities and not in any particular commitment to or enthusiasm for specifically anti-Jewish policies, in which he was less than actively involved. Yet 'mere administration' in such a context and system was intrinsically deeply compromised and inevitably effected on racial lines. . . . However much I would like to have persuaded myself otherwise, I cannot help but conclude that, whatever Klauska's perhaps ambivalent inner feelings, the way he behaved had horrendous historical consequences; and hence to have played any such role in this system was morally wrong."

In reviewing this fine book, I have chosen to emphasize Fulbrook's account of Klauska's career as Landrat, but she narrates this within the larger context of what happened in and around *Bedzin* during those awful years. Many of the stories she tells are gruesome, and reading them is not easy, but they are absolutely necessary to an understanding — even if a tentative and limited one — of what happened then and there, and why the likes of Udo Klauska, decent though they may have been at heart, cannot be permitted to escape the judgment of history.

“REOPEN PROBE INTO RAOUL WALLENBERG’S FATE”

BY SUSANNE BERGER, THE LOCAL

After conducting a decade-long investigation, the official joint Swedish-Russian Working Group studying Wallenberg's fate in Russia concluded its report in 2001 with these succinct words: “The burden of proof regarding the death of Raoul Wallenberg rests with the Russian government.”

Eleven years later, the world is still waiting for that proof.

As Hans Magnusson, the former Chairman of the Swedish Working Group remarked recently in a speech in Moscow, the idea that Wallenberg died on July 17, 1947 “seems an increasingly shaky one.”

Last January, Magnusson was appointed by Swedish Foreign Minister Carl Bildt to conduct a fact-finding mission to study what new information exists in the Wallenberg case and how it can be best followed up. Bildt took the step in response to growing complaints by researchers about the lack of direct access to Russian archives.

Swedish officials have known for decades that Russia has important records that it refuses to show. However, the Swedish government currently considers the Raoul Wallenberg case purely a historical issue and wants any remaining questions solved through “cooperative” archival research.

For researchers, this means that the Wallenberg inquiry is essentially moving in circles. They know exactly what documentation they need to see but cannot obtain the necessary official support from either Russian or Swedish officials to gain access to it.

Last September, the chief of the Russian State Security Service's (FSB) Archival Directorate, Lt. Gen. Vasily Khristoforov, emphasized in an interview with the Associated Press (AP) that he was “more than convinced that if Wallenberg outlived the official date of his death, it could only have been by a few days.”

However, Khristoforov offered no insight concerning from what particular knowledge or documentation he derived this certainty.

A closer examination of all documentation currently available in the case shows that there is a surprisingly even split between evidence pointing toward the possible death of Raoul Wallenberg in

July 1947 and evidence of his possible strict isolation at the time.

It was in fact Khristoforov and the FSB archives that have thrown the most serious doubt on the old Soviet version that Wallenberg died on July 17, 1947.

In 2009, Khristoforov revealed that a Prisoner No. 7, who is believed to have been Raoul Wallenberg, was interrogated on July 23, 1947, six days after what Russian officials have maintained is the date of Wallenberg's death.

What we do know for sure is that Raoul Wallenberg was questioned on March 11, 1947 in Lubyanka prison.

From then on, he could have been either killed or continued to be held in Lubyanka, Lefortovo or another prison — most likely in or around Moscow — as a prisoner under investigation.

Another possibility is that Wallenberg was formally charged and sentenced for a crime and sent to a known isolation facility like those at the prisons of *Vladimir*, *Verkhne Uralsk*, or *Alexandrovsk*.

Alternatively, he could have been transferred to a Special Camp or possibly a psychiatric hospital.

Regardless, some kind of decisive action was definitely taken on or around July 22 or 23, 1947.

The absence of any independently corroborated witness testimonies about Raoul Wallenberg's presence in the Soviet prison system after 1947 suggests that he may have died around that time, but the issue is far from clear.

“The inquiry into Wallenberg's death should be reopened,” argues Nikita Petrov, the deputy director of the human rights group Memorial in Moscow.

As he told the Russian news agency Interfax on May 29, “from my point of view, this could be a criminal inquiry. Murder is a criminal offense, and here it is important to identify all those responsible and reconstruct the picture of the crime.”

Unlike Petrov, other Wallenberg experts do not believe it is certain that Wallenberg was killed in July 1947.

Important questions raised by Susan Mesinai, Dr. Marvin Makinen, and Ari Kaplan, the former independent consultants to the Swedish-Russian Working Group, regarding the numbering of highly secret foreign prisoners in Soviet captivity remain unanswered.

In her report from 2001, Mesinai pointed

out that the chronological numbering of about thirty sentenced prisoners held in *Vladimir* between the years 1947 and 1952 shows obvious gaps.

In fact, for the years 1947–48 — the most critical period of the Wallenberg case — six numbers remain unidentified.

It is possible that one of these numbers was assigned to Raoul Wallenberg, Mesinai writes.

And Russian authorities still have not identified an unknown Swedish prisoner



Raoul Wallenberg.

held in Vladimir Prison during the 1950s and early 1960s. The answer to this simple question alone could move the case dramatically forward.

While some experts stress that Soviet leader Joseph Stalin would have had little use for Raoul Wallenberg after 1947, others dispute that assertion.

As the Swedish Working Group Report suggests, the killing of a foreign diplomat was a very serious matter.

“Although we know that Stalin had few, if any, moral scruples,” the report argues, “it would have been exceptional to order the execution of a diplomat from a neutral country. It might have appeared simpler to keep him in isolation.”

In other words, Stalin may have wanted to gauge if Wallenberg could not be of some use to him in the months or years ahead.

But key Russian intelligence files that could provide insight into the Soviet leadership's thinking on this issue remain firmly classified in Russian archives.

How long could Raoul Wallenberg have survived?

That question is currently impossible to answer. The official Soviet notification of Wallenberg's death to the Swedish government in February 1957 raises doubts that he was alive beyond that time.

However, investigators continue to wonder why Soviet officials at that moment

offered such an ambiguous account of his alleged death and why Russian officials have not provided a fuller explanation of Wallenberg's fate since then.

It appears very unlikely at this stage that the current Russian leadership does not know what happened to Raoul Wallenberg.

High-level institutional memory was available until very recently and to some degree remains available today.

Sergei Kartashov, head of the Fourth Department, Third Main Directorate of MGB, which investigated Raoul Wallenberg's case in 1947, died in 1979.

Anastas Mikoyan, a longtime member of the Politburo, survived until 1978; longtime Soviet Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Molotov was still alive in 1986, while Nikolai Selivanovsky, Deputy to Minister of State Security Viktor Abakumov, who had direct authority over Wallenberg's case, died only in 1997.

Two of Raoul Wallenberg's interrogators, Daniil Kopelyansky and his colleague Boris Solovov, lived past the year 2000.

According to Nikita Petrov, there is little doubt that Russian authorities are continuing to conceal important documentation. As he told Interfax, “there is a bulk of evidence which is gradually coming to the surface...This gives us reasons to suggest that not everything was investigated in the Wallenberg case.”

Arseny Roginsky, co-founder of Russia-based human rights group Memorial, shares this assessment.

“Is it possible to clarify the Wallenberg case? Yes, it is possible,” Roginsky said in a recent interview, adding that this requires “free independent researchers working in Russian archives.”

The simplest explanation for why the Russian government does not release the full facts about the Raoul Wallenberg case is that the truth does not fit with the decades-old Soviet version of his fate.

The Kremlin may feel that revelation of the truth about Raoul Wallenberg runs counter to its current policy of promoting only “useful” history, the presentation of historical events in ways that serve to reinforce President Vladimir Putin's idea of a strong, powerful Russia.

It is time to be daring and to face the possible contradictions — the world and Raoul Wallenberg's family have been waiting far too long.

A CANDLE IN THE HEART

(Continued from page 4)

fell ill. When she died, the bereft Maurice sent Judith to a children's camp in Hungary, from which she ran away. When she reached Budapest, she collapsed physically, requiring many weeks of rehabilitation. Maurice subsequently married a beautiful woman, who wanted no part of someone else's child. So Maurice sent Judith to a mountain camp in Czechoslovakia. With her contact with the Sterns severed, Judith was gathered up by Rabbi Solomon Schonfeld and placed in a post-war *Kindertransport* to England. She stayed with a reserved, Orthodox foster family while attending a school run by Schonfeld. Their lack of warmth persuaded her, at age 13, to migrate to Israel, where she lived at the *Kfar Baya* youth village in *Ra'anana*.

The English that she had learned served her well in Israel because she was able to serve as a tour guide for many English-speaking visitors, including a young man who would become her first husband, Howard Alter, to whom she was

wed at age 18 on December 28, 1955. Alter brought her to New York.

They owned a business called Howard Notions and Trimming Company, and eventually had three children. Learning American ways, and avoiding anything that would remind her of her childhood in Europe, Judith was happy being a suburban housewife. But in 1972, her husband's life was claimed by cancer.

Now on her own again, Judith took care of her children rather than being the recipient of care. This enabled her to grow psychologically into a more independent person. Instead of rushing into the security of another marriage, she waited until June 3, 1981, to marry attorney Irwin Kallman, the second marriage for each. By 1983 she was a grandmother, and today she is a great-grandmother.

Such is the outline of an unusual life. Beyond these bare facts, however, this book is worth reading because it provides insight into the human spirit, and how even the youngest and most fragile among us can survive incredible trauma.

JEWES ARE THE VICTIMS OF NEARLY TWO-THIRDS OF RELIGIOUS HATE CRIMES

The release of the FBI's annual Hate Crime Statistics Act (HCSA) report indicated a promising new trend in America, with hate crimes overall falling by 6 percent in 2011. However, despite the improvement, anti-Jewish hate crimes still remain disproportionately high, the report found.

According to the report, there were 6,222 hate crimes in the U.S. in 2011 with 1,480 religious hate crimes, down 3.4 percent from 2010. These incidents included offenses like vandalism, intimidation, assault, rape, and murder, the FBI report said.

Of the 1,480 religious hate crimes, nearly two-thirds were anti-Jewish at 63.2 percent, with those against Islam a distant second at 12.5 percent and those against Catholicism next at 5.7 percent.

While the overall number of anti-Jewish hate crimes fell slightly from 887 in 2010 to 711, Jews are still overwhelmingly the victims of hate crimes compared to other

religious groups.

The Anti-Defamation League (ADL) welcomed the overall decline. However, the group expressed concern at the disproportionately high number of anti-Jewish attacks.

“It is also troubling that Jews and Jewish institutions continued to be principal targets, accounting for 63 percent of all religion-based hate crimes in 2011 — showing, once again, that anti-Semitism is still a serious and deeply entrenched problem in America,” said Barry Curtiss-Lusher, ADL National Chair, and Abraham H. Foxman, ADL National Director, in a joint statement.

According to a 2010 Pew Research Center report, Jews comprise approximately 1.6 percent of the U.S. population, whereas Muslims account for 0.6 percent. The two largest religious affiliations in the U.S. are Evangelical Protestants and Catholics, at 26.3 percent and 23.9 percent, respectively.

NEW INSIGHT INTO THE WARSAW GHETTO UPRISING

BY JACK COHEN,
THE TIMES OF ISRAEL

On April 14, Moshe Arens, former Israeli defense minister, foreign minister, and ambassador to the USA, spoke at Netanya AACI on his recently published book, *Flags over the Warsaw Ghetto*. This is a unique and novel work that rights a historic wrong in Jewish history. The date was appropriate since the uprising in the Warsaw ghetto started on April 19, 1943, the first day of Passover 69 years ago, and the date of *Yom Hashoah*, Holocaust Heroes and Martyrs Remembrance Day in Israel. Until now the true history of what happened during that epic battle has been obscured by lack of information and biased reportage. Finally thanks to Moshe Arens's efforts, the true story can be told.



Men and women members of a partisan resistance unit in Vilna.

The story starts in *Kovno* (now *Kaunas*) in Lithuania, which was one of the first areas to come under German control. *Kovno* had one of the largest Jewish populations, about 70,000 Jews, and within seven weeks of its occupation 30,000 had been killed by the Germans. A resistance movement grew among the Jewish youth that was unified, with all groups from left and right joined together. But the

Germans managed to learn the identity of the leader of the Jewish underground, Itzik Wittenberg, and they forced the *Judenrat*, the Jewish council, to hand him over. This was supported by the remainder of the Jewish population who feared further German reprisals. To avoid intra-Jewish strife, Wittenberg committed suicide, and as a consequence there was no uprising in the *Kovno* ghetto.

Emissaries were sent from *Kovno* to Warsaw to warn the Jews there of the German massacres, but some Jews refused to believe them and others were sure that such events could not occur in civilized Warsaw. The Jewish population of Warsaw was about 350,000, but many escaped east before the Germans arrived, and the Germans forced many Jews from surrounding areas into the ghetto when it was established in October 1940 with a Jewish population of about 380,000, the largest ghetto in Europe. In June 1942 the Germans began the systematic organized murder of the Jews of Warsaw. Every day the Jews were assembled at the *Umschlagplatz* and about 8,000 were forced into cattle cars and taken by train to an unknown destination. Many realized that they were going to their deaths and this was confirmed by sending men to follow the trains. It was discovered that they went to the death camp *Treblinka* and returned empty. The leader of the Warsaw ghetto *Judenrat*, Adam Czerniakow, committed suicide because of his complicity in these deaths.

When the Jewish population of the ghetto was reduced to about 50,000, there was no longer any Jewish resistance to the formation of underground organizations to fight the Germans. Two ideologically separate organizations were formed. One was based on the left-wing youth groups *Dror*

and *Hashomir Hatzair*, which were Zionist, and the Bund and the Communists, which were anti-Zionist. Out of socialist solidarity, their strategy was to form an alliance with non-Jewish groups outside the ghetto. But in fact, the Polish groups outside the ghetto did not want to cooperate with them, for two reasons: first they were basically anti-Semitic, and second, they believed it was premature to counter the Germans then, although for the Jews time was running out. The other group was the right-wing *Betar*, affiliated with Zeev Jabotinsky's revisionist nationalist ideology. The two groups had been enemies for years, a situation that paralleled that in Eretz Israel (then Palestine). The left-wing grouping was called the Jewish Fighting Organization (ZOB) and was led by Mordechai Anielewicz, the right-wing group was called the Jewish Military Organization (ZZW), led by Pawel Frankel, and the two groups acted and fought totally separately. This seems insane, given the weakness of the Jewish fighters, their lack of weapons and the overwhelming power of the German military, but such were the ideological hatreds that they could not be overcome even in extremis.

The basic story of the uprising in the Warsaw ghetto is known from several survivors of the ZOB. This is the story that is to be found in the books *The Wall* by John Hersey and *Mila 18* by Leon Uris, and in several movies and documentaries. This is not surprising, since Israel was governed by Labor socialist governments in its early years, and there was an ideological preference for the story as told by the left-wing fighters. But what of the ZZW? None of these fighters survived: they literally fought to the death! There was no one left to tell their story.

Compared to the ZOB, who had no military training, the *Betar* youths had extensive exercise and weapons training. At high cost they managed to acquire two

submachine guns that were smuggled into the ghetto through tunnels. The military tactics of the two Jewish groups were totally different: whereas the ZOB ambushed the German troops as they entered the ghetto to liquidate it on January 19, 1943, the ZZW fought a direct



Jewish citizens raise their arms in the air as Nazi troops round them up. The original German caption reads "These bandits resisted by force of arms."

confrontation with the German forces in Muranowski Square, the largest open space in the ghetto. They also raised two flags over the ghetto: that of the Jewish star of David, which became the flag of the State of Israel, and the flag of Poland. Both the daily German military reports, including those of General Jurgend Stroop who commanded the German troops, and accounts from other observers and reporters of the scene, indicate that the major fighting that occurred in the ghetto actually took place in Muranowski Square. This has never before been described in detail. The Germans were mortified that they could not take the ghetto, and fighting continued for nearly a month, until finally the Germans burnt the ghetto to the ground.

This book rights a historic wrong. The uprising in the Warsaw ghetto by Jewish fighting units was the first major organized resistance to German occupation throughout Europe. It deserves to go down in history as a foundational event of the State of Israel.

A SPANISH SCHINDLER IN BUDAPEST

(Continued from page 5)

illegality of the document could pass unnoticed. "The 200 units that had been granted to me I turned into 200 families; and the 200 families multiplied indefinitely due to the simple procedure of not issuing a document or passport with a number higher than 200," Sanz Briz would explain years later in the book *Spain and the Jews* by Federico Ysart. Sanz Briz's ingenuity meant that only a minority of the approximately 5,200 Jews that he helped save were of Spanish origin.

By the autumn of 1944 the deportations and the mistreatment of Jews greatly intensified. At this stage, Sanz Briz made use of his own resources to rent entire buildings a short distance from the Spanish Legation to provide shelter and food to every Jew who could be granted a visa or letter of protection. Meanwhile, the Red Army advanced from the east, already at the gates of Budapest by December. At this point, Sanz Briz received orders from Madrid to move to Austria. On December 20, Sanz Briz left the Legation in Budapest almost in secret, bidding farewell only to his closest employees. The Jews he had protected all this time were not abandoned. Giorgio Perlasca, an Italian Fascist who had volunteered to fight for Franco during the Spanish Civil War, where he had met Sanz Briz, was named Spanish consul and left in charge of the protection of the 5,000 Jews Sanz Briz had sheltered. After

the Spanish Civil War, Perlasca, repulsed by anti-Semitism, abandoned his faith in Fascism. In the end, Madrid silenced Sanz Briz and his story in order to avoid drawing attention to the Franco regime's inaction in the face of the destruction of European Jewry. The historical deception regarding Sanz Briz's role thus created a distorted version of the sheltering of Hungarian Jews, which has been wrongly attributed to Giorgio Perlasca alone.

In the 30 years after the war, Ángel Sanz Briz worked in other destinations around the world, never mentioning a word about his heroic actions in Budapest, not even to his family. He was stationed in San Francisco; Washington, D.C.; Lima; Guatemala; and Vatican City, where he died on June 11, 1980. Eleven years later, Yad Vashem recognized him as "Righteous Among the Nations" for his unwavering efforts to save the life of innocent men and women. Although relatively unknown in Spain today, his work has recently drawn the attention of filmmakers, historians, and novelists. The story has been depicted in a historical novel by the writer and journalist Diego Carcedo. Sanz Briz is now the subject of both a documentary and a historical film for television. Hopefully, this new popular attention to an intrepid Spanish diplomat will arouse interest in Spain and elsewhere about the complexities of Spanish diplomacy during the Holocaust.

NEW YORK MUSEUMS HAVE NOT RETURNED NAZI-SEIZED ART

(Continued from page 8)

fessor at Claremont McKenna College in California.

Valentin was on his own after World War II. In 1952, he sold "The Poet Max Herrmann-Neisse" on behalf of Weidler to MoMA for \$750, plus a \$100 commission. MoMA founder Alfred Barr was a frequent Valentin patron, according to legal papers. "MoMA appears to have been his best customer," Petropoulos said.

The other two disputed Grosz paintings were auctioned in 1938 in the Netherlands in what the painter's descendants maintain was a sham sale. MoMA later bought one and the other was donated to its collection.

After the Grosz family made its initial request to MoMA for the paintings, the museum hired former US Attorney General Nicholas Katzenbach to investigate the claim.

Katzenbach cited letters Grosz wrote in the 1950s when he described MoMA exhibiting a painting "that was stolen from me" and went on to say "I am powerless against that."

Katzenbach says the letters were "fatal" to the family's claim because Grosz stayed silent and never tried to get his paintings back.

"In my opinion the public trust requires the museum to preserve the paintings in its collection and that this is the proper moral and ethical course for the trustees to follow," Katzenbach wrote.

The Grosz family then sued, but MoMA prevailed, arguing that a three-year statute of limitations in bringing such a claim had expired. The Grosz heirs say they have given up their fight.

"We have no desire to reopen it," Lillian



Heinrich Himmler presents confiscated art to Adolf Hitler during the Nazi reign.

Grosz said. "MoMA has very deep pockets and is a very powerful institution."

Dowd, the Grosz family lawyer, said the issue goes beyond individual lawsuits. While they pledged to do the right thing, museums have done nothing to actually find the families that have been wronged.

"They're hiding the records that show that they have received stolen property and then blaming the victims of the crime," he said. "Since the crime was a murder of 6 million, it's a little silly to expect the victims to solve this on their own."

PHOTOGRAPHER HAUNTED BY IMAGES OF JEWISH PRISONERS

BY ALEX WARD, MAIL ONLINE

These chilling images of a young Jewish girl at Auschwitz are among thousands that haunted a Nazi photographer all his life.

Wilhelm Brasse was forced to take photographs of frightened children and victims of gruesome medical experiments moments from their death at the extermination camp where some 1.5 million people, mostly Jewish, died in the Holocaust.

Mr. Brasse, who died in October aged 94, had to relive those horrors from inside Auschwitz, but is considered a hero after he risked his life to preserve the harrowing photographs, which later helped convict the very Nazi monsters who commissioned the photographs.

He said: "When I started taking pictures again, I saw the dead. I would be standing taking a photograph of a young girl for her portrait but behind her I would see them like ghosts standing there.

"I saw all those big eyes, terrified, staring at me. I could not go on."

He never again picked up a camera. Instead, he set up a business making sausage casings and lived a modestly prosperous life.

Before the war, Mr. Brasse trained as a portrait photographer in a studio owned by his aunt in the Polish town of *Katowice*. He had an eye for the telling image and an ability to put his subjects at ease.

But his peaceful, prosperous existence was shattered with the Nazi invasion of Poland in September 1939. He was the son of a German father and a Polish mother.

He said: "When the Germans came, they wanted me to join them and say I was loyal to the Reich, but I refused. I felt

Polish and I was Polish. It was my mother who instilled this in us."

Considering the Nazis' capacity for brutality, it was an extraordinarily brave thing for 22-year-old Mr. Brasse to do.

After several Gestapo interrogations, he tried to flee to Hungary, but was caught at the border. He was imprisoned for four months and then offered another



Wilhelm Brasse took some 40,000 to 50,000 photographs inside Auschwitz for the Nazis, including these shots of Czeslawa Kwoka after she was beaten by a guard.

chance to declare his loyalty to Hitler.

He said: "They wanted me to join the German army and promised everything would be OK for me if I did."

But again he refused, and on August 31, 1940, he was placed on a train for the newly opened concentration camp at Auschwitz-Birkenau.

In February 1941, he was summoned to the office of the camp commander, the notoriously brutal Rudolf Höss, who would later be hanged for his crimes.

Mr. Brasse was certain that this was the end, but when he arrived he discovered that the SS was looking for photogra-

phers.

There followed what must have been a bizarre and terrifying experience. The assembled men were tested on their photographic skills.

Each must have known failure would mean a return to hard labor and death.

He said: "We were five people. They went through everything with us — the

doomed in this makeshift photographic studio. Each day he took so many pictures that another team of prisoners was assembled to develop the pictures.

The photographer estimated that he personally must have taken between 40,000 and 50,000 portraits.

One day, a prisoner was sent to him because one of the camp doctors, the infamous Nazi Dr. Josef Mengele, wanted a photograph of the man's unusual tattoo.

He said: "It was quite beautiful. It was a tattoo of Adam and Eve standing before the Tree in the Garden of Eden, and it had obviously been done by a skilled artist."

About an hour after taking the photograph, he learned that the man had been killed. He was called by another prisoner to come to one of the camp crematoria, where he saw the dead man had been skinned.

Mr. Brasse said: "The skin with the tattoo was stretched

on a table waiting to be framed for this doctor. It was a horrible, horrible sight."

"Mengele liked my photographs and said he wanted me to photograph some of those he was experimenting on.

"The first group were Jewish girls. They were ordered to strip naked. They were aged 15 to 17 years and were looked after by these two Polish nurses.

"They were very shy and frightened because there were men watching them. I tried my best to calm them."

Mr. Brasse and another inmate managed to bury thousands of negatives in the camp's grounds which were later recovered.

laboratory skills and the technical ability with a camera. I had the skills as well as being able to speak German, so I was chosen."

The Nazis wanted documentation of their prisoners. The Reich was obsessed with bureaucratic records and set up *Erkennungsdienst*, the photographic identification unit.

Based in the camp, it included cameramen, darkroom technicians and designers.

He said: "The conditions for me were so much better then. The food and warmth were heavenly."

Soon began a daily parade of the

HOLOCAUST TRACING SERVICE STILL REUNITING FAMILIES

(Continued from page 7)

Most of the documents have been digitized and the staff of just under 300 is busy deacidifying the decaying paper to stabilize it. Whole files are put in machines resembling large tumble dryers that remove the acid corroding the documents. Laminated files are put through a chemical treatment that separates print that has stuck to the plastic and reattaches it to the paper.

It will take years to sort and cross-reference all the information in the database. The archive was devised from the outset to be searchable only by names, because that was its initial task — to find people. But researchers want to be able to apply different search criteria such as locations or themes. What happened to the Sinti and Roma in Galicia? How were the death marches organized, when hundreds of thousands of prisoners were forced to walk to Germany from concentration camps in the occupied east as the Red Army closed in on the Reich?

At present, getting the information one wants from the ITS still requires a lot of sifting.

Thankfully, German bureaucrats often recorded the ordeals of the victims with chilling thoroughness. "*Buchenwald* concentration camp diligently updated its registers until April 10, 1945. It was liberated on April 11," said Kathrin Flor, the spokeswoman for ITS. "They would fill out a form on a prisoner's personal belongings even if he had just come on a death march from Auschwitz and only had the rags he was wearing."

There were limits to the record-keeping, however. "With death camps like *Sobibor* or the extermination part of Auschwitz, the last trace of a life was the transport to the camp. There was no registration after that," said Flor. "And you won't find the word 'gassed.' In the death books of Auschwitz you'll find natural causes of death like pneumonia or heart failure. They were at pains to hide the truth then."

There is also no written record of the approximately one million people shot dead by German troops and SS death squads in mass executions following the invasion of the Soviet Union, said Flor. The German documents are infused with the racism of the Nazi era. Prisoners are categorized with humiliating descriptions such as "protruding ears" or "crooked teeth." The lists compiled by the Allies, by contrast, served to help the refugees and give them back their identity. Obvious though that difference may seem, it is part of *Bad Arolsen's* legacy. The archive in itself is a piece of history.

Reorganizing the database is one of the tasks of Susanne Urban, the ITS head of research, who joined the archive in 2009 after working in Yad Vashem, Israel's official memorial to the Holocaust. She says she expects the archive to reveal a plethora of "mosaic stones" to complete the picture of the genocide rather than alter it.

"Here you keep getting confronted with the global aspect of the Holocaust and survival, you see how it started in Germany, spread across Europe, and with the documents about the survivors we see how a web of memory has spread across the whole world. Here you get an overview over

everything. What makes it so harrowing is that you don't just get one aspect, you get them all. You sense this monolith that was built of pain and sorrow."

The work may be fascinating, but it can also be exhausting and saddening. Urban has only two research assistants on temporary contracts, which she says isn't enough.

"You can't work here without empathy but you can't let it overwhelm you. You read some stories for example in files about children and then you go home and you have to go for a run through the fields for a couple of hours. But what I personally find very heartening is that in the midst of all this horror you find tiny rays of light, for example files of people who helped someone else or people recalling how they were hidden as children."

In her work in schools and universities, she uses information from the archive to focus on the fates of individuals, such as children who lost their identity by being separated from their parents and taken far away. That, she says, is an effective way to get people to think about the Holocaust and to empathize with the victims.

"After seeing the bureaucratic diligence in these files, we get unprompted responses from many young people like 'Wow, are we lucky we live in freedom.' That is of course a wonderful side effect. Learning not just about history, but from it," says Urban.

She recalls one particularly moving instance in her research on death marches. She stumbled on an exhumation report dated October 13, 1949, from a military cemetery in *Neunburg*, Bavaria, stat-

ing that a previously unknown corpse had been identified as one Jozef Walkowski.

The Polish prisoner was identified by his prisoner number and by two letters in his pocket, one from his wife Zofia and one addressed to her but never sent. Urban had a name and searched the archive. She found out that he had two children, that he had lived in *Poznan*, and that he had been drafted into a forced-labor camp in September 1943 to do backbreaking work building a highway.


She learned that he had been taken to Auschwitz in November 1943 before being deported in January 1944, to *Buchenwald* where he was registered as suffering from "general physical weakness." He was shot dead in April 1944 during a forced march.

His daughter is still alive. "We have contacted her and were able to tell her where her father is buried," said Urban. "The nice thing is she knows where he lies now and she knows that her parents loved each other. And now she can visit the cemetery and place some flowers on her father's grave."


It's the kind of certainty Wilhelm Thiem, who was taken from his mother when he was a toddler, has craved for all his life. He now plans to travel to Poland to meet his aunt. "She must be very old now, I want to speak to her before she dies," he says.

He knows his mother returned to Poland after the war, married a Frenchman, and is then believed to have emigrated to France. "Just imagine, I might have a brother or a sister there! I'd be able to die in peace."

Young Leadership Associates Gala



*The Shining Light
of the Next Generation*



*The Young Leadership Associates of the
American Society for Yad Vashem*

*Invites you to
an elegant evening of dinner, drinks, dancing and dessert
with New York's most accomplished
young Jewish philanthropists*

*Thursday, February 28, 2013
7:00-11:00pm*

*The Metropolitan Pavilion
125 West 18th Street (between Sixth and Seventh Avenues)
New York City*

Cocktail Attire

Dietary Laws Observed

Proceeds from this evening will benefit the education programs of the American Society for Yad Vashem's Young Leadership Associates. Holocaust education programs provide a context for exploring the dangers of remaining silent and indifferent in the face of the oppression of others. Funding for Holocaust education in public schools enables us to help protect future generations from the perils of discrimination and hatred.

We will soon live in a world without Holocaust survivors who can share their stories and memories firsthand. We must rely on our teachers, as speakers of history, to carry on the lessons of the Holocaust. The American Society for Yad Vashem is a valuable source to guide these teachers in their vital work.

With your help, the Young Leadership Associates will have the resources needed to continue their work in furthering Holocaust education. Together we are committed to broadening Holocaust remembrance for future generations.

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