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The American & International Societies for Yad Vashem Annual Tribute Dinner

The American & International Societies for Yad Vashem Annual Tribute Dinner will be held on Sunday, November 16, 2014, at the Sheraton New York Hotel and Towers. This year's honoree, Sigmund Rolat, was born in 1930 in Czeszochowa, Poland. His immediate family was murdered during the



Sigmund Rolat.

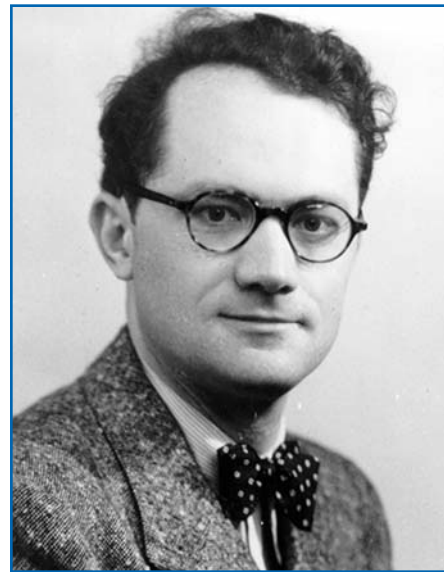
Shoah, leaving him orphaned and alone. He survived by seeking shelter in the Czeszochowa ghetto and by working in the *Hasag Pelcery* labor camp. Sigmund arrived in the United States in 1948 and earned a BA from the University of Cincinnati and an MA from NYU.

Mr. Rolat went on to marry, raise a devoted family and build a successful business. After the collapse of Communism he saw an opportunity and began doing business in Poland. That re-engagement led Rolat to become the prime financial supporter and ambassador for restoring Polish Jewry's place in Polish history. He is now focused on the Museum of the History of Polish Jews, scheduled to fully open on the site of the former

Warsaw ghetto. He serves as the chairman of the museum's North American Council. His commitments to Polish Jewry led to his being awarded the Commander Cross of the Order of Polonia Restituta by President Bronislaw Komorowski. In addition to his work in Poland, Sigmund was a member of the Executive Committee and Board of Governors of Ben-Gurion University in Israel. He continues to serve on numerous advisory boards, including those of the Kosciuszko Foundation, the Taube Foundation for Jewish Life & Culture, and the President's Council of the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, California. He is the chairman of the Krakow Jewish Culture Festival, the Isaac Bashevis Singer Festival in Warsaw and the Shalom Foundation. He is also involved in the Jan Karski Educational Foundation in the US and in Poland. Mr. Rolat serves as the president of the World Society of Czeszochowa Jews and Their Descendants.

Mr. Rolat is a longtime supporter of the American Society for Yad Vashem. He has achieved the status of Builder at Yad Vashem, Jerusalem, by donating generously and often. Rolat donated a drawing by the Polish writer and artist, Bruno Schulz, titled "Bianca and Her Father in a Coach." He has been recognized for the generous donation of the works of Private Zinovii Tolkatchev and other artwork in Yad Vashem's collection.

The American Society for Yad Vashem will also pay tribute in to Varian Fry, the first American to receive the title of Righteous Among the Nations from Yad Vashem. When WWII was declared in 1939, Varian Fry was a 32-year-old American working in New York as an editor for the



Varian Fry.

Foreign Policy Association. In August of 1940 he was sent by an aid organization, the Emergency Rescue Committee, to France, to save the lives of 200 intellectuals and renowned figures who had managed to escape from Germany. Fry was faced with the desperate pleas of many more refugees. Without the backing of the American consulate, he decided to act on his own and began finding ways to smuggle people out of France. In December 1940, Fry was arrested for his rescue activities and then expelled from France. By his estimate, he helped save the lives of about 4,000 people, among whom was Marc Chagall.

The French government awarded him the Chevalier of the Legion d'Honneur prior to his death in 1967. Yad Vashem awarded him the title of Righteous Among the Nations in 1994.

Varian Fry will be represented at the event by his son James Fry, and Chagall by his granddaughter Bella Meyer.

James Fry (b. 1958) is the youngest of the three children of Varian Fry and Annette Riley Fry. He lived in Ridgefield, Connecticut until he was six, when his family moved to Manhattan's Upper West Side. There he learned to play street stickball and became an ardent Yankees fan, taking the subway by himself to games starting at age 9. He attended P.S. 84 (1965-1969), Collegiate School (1969-1975), and Columbia College (1975-1979), graduating with an AB

in biology. He earned a PhD. in biology from the University of Michigan in 1988. After working in his field of evolutionary biology at Duke University, North Carolina State University and Utah State University, he joined the faculty of the University of Rochester in 2000; he is currently associate professor of biology there. He is married to Silvia Sorensen, a Berlin native; they have a nine-year-old son, Tobias Sorensen-Fry.

Bella Meyer born in Paris and raised in Switzerland, was born immersed in the world of art. She always painted while studying art history and obtaining her PhD in medieval art history from the Sorbonne. Bella taught art history, wrote numerous academic papers and delivered



Marc Chagall.

informative, firsthand experiences in lecture form, of her grandfather Marc Chagall's work. Invited to take on responsibilities for the visual arts at the Cultural Services of the French Embassy, Bella settled in New York, where she held this position for a number of years. Adding to her expanding list of accomplishments, she has had her hand in costume design and mask-making for a number of theater performances and also created many puppets for her own puppet show productions. Bella's passion for beauty and aesthetics led her to become a floral designer. In a recent publication Bella describes her love for flowers: "to discover its essence — opening, life, death — is to experience an unimaginable mystery." Bella founded FleursBELLA, a floral design and décor company, in 2005, focusing her talents on creating floral arrangements much in the way an artist paints.

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AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR YAD VASHEM BOARD NAMES NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Ron B. Meier, PhD., was recently appointed as the new executive director of the American Society for Yad Vashem. Founded in 1981 by a group of Holocaust survivors, and spearheaded and led by Eli Zborowski, of blessed memory, from 1981 to 2012, the American Society for Yad Vashem works in partnership with Yad Vashem, the Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Authority in Jerusalem, to support its efforts in the areas of commemoration, remembrance, education, research, capital improvement and special projects.

Ron comes to the American Society for Yad Vashem with a distinguished record of professional leadership in the Jewish community. Most recently, he served as the New York regional director of the Anti-Defamation League, leading ADL's efforts statewide to combat anti-Semitism, prejudice and hate. He spent more than 20 years working on behalf of North American Jewish communities, first as the chief operating officer of the United Jewish Federation of MetroWest (N.J.), next as the chief executive officer of the Jewish Federation of Northern New Jersey and finally as the senior vice president and founding director of the Mandel Center for Leadership Excellence at the Jewish Federations of North America.

He also served on the faculty of Haifa University (Israel) as a lecturer (assistant professor) and chair of the Community Development and Planning Track at the Haifa University School of Social Work.

As a leader in the Jewish communal field, he served as the president of the New Jersey Association of Jewish Communal Service and later as president of the Jewish Communal Service Association of North America.

Ron is the son of Holocaust survivors, both of whom were in their early teens growing up in the same small town in Germany around the time of *Kristallnacht*. His maternal grandparents (for whom he and his sister are named) did not escape, but saved his mother and aunt by getting them on the *Kindertransport* to England. As Ron puts it: "Preserving the memory of all those who perished and fighting on behalf of the Jewish people are in my DNA."

Born in Baltimore, he received his BA from the University of Maryland and later was awarded MSW and PhD. degrees from Washington University. Ron and his wife Joyce Raynor, an accomplished Jewish educator serving as head of school of Golda Och Academy, have two daughters and one granddaughter.

Leonard A. Wilf, chairman of the board of the American Society for Yad Vashem, comments, "We welcome Ron Meier as our professional leader and have great confidence that his training and experience in Jewish communal leadership will inspire and guide the American Society for Yad Vashem to continued success in Holocaust education in the United States and support for the critical efforts of Yad Vashem in Jerusalem. I look forward to a long and successful relationship for years to come."

BERGEN-BELSEN DIARY, 1945

Bergen-Belsen was liberated by the British army on April 15, 1945. Conditions at the camp were so horrendous that the British burned it down in order to stop the spread of typhus and other diseases. They relocated the survivors to a former German army barracks, two kilometers from the original camp. This new camp was called *Bergen-Belsen* Displaced Persons Camp.

This diary by Chava Rosenfarb appears to have been written in this DP camp, when Rosenfarb was 22 years old. The following extracts were published in Yiddish in 1948 as an addendum to Rosenfarb's first collection of poems, *Di balade fun nekhtikn vald* (*The Ballad of Yesterday's Forest*). It is translated here by Goldie Morgentaler, Rosenfarb's daughter and a professor of English at the University of Lethbridge.

Bergen-Belsen, May 6, 1945

Father, where are you?

Today, for the first time, I hold a pencil in my hand. My fingers tremble over the white sheet of paper. Where is your warm, sure hand to cover my trembling fingers and lead them again to open the sacred doors of our Yiddish aleph-bet? When I was a little girl, you guided my hand over the neat white lines. We wrote the word "Tateh" and there arose such a light from those five small letters that the word itself acquired a soul, and I saw that soul reflected in your loving smile: "Tateh."

I sit near the window. The branches of the large chestnut tree outside reach up to the second floor where we are staying. Today I can see the sky and it is of the purest blue. Perhaps it is just an ordinary blue sky with nothing remarkable about it. But I see this sky as it must have looked to the first human being when he suddenly recognized God and genuflected before the beautiful blue expanse

that stretched above his head. I want to write: "How beautiful you are, blue sky," but instead I see your luminous eyes. I can feel your blessings and your dreams, your smile and your longing.

Below my window I hear a commotion. It is nothing serious. Soup is being distributed. Everybody will get a portion. People are impatient, still haunted by the anxiety of yesterday that lives on in them. Although they know that no one will go away without his portion of soup — if not at this window, he will be served at the next — but still they all try to be served first. They want to be sure of that little bowl of soup, to stir it with a spoon. There is a man standing opposite my window. He emerges from the tangled crowd holding his bowl in his hand. He does not go to his room. He does not sit down at the table. Leaning against the stone wall he gulps down the soup as fast as he can. God, how hungry he is! For years he has been hungry and for years he has been frightened. He is very thin. A heavy coat hangs from his shoulders and reaches to his ankles. Between one slurp of soup and the next he wipes his face with the sleeve of his coat. He is tired but happy. I can see his eyes dance with pleasure as they glance away from his pot to embrace everything around him, from the green grass beneath the window to the tall chestnut tree. He is so happy. What is he thinking about, this man, this Jew, this tortured emaciated Jew? Most likely, he is not thinking anything at all. Even so, I know and his limbs know and his body knows that soon he will cast off his heavy black overcoat. Soon the flesh will grow on his bones. Life has arrived!

I shut my eyes. Deliberately I put out of my mind the man standing opposite. And suddenly I see you, Father. It is you. I can see how the strength is

returning to your body. You are alive. Perhaps you too are standing somewhere at this very moment with your bowl of soup, leaning against another wall. Is it possible? I ask my heart, but it trembles with uncertainty.

May 7

Wherever I look I see you. No matter what other thoughts come into my mind, you are always there. Where are you, Tateh? Will I ever be able to caress you and beg your forgiveness? I showed you so little kindness in the lost days of my feverish past. I told you very little of my innermost thoughts. You were so thirsty to know my feelings and I was so stingy in sharing them with you. Where are you now, Tateh? I want to tell you everything!

Did you hear the firing of the guns? The shots are meant to tell the world that peace has come, that the hour of freedom has arrived; those very days for which you so longed when you were shut up in the darkness of the ghetto. Have you lived to see them? The uncertainty is torturing me. My only hope is that a miracle has saved you. You were so tired after those five years in the ghetto. But then, cut off from us, how could you have survived the still more terrible atrocities of the camps? Perhaps the longing to see us again helped you to survive? Tateh, we are here. The fire is glowing, but you are missing from our joy.

May 8

It is over. Our liberation has come, but she wears a prosaic face. No one has died of joy. No one has gone mad with excitement. When we used to dream of freedom, we bathed her with our tears. We crowned her with the garlands of our smiles and dreams. Now that she is here, she looks like a beggar, and we have nothing to give her. With what desperation did we call for her in those dark days. With what power did her far-off shimmer flesh

out our thin bodies? Now she is here and she beckons to us from every corner. She is right before our eyes, yet we cannot see her. She begs us: "Touch me ... enjoy me ..." But we are tired. Our past, like a hawk, circles overhead, fluttering its black wings, devouring our days with horrible memories. It poisons our nights with terror. Poor, sad Freedom! Will she ever have the strength to free us from those dark shadowy wings?

Bats circle outside the window. Their wings flutter in a ghostly dance. My unfinished ghetto poem torments my mind. It used to accompany me in the camp. With its words on my lips I used to drag myself through the snows in the early winter mornings to work. I penciled the verses on the ceiling above my bunk. Each day a few more lines. In my mind, I hear them constantly.

Through the open window I can hear the loudspeaker announcing that today the war is officially over. Where are you, Tateh? I want to hug you. The air trembles to the distant salvos of guns. Thin clouds of smoke waft through the air. We celebrate this festive moment with a chunk of dry bread. We have nothing better.

May 10

At night when I open my eyes, I see Mother and Henia. They are wiping the sweat from my forehead and they constantly ask how I feel. We tremble over each other's well-being. I want to comfort them. I want to tell them that we do not need to be afraid anymore. We are free now. But how can we protect ourselves from death? No, we are still very helpless.

I have a fever. Perhaps it is a cold. Or is it, perhaps, typhus?

June 13

For four long weeks the fever boiled in my blood. It scorched my eyes and dulled my brain. From under steep

(Continued on page 9)

CLAIMS CONFERENCE EXAMINES PLIGHT OF CHILD SHOAH VICTIMS

More than 1.5 million Jewish children were murdered by the Nazis; trauma of child Holocaust survivors can be triggered at any time, expert says.

The last day of the three-day Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany in Berlin featured a focused discussion and examination of the experiences of child survivors of the Holocaust, a category into which most of those in the crowded conference room who had outlived the *Shoah* fell.

Conducted in English and in German, this last event of the week, held at the Centrum Judaicum museum near the center of the city, was meant to be a wake-up call to the ongoing needs of Holocaust victims, said Greg Schneider, the executive vice president of the conference.

"How do we honor child survivors?"

Schneider asked. "We need to ask what are the issues of child survivors today. When someone is subjected to trauma, what effect does that have over time? Problems come out even later in life."

It quickly became clear that they are almost the only survivors left in the world, as Roman Kent, a Poland-born survivor of Auschwitz and the treasurer of the conference, spoke about how the trauma of surviving when your entire family perished extended to more than just loneliness after the war.

"Some things are intangible," said Kent. "On our wedding day we didn't have the parents and the aunts and the brothers.... I never thought I would be asked by my daughter: 'Where is my grandma?' I had no answer."

Colette Avital, the chairwoman of the Center of Organizations of Holocaust Survivors in Israel, said

that today, Holocaust survivors find themselves hiding from rockets and bombs in the same way they used to hide from the police looking for Jewish children.

Stefanie Seltzer, another survivor from Poland and the president of the World Federation of Jewish Child Survivors of the Holocaust and Descendants, spoke about how years later, despite her having been only a child, the memories were vivid enough to bring her to tears, and to inspire her to start forming social groups of other child survivors.

"There's no need for introductions or starting from square one," Seltzer said. "We are each other's family."

Despite being experienced 70 to 75 years ago, the trauma can be triggered at any time, almost regardless of how old the children were when they went through the

Shoah, said Dr. Kurt Grünberg of the Sigmund Freud Institute in Berlin.

Every experience and trauma was different, depending on the children's age, whether they were hiding or in a camp, how they were separated from their families, what that moment of separation was like, and a myriad of other factors, Grünberg said.

Examining four different case studies of survivors and how they live today — underlining the fact that 1.5 million children were murdered — guilt, anxiety, antisocial behavior and even physical illness were all common manifestations of the trauma, he said.

"The long-term effects highlight the acute need for action, especially for those who are still being neglected," Grünberg said. "The 1,000-year Reich lasted only 12 years, but the psychological effects extend across generations."

FRENCH NEGOTIATING REPARATIONS FOR JEWISH FAMILIES

A coalition of Holocaust survivors and families headquartered in New York has battled to block lucrative contracts to an affiliate of Société Nationale des Chemins de fer Français, leading the French government to start formal negotiations with

never forget.

Paris rail workers and guards "took everything but the clothes on our backs and crammed us into a cattle car," he said.

Now, 73 years later, the French are finally negotiating reparations for

Jews. "It wasn't an attack of morals that caused them to reach out now."

The rail company is a transit powerhouse that moves to the head of the line when cities seek companies capable of building and managing cutting-edge transportation systems. Its U.S. arm, Keolis North America, has bid on projects from Florida to California to Virginia.

Keolis recently won a \$2.7 billion contract from Boston's Massachusetts Bay Transit Authority. But its interest in a \$6.5 billion Maryland project is being challenged by a state bill requiring SNCF to pay reparations.

Support for the measure was fueled by survivor Leo Bretholz, 92, who has gathered 150,000 signatures on a petition blasting the "unconscionable" possibility that the company could now reap profits from

Department representatives. Tamen has communicated her clients' expectations, and is awaiting an offer.

"They had better hurry," quipped Dresdner, 85, a retired salesman from Borough Park.

His family was lucky. They escaped from a French internment camp and, though they lost everything, eventually fled to America.

Manuel Feingold's family didn't fare so well.

Feingold, 74, a retired Manhattan steel broker, lost his father at Auschwitz, and his mother never recovered.

When he finally moved her to a nursing home, she begged not to go, insisting her "transit papers" weren't in order.

Lucie Davis, 84, a Manhattan grandmother of two, discovered both her



Deported Jews from Hungary exit a German boxcar onto a crowded railway platform at Auschwitz concentration camp in Poland in 1944.

State Department representatives. The foreign company transported some 76,000 Jews to concentration camps. Only about 3,000 survived.

Francine Green can't remember the

Jewish families like the Dresdners.

What brought the Société Nationale des Chemins de fer Français to heel? A coalition of survivors and families headquartered in New York that has



Francine Green, 73, the younger sister of Abe Dresdner, in her Upper West Side apartment.

day she and her family were put on a train amid the horror of the Holocaust.

The Manhattan grandmother was an infant then, hidden in the folds of her mother's clothing for safety. But her big brother Abe Dresdner will

battled to block lucrative American contracts to an SNCF affiliate.

"The SNCF wants desperately to do business here," said Harriet Tamen, the Manhattan attorney representing some 600 U.S., Israeli and French



Abe Dresdner, 85, in his Borough Park, Brooklyn, apartment. Dresdner remembers his family being crammed into a cattle car by Paris rail workers and guards during the Holocaust.

its taxpaying victims.

Rep. Carolyn Maloney (D-N.Y.) has also joined the fight, co-sponsoring the Holocaust Rail Justice Act, which would allow victims to have their day in U.S. court against the foreign company that transported some 76,000 Jews to concentration camps. Only about 3,000 survived.

The French government has now begun formal negotiations with State

parents had died in Auschwitz when she returned to her Paris home from summer camp at the age of 12.

She's not hopeful she will ever see reparations, and doesn't buy the company's story — that it had to comply with Nazi orders.

"The French knocked on doors, loaded Jews in the trucks, forced them on the trains," she said. "No ifs or buts."



BOOK REVIEWS

THROUGH AMATEUR EYES

Through Amateur Eyes: Film and Photography in Nazi Germany.

By Frances Guerin. University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis, Minnesota, 2012. 342 pp. \$ 84.00.

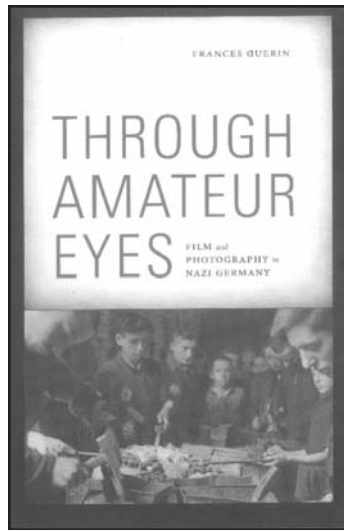
REVIEWED BY DR. DIANE CYPKIN

It has always amazed me to think that most all the existing still and moving images documenting World War II were taken by the Germans — and amateur photographers and filmmakers at that! But as Frances Guerin records in her book, *Through Amateur Eyes: Film and Photography in Nazi Germany*, it's really not surprising at all. In the years leading up to the war, the interest in filmmaking and photography was ever-growing globally. In Germany it was especially so, with new technologies developing and the number of film clubs burgeoning — all servicing these exceptionally enthusiastic hobbyists. Thus when the war came and many Germans went off to fight, they packed their "Agfa box cameras" or the more "recently invented" and "more expensive Leicas" in their gear.

Which brings this reviewer to what does surprise the reader and makes Guerin's a thought-provoking work. While most researchers simply concern themselves with the content of the filmed or photographed material, Guerin's exceptionally close and meditative study of them points out that a much "more nuanced understanding of the images" is possible, an "understanding" which reveals that they have greater stories to tell — often dependent on who is viewing them and when!

Hence, getting back to those cam-

era enthusiasts who went off to war, when it comes to the countless black-and-white photos taken by these German soldiers on the Eastern Front — many of them capturing the "worst kinds of violence" and brutalities perpetrated on civilians, alongside images of the soldiers themselves eating, cleaning their weaponry, carousing, and doing their daily chores — Guerin forwards the idea that to the soldiers taking them then, these images served (horrifyingly) as travel and sightseeing photos! And, like travel and sightseeing photos, they were frequently sent home to Germany — with or without accompanying letters — to end up in family photo albums, also conveniently made available at that time. In sum, the picture of a group of German soldiers next to a Jew just hanged, or a hapless Jew having his beard ruthlessly shorn, was, to the sender (and surely his family), like a photo taken of oneself near the Eiffel Tower and sent home announcing something like, "Look, look where I am now!" Needless to say, the soldier sending this image (and the family), undoubtedly, was either apathetic or proud when it came to the inhuman act this image recorded. Needless to say, too, this apathy or pride can only attest to the "success" of Nazism vis-à-vis its many "dedicated" followers!



No less surprising, of course, is the fact that while the Nazi leadership officially forbade the taking of moving or still photos of anything that could give information to the enemy or besmirch the good name of the *Wehrmacht*, control appears to have been difficult! Then again, in reading Guerin's work one can't help but notice the Nazi leadership's schizophrenic approach

to photography and filmmaking generally. On the one hand they loved it — especially when it came to color photography and filmmaking. Color, to them, added artistry to black-and-white documentary. They felt it allowed Nazism to show off its glorious excitement and colorfulness, like nothing else! On the other hand, the camera recorded things, things the Nazis wanted recorded (and they did enjoy record-keeping!) — and those

they didn't . . .

Indeed, when it comes to that evidentiary aspect of photography, Walter Genewein, a chief accountant of the Lodz ghetto, "meticulous[ly] document[ed]" "the mechanics and activities of everyday life in the Lodz ghetto" on his "confiscated Movex 12 camera," in hopes of pleasing his higher-ups and advancing in the Nazi ranks. He took color photographs of just about everything in the ghetto, including, of course, Jews laboring for the Nazis. The surprise readers will discover here? Guerin points out that "Instead of narrating the necessity of

obliterating the Jews as vermin, these photographs offer a justification for their continued existence. They show the usefulness and productivity of Jewish labor...." But, of course, who was doing the viewing would make all the difference here. Meanwhile, as we look back on them now, Guerin also notes, we cannot help but think about what happened to these Jews in the end . . .

Finally, there is Guerin's fascinating chapter on Eva Braun, Hitler's mistress, and her amateur photography and filmmaking activities. Just one of the variety of interesting ideas Guerin forwards here is the very fact that Braun was most definitely NOT the definition of the supposed Nazi ideal of the German woman, busy in the kitchen and busy having children! Instead, Braun was single, she traveled to some fascinating places, and she was busy with her camera photographing and filming people and scenes. Moreover, Hitler encouraged her by presenting Braun with the very latest in camera equipment and film! Hypocritically, it seems that Hitler's ideals of "German womanhood" were directed much more to the greater populace than the Nazi "elite."

As regards the rest, I leave that for the reader to discover . . . and ponder . . .

In sum, Holocaust scholars and camera buffs will find Guerin's work highly absorbing.

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

SURVIVING THE HOLOCAUST BY HIDING THEIR FAITH

Such Good Girls: The Journey of the Holocaust's Hidden Child Survivors.

By R.D. Rosen. HarperCollins Publishers: New York, 2014. 288 pp. \$25.99, hardcover.

REVIEWED BY STEVE WENICK

"Jews Out!" was just the name of a child's game that three little girls played in World War II Europe. But all is not as it seems, because the three girls were Jewish, but hiding their true identities. In award-winning author R.D. Rosen's riveting nonfiction work, *Such Good Girls*, "Jews Out!" wasn't a game; it was a struggle for survival.

The girls, Sophie, Flora and Carla, grew up in a time and a place that did not allow them to be children. The time was the Holocaust, the place was Europe, and the humanity of too many "good" people was hidden — just as three girls were.

The accuracy of the histories of the

three young girls interviewed was validated by Rosen's series of personal in-depth interviews with each of the women, and bolstered by painstaking cross-verifying research. Even though the years had buried their memories in the far recesses of their psyches, Rosen was able to cast off the shrouds of denial and forgetfulness and prod the women into recalling events that defined their secret lives.

The story of *Such Good Girls* is presented in three parts that recount the milestones of the women's lives: *The Children*, *The Gathering*, and *The Ghetto Inside*.

Part One: The Children delves into the lives of the young girls and how the quality of their lives was wrenched from them with the rise of

Fascism. Although all three girls survived their steady descent into the abyss of Nazi-occupied Europe, they did so at the expense of being who they were. It was during their young and most formative years that they learned how to hide from the Nazis and their all-too-eager collaborators, as well as from themselves.

Sophie was born Selma Schwartzwald in Lvov, Poland, and escaped the Jewish ghetto along with her mother, who sought sanctuary for her daughter by having her genuflect as a Catholic under the protection of the church.

Flora was born Flora Hillel in San Remo, Italy, but she was later given the Christian-sounding name of Marie Hamon by convent nuns, sworn to silence, as they diligently toiled to pro-

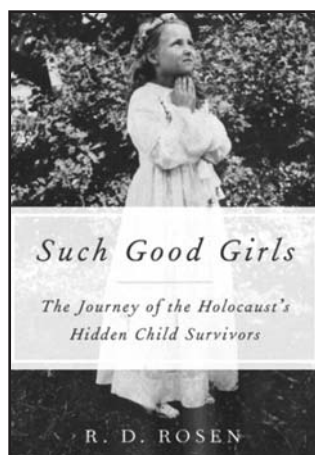
tect and save her.

Carla was born Carla Heijmans in Holland, where 75 percent of the nation's Jews were lost, but unlike those victims of the accident of their birth, she was hidden and survived, thanks in part to the labors of a courageous but stern Jesuit priest.

After the war, Sophie, Flora and Carla came out of hiding, struggled with their past on their journey to the present, and as adults finally rejoined the living and reunited with their Jewish roots.

Part Two: The Gathering, explores breaking the silence — survival techniques employed by hidden children in order to reach the next chapter of their lives as adults. Although the hidden children could neither hide from their memories nor escape their nightmares, the psychotherapeutic treatment they underwent as adults helped give voice to the silence.

(Continued on page 13)



HOW THE NAZIS HELPED GERMAN COMPANIES GET VERY RICH

BY ALAN HALL, MAIL ONLINE

The colossal extent of slave labor used by modern-day German blue-chip companies to get rich during the Third Reich has been laid bare by the nation's top business magazine.

WirtschaftsWoche has published a league table illustrating the Nazi past of top German firms like Bosch, Mercedes, Deutsche Bank, Volkswagen and many others, which involved the use of almost 300,000 slaves.

The league table follows revelations earlier that Audi, which was known as Auto Union during the Nazi period, was a big exploiter of concentration camp-supplied slave labor, using 20,000 concentration camp inmates in its factories.

Many of the companies listed by *WirtschaftsWoche* have already had internal reckonings with their Nazi past.



Jewish slave workers in striped uniforms work in a Nazi ammunition factory near Dachau concentration camp during World War II.

In 2011, the dynasty behind the BMW luxury car maker admitted, after decades of silence, to using slave labor, taking over Jewish firms and doing business with the highest echelons of the Nazi party during World War II.

Gabriele Quandt, whose grandfather Guenther employed an estimated 50,000 forced laborers in his arms factories, producing ammunition, rifles, artillery and U-boat batteries, said it was "wrong" for the family to ignore this chapter of its history.

But BMW was not the only German firm to profit from the sudden influx of slave labor.

Daimler, which owns Mercedes, admitted as far back as 1986 that it had employed 40,000 forced laborers under appalling conditions during the war, enabling it to reap massive profits.

Electrical giant Bosch used 20,000 slaves, while steelmaker ThyssenKrupp used a staggering 75,000.

VW, builder of the "People's Car" that morphed postwar into the VW Beetle, employed 12,000 slaves in the most terrible of conditions at its plant in Wolfsburg. The chemical and

pharmaceutical behemoths BASF, Bayer and Hoechst employed 80,000 slaves.

Bayer celebrated its 150th anniversary last year with no mention in the official blurb about the Nazi years from 1933 to 1945.

And chemical manufacturer IG Farben even had a factory inside Auschwitz death camp that used prison labor in the production of synthetic rubber and oil.

However, Farben's most ghastly act was in the sale of Zyklon B — the poison used in the Nazi gas chambers. At its peak in 1944, this factory made use of 83,000 slave laborers.

There were also companies which enriched themselves through Nazi rule. Publishing giant Bertelsmann grew rich publishing gung-ho pro-war books for Hitler Youth members and, according to Handelsblatt, "profited massively" from contracts with the German armed forces at the Nazi

Party central headquarters in Munich.

Germany's largest bank, Deutsche, did not employ slaves but became hugely wealthy under Nazism. The bank sacked all Jewish directors when the Nazis came to power and from 1938 onwards became the richest in Germany by taking part in the "Aryanizing" — or taking over — of Jewish-owned businesses.

Train builder and electrical engineering giant Siemens still plays its cards close to its chest about wartime activities.

The research director of the German Museum in Berlin said that what it has admitted so far about its past is merely a "house history." Companies such as the sporting goods supplier Adidas and the popular retailer C&A are still working on company histories about their time under Nazism.

Top German companies a decade ago contributed £3 billion into a fund to compensate forced laborers enslaved in Third Reich factories.

Under a program organized by Fritz Sauckel — who was hanged at Nuremberg for war crimes — over two million people were brought to

Germany from conquered lands to work for the new master race.

Many of these went to private companies, like VW and BASF, while tens of thousands more were conscripted to work under the most appalling conditions producing weaponry.

These included the slaves who built the V1 and V2 rockets and other massive construction projects, such as the Valentin submarine base in Bremen.

The Nazis differed from other regimes throughout history which used slave labor. Romans and Greeks, for example, valued and revered their forced laborers, while the Nazis treated them with immense cruelty.

VW, for example, had something called the "dying room," where female forced laborers who gave birth had to leave their newborns to die.

Most of the agricultural slaves came from the occupied eastern territories of Poland, the Baltic states and Russia. Because the Slavic people were regarded as subhuman in the Nazi racial lexicon, casualty rates among them were the highest of all.

Slave laborers were used after the 1943 Dambuster raid to repair the breached dams in the Ruhr Valley and many French workers were press-ganged into backbreaking work building Hitler's Atlantic wall, meant to stave off a seaborne invasion launched from England.

BASF built a plant at Auschwitz to produce synthetic rubber, and inmates there had a life expectancy measured in weeks. Soviet PoWs conscripted to work in Nazi industrial plants suffered death rates of between 90 and 97 percent.

Gabriele Quandt spoke out after an in-depth study by Bonn-based historian Joachim Scholtz, commissioned by the family, that concluded Guenther Quandt and his son Herbert were responsible for numerous Nazi injustices.

It found Guenther acquired companies through the Nazi program of "Aryanization" of Jewish-owned firms.

Herbert Quandt was "part of the system," son Stefan Quandt said after the conclusion of the three-year study — forced on the family by public outrage over a German TV documentary — compiled using company files from the 12-year period of the Third Reich.

The Quandt family bought into BMW 15 years after the war.

Guenther became a Nazi Party member on May 1, 1933, a month after Adolf Hitler achieved supreme power in Germany.

But he had long used a network of party officials and *Wehrmacht* officers to build up contacts for lucrative state contracts.

Married to Magda Behrend

Rietschel, Guenther was divorced by her in 1929, although they remained on friendly terms.

She went on to marry the "poison dwarf" of the Nazi party, the propaganda maestro Joseph Goebbels, and would die with him — after mur-



The league table follows revelations earlier that Audi, which was known as Auto Union during the Nazi period, was a big exploiter of concentration camp supplied slave labor, using 20,000 concentration camp inmates, such as this young boy, in its factories.

dering their six children — in Hitler's bunker in 1945.

The company grew rich in the Nazi era. In 1937, Hitler bestowed on Guenther the title *Wehrwirtschaftsführer* — leader of the armament economy — and his business supplied weapons using slave laborers from concentration camps in at least three factories.

Hundreds of these laborers died.

An execution area to murder those who displeased their masters was found in one of his plants in Hannover and the study mentions the fate of a Polish man who was hanged at another plant in front of 50 other inmates.

The study showed that the Quandt firms also used Russian POWs as slave laborers and that Guenther and Herbert knew about them, detailing their dispersion among their empire from the company HQ in Berlin.

Herbert even employed Ukrainian slaves on his weekend retreat outside the Reich capital.

Guenther was described as an "opportunist" who enthusiastically helped the regime to rid Berlin industries of Jewish workers before the start of the war.

This was despite his numerous contacts with Jewish bankers in the years before the Nazis began their climb to power.

He was also "unscrupulous" in his take-overs of Jewish firms, which were forcibly sold for a pittance to loyal German industrialists such as himself.

"The family patriarch was part of the Nazi regime," judged the historian in the 1,200-page study.

"The Quandts connected themselves inseparably with the crimes of the National Socialists."

BMW, of which the Quandts became major shareholders 15 years after the war, was not implicated in the documentary.

"We were treated terribly and had to

(Continued on page 14)

SURVIVORS' CORNER

THE UNTOLD STORY OF JEWS WHO RESCUED JEWS

BY ALAN SCHNEIDER,
THE TIMES OF ISRAEL

Yona (Jonas) Eckstein (1902-1971) was an active member of the Jewish community in Bratislava and a successful wrestler in the "Hakoach" Jewish sport club there. Through his sporting activities and vivacious personality Eckstein befriended city officials and police, and when the Jews of Bratislava were being rounded up for deportation in 1941, Eckstein was charged with providing food to Jews in the transit camps and was given the privilege of remaining in his own home.

But Eckstein did not take advantage of his relative freedom and good connections to escape to a safe haven. Instead, he utilized them to facilitate rescue activities of fellow Jews that endangered himself and his family.

His diverse activity touched thousands of people over a period of two and a half years, encompassing the clandestine delivery of food to hidden Jews along with information vital for their survival; hosting orphans from Poland and facilitating their conveyance to pre-state Israel via Hungary; hosting Jews who fled to Slovakia from Auschwitz; hosting and conveying Polish Jews to the then-relative safety of Hungary; and hiding Jews in bunkers — including one he dug under his own basement. Eckstein was imprisoned and tortured by the Gestapo and pressured by Jewish leaders to hand over hidden Jews. Many of the operations undertaken by Jonas Eckstein were done in the framework of the Jewish commu-

nity and the "Working Group" headed by Rabbi Chaim Michael Dov Weissmandl and Gisi Fleischmann, but most of his activity was undertaken at his own initiative.



Yona Eckstein in Bratislava, 1942, with four of the children he kept in hiding.

For years, his heroism was known only among Jewish survivors from Bratislava. Like many other rescuers, Jonas Eckstein did not speak of his rescue activities, and many details remain obscure to this day. After the war, Eckstein emigrated to Australia. Later he made one triumphant visit to Israel, where he was hailed by hundreds of people he rescued and their offspring, shortly before succumbing to diabetes.

The phenomenon of Jewish rescue and the instructive stories of thousands of Jews who labored to save their endangered brethren throughout Europe have yet to receive the public

recognition and resonance they deserve even though they represent some of the finest examples that I know of Jewish solidarity and the timeless Jewish edicts: "Neither shalt thou stand idly by the blood of thy neighbor" and "All Jews are responsible for one another."

Many who could have tried to flee chose to stay and rescue others; some paid for it with their lives, like Goffredo Pacifici from Italy, who repeatedly undertook the dangerous task of smuggling groups of Jews at night across the Tresa River between Italy and Switzerland while it was guarded by German troops. He was the only Italian to remain with the Jewish refugee children at Villa Emma after the area was occupied by the Germans, and it was he, together with the group's indefatigable leader, Yosef Indig, who spirited them across the river. When Indig begged him to join them, Pacifici replied: "Try to understand me. I still want to try to help some more Jews to cross the border. I want nothing in exchange! What will happen to me is not that important! When all will be safe, I'll also put my wife in safety and then I'll join the partisan in the mountains."

When it became clear that the Swiss would no longer turn away youngsters over 16, Pacifici led successive groups of Jews to the river and on to safety. On December 7, 1943, Goffredo and his brother Aldo, who assisted in the escapes, were picked up by the Varese police, deported and murdered in Auschwitz. In his book about his own escapade across Europe with nearly a

100 orphaned and refugee children in tow, Indig wrote:

"[Pacifici] was the representative of all that was good in Italian Jewry. A proud Jew with a warm soul. He was felled on the treacherous route he took without fear. He was one of the heroes of our rescue, among the greats we came to know during our Italian exile."

With great heroism, Jews in every country in occupied Europe employed subterfuge, forgery, smuggling, concealment and other methods to ensure that some Jews survived the Holocaust in Europe, or assisted them in escaping to a safe haven, and by doing so resisted the Nazi murder machine. The few rescuers who are still alive remained reluctant until recent times to recount their stories, satisfied in the knowledge that they were able to overcome the German tormentors and their collaborators.

Holocaust historiography has focused for 70 years on the means and ways Jews were despoiled, deported, dehumanized and murdered. Some Holocaust historians are aware of the urgent need for change. Writing in the introduction to his book *Jewish Resistance Against the Nazis*, Patrick Henry, professor emeritus at Whitman College, notes that "[I]n the realm of rescue, particularly when compared to the acclaim granted non-Jewish rescuers, the tremendous role played by Jews in the rescue of other Jewish persons, often working in Jewish organizations and in conjunction with non-Jews, has not received sufficient academic study and appropriate public recognition."

HOLLYWOOD'S UNKNOWN RESCUER

BY ALLISON HOFFMAN, TABLET

On December 27, 1938, a young woman in Berlin named Johanna Rockmann sat down and wrote a desperate letter to a stranger in California. In the immediate aftermath of *Kristallnacht*, it was clear that things were only getting worse for Germany's remaining 550,000 Jews, of whom Rockmann was one. Appeals to Americans with influence or money, whose names and addresses could be culled from newspapers or encyclopedias, were one of the few avenues for escape that most German Jews had left. "With the greatest desire of my life I take the liberty to address you," she wrote, in fluid English script. "I politely address my petition to you, asking you for your kind assistance in getting to a transatlantic country. At the same time, I may be permitted

to ask you for an affidavit."

The man to whom she addressed her plea was Harry Warner, one of Hollywood's Warner brothers. President of the studio that bore his family name, he was ranked by *Fortune* as the second-most-important man in the film business — a man with production schedules to meet and high-powered egos to manage and little time left over to help people he didn't know.

What Rockmann needed from Harry Warner was something quite involved: a signed and notarized guarantee of financial support that she could offer to U.S. consular authorities as proof that she would not become a burden to the American public. Such an affidavit, signed by the head of a major Hollywood studio, would seal her application for a precious visa that would allow her to escape from Nazi Germany.

To further her case, Rockmann

described the 14 years she spent working as a bookkeeper for a lighting-supply company, Siegel & Co. She added that she was fluent in foreign languages and also a diligent housekeeper and seamstress. "Hoping you will be kind enough to consider my petition for which I will always be thankful to you," she concluded. Below her signature, she added a postscript — "Please turn over!" — whose final exclamation point betrayed her anxiety. On the reverse side of the page, she wrote that the Dominican Republic was allowing refugees to land as long as they had \$50 in hand, so if Warner was not inclined to offer an affidavit, perhaps he would loan her the cash? "I will return you the money with my thanks after my admittance," Rockmann pledged.

Nowhere did Rockmann make reference to the one thing she shared in common with the powerful studio

chief in California: their Jewish heritage. But she addressed the letter to H.M. Warner — the initials for Hirsch Moses, the name Warner was born with in Poland. The missive, mailed in care of Warner Bros. Studio, Los Angeles, Cal., USA, made it to Warner's office and eventually into a manila folder marked "1938 correspondence" that today sits with the rest of the Warner Bros. archives, which reside in Los Angeles, at the University of Southern California.

That the Jews of Nazi Germany responded to the gathering storm clouds in Europe by writing to strangers halfway around the world is a measure of how dire their circumstances were. But these desperate correspondents weren't fantasists. For the most part, they were educated, sophisticated city people trying everything they could to save their own lives.

(Continued on page 13)

THE WOMAN WHO LAUNCHED 1,000 JEWISH REFUGEES

BY MENACHEM WECKER AND
AMANDA BORSCHER-DAN,
THE TIMES OF ISRAEL

In so many ways, Ruth Gruber is larger than life. As a photojournalist she traveled to the Soviet Arctic as a foreign correspondent in the mid-1930s, covered the arrival of *Exodus 1947* in Palestine, and reported on the rescue of Jews in Ethiopia in the mid-1980s. The Brooklyn native, who started reporting in the early 1930s, has also published 19 books.

But what she called “the most important assignment of her life” was not as a journalist, but rather as a diplomat

— Gruber was a special assistant to the US secretary of the interior during World War II — with the astonishing rank of general.

In 1944, Gruber was instrumental in bringing some 1,000 Jewish refugees from Nazi Europe to the United States — the only time the US brought Jewish refugees en masse.

As documented in her book *Haven: The Dramatic Story of 1000 World War II Refugees and How They Came to America*, because of the strict quota system enforced by the US Congress, President Franklin D. Roosevelt used his executive authority to invite 1,000 refugees to be his “guests” at the fenced and barbed wire secured Fort Ontario Emergency Refugee shelter on a former army base in Oswego, New York.

Culled from over 3,000 applicants,

982 refugees boarded the transport ship *Henry Gibbins* and sailed from Naples in July 1944. There were also a comparable number of injured US soldiers onboard.

In an interview with journalist Susan Richards, whose father and his family were on the boat, Gruber, then 95, explains priority was given to people who had escaped from Nazi concen-



Ruth Gruber, Alaska, 1941-43.

tration camps and slave labor camps. Families were kept together whenever possible, though young men of military age were not allowed. Preference was given to those who could help run the refugee camp in the US, and those with communicable or “odious diseases” were excluded.

All refugees were forced to sign a document stating they would return to Europe after the war ended and weren’t provided with legal status for their stay in the US. Gruber describes that the refugees were given a tag to wear around their necks that classified them as “casual baggage.”

Though the ship arrived August 3, 1944, the voyage was rife with danger.

In interviews for the biographical documentary *Ahead of Time*, Gruber, close to 100 at the time of filming, tells of this amazing chapter in her episodic life.

“In January 1944, Roosevelt decided we should open our doors and take in 1,000 war refugees. I was a member of the Roosevelt government.... [Secretary of the Interior Harold L.] Ickes told me they’re going to make me a general. He said, ‘If the Germans capture you, they can kill you as a spy. But if we make you a general, they have to keep you alive!’

“We were part of a whole convoy. There were 29 ships, about 15 of them were warships. Every night the ship was blacked out completely. The whole convoy was blacked out,” says Gruber.

The ship was sailing in the Mediterranean when 30 Nazi planes flew over. All passengers were told to retreat to their bunks and the refugees ran to their hold, Gruber describes. When the Nazi planes flew over, the refugees were silent on their bunks.

“They had been through so much, they could go through this. Though many were scared, they were silent. Even the babies were silent as if they knew this was a moment to be silent,” Gruber tells Richards.

“And I had an epiphany and I knew from this minute on, my life would be inexorably bound with rescue and survival,” says Gruber.

Slowly the refugees grew used to life in the former army base. Gruber tells how the townspeople were “fascinated” and threw gifts over the fence.

“The schools of Oswego opened

their arms to our children and these children were hungry for education,” Gruber says, noting some hadn’t been in school for up to 15 years.

At the end of the war there was panic, tells Gruber. The refugees thought they would be sent back, as per their agreement with the now deceased Roosevelt. President Harry S. Truman’s decision to bestow citizenship on the refugees is attributed to the work of camp director Dr. Joseph Smart and Eleanor Roosevelt, who took up the cause.

In December 1945, the refugees were taken to Canada and given visas to the US.

“One thousand helps make up for



Children playing chess on the refugees’ deck of the *Henry Gibbins* next to an outdoor medical station and pharmacy, 1944.

the thousands we could have saved. It was to be sure late and too little, but it was something,” says Gruber.

“I had two tools: I had words and I had images, and I realized every one of us has tools, we have to find those tools and use them and fight injustice.”

The fantastic voyage was described in Gruber’s *Haven* and eventually turned into a 2001 movie, starring Natasha Richardson as Gruber, as well as a musical.

RESEARCHER’S MISSION TO SHOW NAZIS’ SILENCING OF MUSIC DURING HOLOCAUST

BY MIKE BOEHM, L.A. TIMES

Nazi crimes against visual art are easy to grasp. We can see images of paintings they stole. We can read about court battles Holocaust victims and their heirs sometimes have fought to get them back.

But how does one show the willful obliteration of music?

Carla Shapreau saw how during a visit to Vienna, and now she is telling the world.

A violin maker, attorney and lecturer at the UC Berkeley School of Law, Shapreau is on a research mission to bring Nazi persecution of Jewish musicians to light. She looks for valuable musical instruments and collections of sheet music that the Nazis confiscated, and anything else that will add to the world’s store of knowledge about how Jewish musicians were hounded into emigration, silence or death.

Two years ago Shapreau went to the city library in Vienna to continue

her search for a lost musical past. On display under glass in the library’s exhibition room was a small book with a marble-patterned binding. It contained column after column of printed names — about 2,000 of them, lined up vertically across 23 pages.



Erich Wolfgang Korngold, shown in 1920, was a targeted Austrian composer.

Published in the late 1930s, it was the membership index of artists, most of them composers, represented by a performing rights society called AKM. The society’s function was to collect royalties earned in Austria from performances or recordings and pass them along to the composers.

The Nazis had a knack for doing evil in the most bureaucratic way, and Shapreau saw immediately that this little book was a striking example of it. Somebody dutifully had drawn red slashes across more than 500 of the names, marking them as Jews. By

crossing them out, AKM aimed to end their careers — not just in Austria but in other nations, including the United States, where AKM had deals with other performing rights organizations to collect its members’ royalties.

“Name by name, this diminutive yet chilling red-lined Nazi-era artifact was a prelude to evolving persecution in Austria for those in the musical world,” Shapreau writes in an article recently posted on the website of the Los Angeles-based OREL Foundation.

For composers’ heirs, Shapreau said, uncovering more of the truth

might constitute a small victory over the forces that had tried to expunge their parents’ or grandparents’ artistry.

The new discovery is important to Beatrice Beer, a French American operatic soprano whose father, Joseph Beer, is crossed out near the top of Page 5.

Beer was already late for a recent rehearsal in Philadelphia when a reporter reached her to ask about Shapreau’s findings. She’d heard about the list but hadn’t seen it.

“This is so emotional for me,” Beer said. “This gives me the chills.”

It’s not news that her father was blacklisted and his career destroyed, she said. But there’s something uncanny about being able to see the moment in which he was marked for creative erasure. “This comes as a bombshell in red.”

The OREL Foundation exists to make the music of composers such as Joseph Beer resound again. It’s an outgrowth of Los Angeles Opera music director James Conlon’s ongoing

(Continued on page 11)

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BERGEN-BELSEN DIARY, 1945

(Continued from page 2)

mountains I saw my loved ones coming towards me. They talked to me as they used to talk in the past. They smiled at me as they used to smile in the past and pleaded for my life. They cried through my eyes and squeezed my thin, bony hands. I embraced them in the emptiness. I snuggled my hot body into their fleshless arms, pressed my swollen, living lips to their lifeless faces. I stretched my thin fingers out into the shadows of the sweaty night and thought I was caressing their hair. I felt my own burning breath scalding my face and thought that they were blowing hot air onto my cheeks. They were all there with me. I saw my friend Yakov Borenstein, just as he was on that winter day when he prepared to leave on his last journey. His eyes were burning: "Don't be sad, my friend. We will meet again..." Suddenly, my lips started to tremble. "Come with me; come with me, my dearest friend. We will go for a long walk." "I am coming, I am coming," I called back. But my other friend, Kuba Litmanovitch, took hold of my hand. "Bring me an apple..." I went with him to the cemetery. All our comrades were there. From a far-off pathway there suddenly appeared Esterl and Moniek. They were holding hands and running towards us. "Wait!" Esterl shouted. Then she laughed in my face. "So now you know that I don't have much time." Moniek lifted her into his arms and placed her in the grave, as if he were putting her to bed for the night. Then he lay down beside her.

I inched myself closer to the wall near my hospital bed and made room for them all. But they angrily pressed me even closer to the wall. Suddenly their mood changed and they became kinder. I saw the whole ghetto street full of people coming towards us in a happy festive mood. Bunim Shayevitch came too. Then I was left alone. My bed swayed like a swing at the end of a long chain that stretched from heaven to the abyss, from life to dream, from dream to death. Bunim was standing by the window of my hospital room, just as he used to stand in his home at 14 Lotniche Street, his hands in his pockets, his grey eyes squinting from behind the lenses of his glasses. He looked through the sky, through me and beyond. "I have perished," he said. He took hold of the edge of my bed and swung it round. The earth started rocking. The sky began to shake. My body was on fire with the flames of the setting sun. I took off the checkered jacket that I was wearing and used it to fan myself as I went back and forth on the swing. I did this for a long time — so long, so long, so endlessly long, until my hands detached themselves from my body, and, with my fingers still clinging to the jacket, they fell into the depths of the night. I wanted to look down, to see where the jacket had fallen and where my hands had fallen, but tears blinded my eyes. Next to me stood my father, crying. His lips were very white and glued together, yet I could hear his voice. "Daughter," he said. "I brought you some lovely broth. Boiled pota-

toes and carrots all mashed up into a *tsimmes*. Take it and eat. Open your mouth. Look how tasty it is and how good it smells."

The taste of something sweet and refreshing made me open my eyes. On my bed sat my mother. She whispered something. I could not make out what she was saying, but her words dripped like balm into my soul. The tears from her tired eyes cooled my burning body. At the foot of my bed stood my agonized sister. Her frightened eyes blinked a prayer at me, entreating me to live. Yes, I must live. Some blessed justice has preserved me for their sake and they for mine. I want to give this justice its due; and I want to pay it back for all the injustice that has been done to us, for our loneliness.

June 18

Nearly six weeks in hospital. I have returned to life again. My body rejoices; my soul weeps. I suspect that it was not my body but my soul that was so ill. Helpless, hopeless, I feel like someone who has spent a long time in a dark cellar and has suddenly come up to the light. I am dazzled, drunk. I squint at the light, without the strength to absorb it.

It is spring. The spring of liberation. The sun breathes life into everything. And yet, beneath its blue skies there is emptiness. The sun's rays search in vain for so many faces, so many bodies that belong to those faces. They are nowhere to be found. The rays embrace a void, except when they settle, here and there, on a few solitary, half-starved individuals.

I lead a double life. One part is thin, fragile, trembling, young and yearning for joy. The other part is deeper and more painful, full of memory and sorrow. The first is full of shame and guilt; the second is stormy, tortured and full of fury. The first trembles on the edge of the second, but never penetrates it. The second, however, often steals into my new young life, disturbing, destroying, poisoning the least glimmer of joy. It demands attention constantly.

June 20

I am learning to walk. Today, Mother helped me down the stairs and took me into the yard. She found an old canned goods box and sat me down on top of it. A pity that there is so much dirt everywhere. Papers litter the ground; empty boxes, broken shelves and bed frames, discarded furniture soil the fresh green of the grass. Why can nothing be clean around us? Why is there no orchestra playing music to the rhythm of my heartbeat? Why is everything and everyone so indifferent? I am learning to walk! At least the sky is decorated with a sparkling sun. I look up at the sky. We are good friends again. It is good to be alive. It is delicious, a delight. I don't want to think about anything. I want my body to acquire flesh. I want my legs to recover their strength. I want to sing. I want to roll in the grass. I want to run carefree through the fields.

Henia brought me a little sprig full of blossoms. I am lying on the bed now, as pleased with myself as a young
(Continued on page 12)



REPORT FROM YAD VASHEM

NAZI'S "PERFECT ARYAN" BABY WAS ACTUALLY JEWISH

BY TERRENCE MCCOY,
THE WASHINGTON POST

The newlyweds came to Berlin as students, a pair of Latvian Jews who wanted to make it big in singing. In 1934, just after Adolf Hitler took control of Germany, the young Jewish woman became pregnant with a child who would soon become known as the "perfect Aryan."

The photo was everywhere. It first adorned a Nazi magazine that held a beauty contest to find "the perfect Aryan" and then was later splashed across postcards and storefronts.

Less well known, however, was the fact that the "Aryan" girl was actually Jewish.

As remarkable as that revelation is, more remarkable is the story that accompanies it. The girl, now 80 and named Hessa Levinsons Taft, recently presented the magazine cover, emblazoned with her baby photo, to the Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial in Israel and offered her tale to the German newspaper *Bild*. But the extended version of what happened is found in an oral history she gave to the United States Holocaust Museum in 1990.

It begins in 1928 when her parents came to Berlin. Both were singers. The father, Jacob Levinsons, crooned a chocolate-smooth baritone. His wife, Pauline Levinsons, had studied at the renowned Riga Conservatory in Latvia.

Jacob had accepted a position at a local opera house and taken the stage name of Yasha Lenssen, his daughter recalled in the lengthy interview with the Holocaust Museum. It was the time of surging anti-Semitism in Berlin, and when "they found out

that his name really was Levinsons," she said, "they decided to cancel his contract."

"Without any money" and living in a "very, very cramped one-room" apartment, the young couple gave birth to Hessa Levinsons on May 17, 1934. She was beautiful. So when she was



6 months old, the parents decided to have her picture taken. "My mother took me to a photographer," she told the museum. "One of the best in Berlin! And he did — he made a very beautiful picture — which my parents thought was very beautiful."

They liked it so much, they framed it and propped it up on the piano her father had given her mother as a present after Hessa was born. They had thought the picture was a private family photo. But soon after, a woman who helped clean the apartment arrived to deliver some surprising news.

"You know," the woman said, "I saw Hessa on a magazine cover in town."

Hessa's mother found that impossible to believe. A lot of babies look the same, the mother explained, and

surely the helper was mistaken. But she wasn't.

"No, no, no, no," the helper explained to Taft's mother. "It's definitely Hessa. It's this picture. Just give me some money, and I'll get you the magazine."

Money changed hands, and the helper soon returned with a magazine. A headline that said "The Sun in the Home" stretched across the top with the same picture that was there, resting on the piano. "The magazine was published out of Leipzig [in central Germany] and was very definitely one of the few magazines allowed to circulate at the time," Taft said in the oral history, "because it was a Nazi

magazine." She said the pages brimmed with images of "men wearing swastikas" and even one of Hitler himself "reviewing the troops."

The parents were terrified. Why was their Jewish infant on the cover of a Nazi magazine lauding Hitler's exploits?

They contacted the photographer, according to Hessa's account. "What is this?" the daughter says her mother asked. "How did this happen?"

The photographer told her to quiet down. "I will tell you the following," the story went. "I was asked to submit my 10 best pictures for a beauty contest run by the Nazis. So were 10 other outstanding photographers in Germany. So 10 photographers submitted their 10 best pictures. And I sent in your baby's picture."

"IF ONLY I HAD KNOWN"

solve the mystery of what had become of his brother Mendel.... I felt that Moshe would have wanted me to try to find him."

Chasia, Sima and Miriam had in fact been murdered in the Ponary forest near Vilna in July 1941. But Mendel's third daughter, Rivka, had managed to escape the Vilna ghetto to the forests, where she joined a partisan unit. In 1946 she married, and the couple emigrated to Israel in 1958.

In 1983, Rivka Gurvitz submitted Pages of Testimony in memory of her father Mendel Eidlicz and his family. Discovering the Pages of Testimony on the Yad Vashem website, Polina contacted Rivka, now aged 90. A conversation with Rivka's daughter, Ahuva Stav, confirmed that Moshe and Mendel were, in fact, brothers. Maksim Gur, Rivka's son, was deeply moved when Ahuva

informed him of the discovery. Maksim (named after his grandfather Max/Mendel) had served as a diplomatic emissary in Kiev from 1995 to 1997, never knowing that family members who had survived the war were living in *Kostopil*, a town in western Ukraine some 220 miles from Kiev. "If only I had known," he says, "I might have been able to help them reconnect with their Jewish identities, and perhaps even emigrate to Israel."

After discovering the Eidlicz branch of the family in Israel, Polina moved her investigations to her grandfather's sister Sylvia, who had moved to the US before the war. Sylvia was last registered as living in New York City in 1940. In 1933 she had married Jacob Brier, and in 1935 gave birth to a son named Joseph.

Staff of the *Shoah* Victims' Names Recovery Project at Yad Vashem con-

"But you knew that this is a Jewish child," the mother exclaimed.

"Yes," he said, explaining there had been a competition to find the "perfect example of the Aryan race to further Nazi philosophy.... I wanted to allow myself the pleasure of this joke. And you see, I was right. Of all the babies, they picked this baby as the perfect Aryan."

Family stories are always prone to hyperbole, distortion and exaggeration — but this appears to be true. Taft has reams of photographs that show her in numerous publications and cards. "I can laugh about it now," the *Telegraph* quotes Taft, now a chemistry professor at St. John's University in New York, as saying. "But if the Nazis had known who I really was, I wouldn't be alive."

The parents were equally shocked and "amazed at the irony of it all." In the weeks afterward, the picture was everywhere. It was in storefront windows, in advertisements and on postcards. One time, Taft says her aunt went to the store to buy a birthday card for her first birthday in May of 1935, only to find a card with Taft's baby picture on it. "My aunt didn't say another word, but she bought the postcard, which my parents brought with them throughout the years."

Eventually, the family fled Europe and found refuge in Cuba for years before emigrating to the United States in the late 1940s and settling in New York City. Hessa Levinsons got married and became Hessa Taft. But the father stayed behind in Havana to operate a business, which eventually foundered under the rise of Fidel Castro. "He always said, 'I have survived Hitler; I will survive Castro,'" Taft said. "And he did. He did."

Names database reconnects three family branches.

BY DEBORAH BERMAN

In March 2014, Polina Gavriluk from *Kostopil*, Ukraine, informed Yad Vashem that she had discovered a cousin in Israel while researching the fate of her family during the Holocaust. Her grandfather, Moshe Eydelevitch, was killed while serving as a soldier in the Red Army, and Polina had in her possession letters that Moshe had written at the front, including his "last letter," sent four days before he was killed and only two weeks before the end of the war. In the letter, Moshe wrote about his desire to learn what had happened to his brother Mendel, Mendel's wife Chasia, and their daughters, Rivka, Sima and Miriam. "The letters are all we have from my grandfather," explained Polina. "I wanted to

tacted journalist Hillel Kuttler, whose column "Seeking Kin" aims to help reunite long-lost relatives and friends, and asked for his assistance. Kuttler succeeded in locating Joseph Brier, thereby reuniting the third — US — branch of the family with the other two. Joe Brier, 79, from Suffern, New York, was surprised to learn he had living family members in Ukraine and Israel. An only child, Brier grew up with few relatives, the most central figures in his life being his maternal grandparents, Tobias and Malka Eidlicz, the family name slightly different from the one Polina Gavriluk had known for her grandfather.

"We are so happy to have found real family, to be related by actual DNA," says Maksim Gur.

"This is a brand-new phenomenon for all of us. It's going to take some getting used to."

BERGEN-BELSEN DIARY, 1945

(Continued from page 9)

mother who has just given birth. The sprig of blossoms stands in a small bottle on the windowsill. When I turn my head I will see it, but right now I do not have the strength. Perhaps later.

June 23

Bats fly across windows. Their wings flutter in a dance of ghosts.

Those lines haunt me. They are from Bunim Shayeitch's poem about our fate. I can see him standing by the window of his room. Tomorrow he is going away. In the dark corners of the room there still linger the spirits of his loved ones, who are gone. Soon he too will be gone. The last of his family. He is taking a whole generation with him. Nobody will remember them. Nobody will remember him. A nameless end.

But deep in my subconscious, they live on. They wake me at night. They pounce unexpectedly when I am in the middle of a laugh that is too carefree, or enjoy a moment that is too pleasurable. But when I want to bring them back to life, to take them out from their hidden places, then the slightest touch of a warm breeze, or the caress of a golden sunray, makes my limbs grow numb with pain and I am seized with a powerful longing to escape them, to forget them all.

I know that back in those days when I was to share their fate, they did not pain me. They were with me, not in fact, but in essence. Somewhere on the way we got separated; at some unknown moment they left me. I went on the road to life. Now when I think about them, when I remember them, something breaks inside me, as if it would destroy me. Then I pray that something more powerful than this pain should come to my rescue. I want to live with them. I must remember them. I pray that time not erase the details of their lives from my mind, that my memory of them remain forever fresh and ready to serve me. But I'm afraid that it will not be so. My longing will remain eternally hungry, and as time goes on, more helpless. Memory will not serve longing. It will not be possible to remember all the little things, the tiny traces of individuality, which by themselves mean very little, but when put together create individuality. What will remain will be an abstract picture, a mere approximation of what once was and now exists no longer.

June 24

Last night I had a nightmare. I woke up screaming. I dreamed that we were being chased. We ran across fields. Suddenly I lost Mother. I opened my eyes and for a long time I could not calm down. In the darkness I could make out Mother's pale face, but I could not bring myself to believe that it was really her. No, we no longer need to run anywhere. It is all over. I walk around all day as if in a fever. Every now and then a shiver passes through me without my understanding why.

June 26

What lovely days we are having! Everything is green. Blossoms fall from the trees, gathering into white carpets under every tree trunk. Those trees which have not yet shed their blossoms look like religious Jews, slowly preparing to remove their prayer shawls. But what am I saying? These are just ordinary trees losing their blossoms. It is



A group of women at the liberated Bergen-Belsen concentration camp in 1945.

impossible to compare them to anything else. The sense of awe belongs to those of us who observe them. We are like children. Every day we make new discoveries. The joy of awakening makes us drunk. It is good to be able to breathe, to feel, to see, to hear. It is good to be able to eat, to be able to bite into a chunk of bread. We perform this sacred ritual with wild animal joy and a sense of religious duty.

We spend entire days doing nothing, but we are not bored. A blade of grass, trodden down under heavy boots, has a hard job righting itself again and must wait until the sap in its veins starts to pulse with new life. We are that trodden grass. We are preoccupied with ourselves, with straightening our bent bodies. Nothing else is as absorbing or thrilling.

I think about Poland, the country of my childhood. I long for the familiar streets of my hometown. But what will happen if there is no one there to meet me?

I can see my father's face before me. I can feel his hand caressing my cheek, the same hand which so lovingly and presciently caressed me as we traveled on the train to our final parting in Auschwitz. Tateh, the thought of your warm hand grieves me. Where are you? Where will we meet again on the many roads of this world? Where will you look for us? Where should we look for you?

June 27

I went into the forest today. It's good that they've brought us here to recuperate — although it seems to me that no matter where they would have brought us, we would see beauty everywhere. From now on we will always see and feel the value of every beautiful thing that we come

across. I lay down on a mound of grass and stretched out my body to its full length, with my arms thrown over my head. I had the feeling that I was covering the whole earth. Above me a thick clump of trees formed a circle, their branches entwined with clasped hands as if they were dancing beneath the blue festive sky. Nothing else happened, but this was enough. The world and life. I turned with my

fault that in their dreams they see the reflections of their parents' faces, or the smiles of their sisters and brothers, or shudder at the horrors they have so recently survived? During the day the girls flutter busily about singing, drawn from every barrack and courtyard to those who will teach them for the first time the language of love. The words may be strange, but they understand the gestures and the kisses. And then there is the sweetness of chocolate to bring back memories of their distant and yet not-so-distant childhoods.

Some women sell themselves to the soldiers simply and knowingly, just for the taste of a slice of white bread.

June 30

We must record and register every detail, even the most insignificant, of what has happened. It is a duty, an obligation, a compulsion. But around me there is sunshine and beauty and the carefree freedom of summer. I do not have the strength to resist it all. This is my first summer. Is it not poisoned to begin with? I postpone the writing from day to day.

I wonder if there will ever be an all-encompassing literary masterpiece that recreates the past. I doubt it. I recall my conversations with Shayeitch in the ghetto, when he was writing his long poem. I told him that such an epic has to be written from a certain perspective. Time has to elapse. He had no way of knowing then how his long poem would end, or that it would remain unfinished. He told me: "Our lives have to be recorded as they are happening. I am letting the story of our daily lives drip off the tip of my pen. We do not need anything else." Today I realize that it could not have been otherwise. The perspective will grow with time; it will stretch out and grow thin. Who then will bring back the terror of those ghetto days? Days like those can only be described as they are happening — with sharp, bated breath. Just as the writers and painters did in the ghetto. When one has distance, one can only remember fragments of the whole. But that memory lacks the pulse of the trembling, feverish present.

How can one construct an artistic history of the ghetto? Would such a work not mask the raw immediacy with which one must approach this topic? Is not the form of the novel too elegant, too peaceful, too comfortable, too quiet? I feel that to write such a novel would be an insult to my dear ones and also to myself.

July 1

I again saw Bunim Shayeitch in my dream. He was radiant with the same light that used to shine so often on his face when he was happy. We communicated with each other without words, just through thoughts alone. "I am very tired," he said. "But I'm happy." He was standing in his wooden shack. From somewhere he pro-

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HOLLYWOOD'S UNKNOWN RESCUER

(Continued from page 6)

Warner Bros. was one of the first American studios to stop doing business with the Reich, in 1934 — the same year Irving Thalberg, Louis B. Mayer's right-hand man at MGM, famously said, "Hitler and Hitlerism will pass, the Jews will still be there." The Warners, meanwhile, became known as the most anti-Nazi studio heads in Hollywood, with Harry — the oldest and most observant of the Warner brothers — assuming the role of elder statesman.

But could the powerful Jewish moguls of Hollywood's Golden Era — people whose successors have been happy to leverage their political clout and star power for causes from electing presidents to ending the conflict in *Darfur* — done more to save their co-religionists from the Holocaust? The answer is yes. Just how much more the Jews of Hollywood could have done is shown by the deeds of another studio boss whose personal sense of urgency and activism outstripped even that of the Warners, but who never made it into the history books as one of America's most important Holocaust rescuers. His name was Carl Laemmle.

Carl Laemmle is well known to historians as one of the most important studio heads of Hollywood's Golden Era. A German-born Jew who got his start in the garment business, he managed in middle age to jump from being a mid-level *schmatte* salesman to founding Universal Pictures. Unlike other studio bosses, who wanted to leave Europe behind them, Laemmle stayed in touch with life in the country he left. He underwrote the reconstruction of his hometown, *Laupheim*, following World War I and was appalled and frightened by Hitler's rise to power. Unlike most Western leaders, and most Jews, in Hollywood and Europe alike, Laemmle had no illusions about who Hitler was and what he had in mind — for Germany, for Europe, and for the Jews.

Laemmle also had more reason than most powerful Hollywood Jews to take Hitler's actions personally: He still had close relatives living in Germany. And when the Nazis came to *Laupheim*, they put Hitler's name on streets and buildings that had been dedicated in his honor. "Mr. Hitler comes to power, and all of a



Carl Laemmle aboard the *Leviathan* in the 1930s.

sudden Laemmlestrasse was no longer Laemmlestrasse," a former employee, Joseph Roos, told interviewers from the *Shoah* Foundation in 1995.

Laemmle immediately brought his siblings and their extended families from Germany to Los Angeles and soon began pestering friends and acquaintances to accept his help in getting visas so they could leave, too. "In 1935, my father went to visit him in *Zurich* at the hospital, and he said, 'Wilhelm, you have to get out of Germany,'" Max Obernauer, the son of Laemmle's closest childhood friend, told the *Shoah* Foundation in a 1997 interview. "He felt that all the Jews of Germany were going to be exterminated, and he felt that whatever he could do on his own he would do to save as many lives as he could." In 1936, he sold Universal Pictures and, at 70, was more or less retired from the film business, with an estate worth \$4 million — about \$65 million in today's dollars. He told interviewers that he planned to improve his poker

game, and he also invested in racehorses.

But Carl Laemmle's response to the impending mass extermination of European Jewry — an event that he foresaw with rare clarity — united his high position and personal capacities in a way that made him America's most important Holocaust rescuer after Varian Fry, the American who ran the European operations of the Emergency Rescue Committee. By 1938, Laemmle was spending, in his estimation, 80 percent of his time trying to rescue Jews, one by one, herding people through the visa process from his hilltop Beverly Hills compound like the Noah of Benedict Canyon. All in all, he quietly rescued, in his estimation, more than 200 Jews from the Final Solution. The actual numbers may be far higher.

Laemmle wasn't entirely alone. In November 1938, the director Ernst Lubitsch and film agent Paul Kohner established the European Film Fund, through which they issued affidavits and provided financial assistance to newly arrived refugees. For the most part, those associated with the group helped fellow intellectuals and artists, many of them friends and former colleagues. But, according to historian Martin Sauter, they also collaborated with Varian Fry to find additional people they could help. And it wasn't only Jews who volunteered to provide affidavits: according to Salka Viertel, a writer and protégé of Lubitsch who gave Greta Garbo elocution lessons, the list of those who wrote affidavits for the EFF included Dorothy Parker and her fellow parodist Donald Ogden Stewart.

But Laemmle proved willing to devote equal energy to people who were not famous, nor likely to become

so — people like Margerete Levi, from *Stuttgart*, whom Laemmle had never met but whose aunt, he told the State Department, he had once promised a favor. The obstacles in Laemmle's path were not insignificant. According to documents retrieved from the National Archives by Laemmle's German biographer, Udo Bayer, the retired studio boss spent months engaged in terse correspondence with the American consul general in *Stuttgart*, Samuel Honaker, and his deputies, who doubted that Laemmle would follow through on his promises to provide support to people like Levi in the absence of any blood relationship. In one, Laemmle told Honaker he would provide her with letters of introduction to his friends in New York, who would find her a job if he asked. "I, for one, feel that every single Jew who is in a financial position to help those badly in need should do so unswervingly," he wrote in August, 1937, from Beverly Hills. Laemmle said the same in a subsequent letter to Cordell Hull, Franklin Delano Roosevelt's secretary of state, whom he personally lobbied for a general relaxation of the rules governing the acceptance of affidavits by consular officials abroad. "Your consuls," he wrote in April of 1938, "can give the law a little more liberal interpretations which I think, under the circumstances, is permissible."

That same year, Harry Warner was also working hard to push American policymakers to save Jewish refugees from Hitler, but from the top down, rather than from the bottom up. In October 1938, after hearing that the British were considering restricting Jewish immigration to Palestine, he immediately sent a telegram to his brother Jack in London, instructing him to go see U.S. Ambassador Joseph Kennedy for help. Warner sent a second missive directly to President Roosevelt — addressed "My dear president" — asking him to personally intervene.

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SURVIVING THE HOLOCAUST BY HIDING THEIR FAITH

(Continued from page 4)

In 1991, the First International Gathering of Hidden Child Survivors was convened in New York City to give additional support to those who sought it. More than 1,600 hidden children worldwide joined as one family to help one another heal the scars of soulless memories.

It was during their discovery of and recovery from a past marred by a childhood that never was, that the girls grew into adulthood and emerged as respected women in their communities. Flora, in spite of her own demons, had managed to become a psychologist who was instrumental in advancing the study of hidden child survivors. Sophie became a successful radiation oncologist in Manhattan, and Carla, a

social worker, helped run the Hidden Child Foundation in New York.

Part Three: *The Ghetto Inside* breaches the walls of repressed memories. It is said that the dead and buried are oft forgotten, but as Rosen so aptly puts it, "One buries a memory, remembered in great detail, and finds, on digging it up, quite another."

Sophie, once exhumed from her interment of silence, discovered that her conscious identity was largely counterfeit. As an adult she learned how difficult a task it was for her to say goodbye to the little girl she could have been but never became.

But Flora could not forget, nor did she think that she should. Neither could she ignore her past, so in the 1990s she volunteered to go into high school classrooms and teach

teenagers about the consequences of racism, anti-Semitism and prejudice. Although her narrative challenged the boundaries of credibility, it resonated as authentic with the students because it was her story.

Carla's life fortunately followed a path that led to a place looking much like the American dream, though one could never have imagined it could happen after the horrors of her childhood. Her Jewish identity and dignity were stripped from her at an early age to preserve her life. Today, in her 70s, she has emerged from the shadows of her past to become an advocate and helping hand for so many like her, by serving as a social worker and vice-president of the Manhattan office of the Hidden Child Foundation.

Rosen's literary style is easy to read, but his portrayals of the cruelty inflicted upon millions of Jews at the hands of the Nazis and their willing collaborators are difficult to fathom. Rosen's narrative of the girls' accounts of the brutality they witnessed and experienced is so descriptive and so intense that at times one cannot help but wince.

So the child's game, "Jews Out," was not really just a game. It was a metaphor for the mistreatment of Jews during the most shameful days of Europe's history. And now, after more than 70 years, their stories are no longer concealed, lost or forgotten, because the moments and memories of their lives have been faithfully recounted in the pages of Rosen's book.

HOW THE NAZIS HELPED GERMAN COMPANIES GET VERY RICH

(Continued from page 5)

drink water from the toilets. We were also whipped," said Takis Mylopoulos, a forced laborer who worked in Quandt's *Hannover* plant.

In 1946 Guenther Quandt was arrested and interned. To the surprise of many, he was judged to be a *Mitläufer*, or fellow traveler — namely someone who accepted the Nazi ideology but did not take an active part in crimes.

He was released in January 1948.

One of the prosecutors in the *Nuremberg* trials, Benjamin Ferencz, now says that if today's evidence against him had been presented to the court at the time, "Quandt would have been charged with the same offenses as the directors of IG Farben" — the makers of the gas used to murder the Jews at Auschwitz.

Quandt was able to reinstall himself in the supervisory boards of various German firms such as Deutsche Bank. He also became an honorary citizen of the University in *Frankfurt* in 1951.

He died on holiday in Cairo on December 30, 1954.

Car giant Audi employed thousands of concentration camp

inmates during the Second World War and was "firmly ensnared" in the Nazi regime, an investigation found last month.



Hitler speaks at the opening ceremony of the Volkswagen car factory in *Fallerleben*, Germany, in 1938. Volkswagen used 12,000 slave laborers under the Nazis.

During the war years, Audi was known as Group Auto Union and, in a deal brokered by the SS, hired 3,700 concentration camp inmates to work in what was then Germany's second-biggest car firm.

The academic study also revealed that another 16,500 forced laborers, who were not imprisoned in concentration camps, were working in Auto Union plants.

Authors of the study, economic historian Rudolf Boch of the University of Chemnitz, and Martin Kukowski, head of the department of history at Audi, were granted access to the Audi archives for the first time for their "house cleaning" history of the firm.

Their book, *Wartime Economy and Labor Usage of Auto Union Chemnitz AG during the Second World War*, centers on the firm, which was the only serious competitor to Mercedes during the 12-year lifespan of the Third Reich, with a 20 percent market share for luxury cars.

During the war some of the plants were turned over to military production, churning out tanks and aircraft engines.

The 500-page report claims that Auto Union — now Volkswagen's luxury marque Audi — built its success on the back of human misery and suffering, and that founder Dr. Richard Bruhn was largely responsible for the firm's large-scale exploitation of forced labor.

"More than 20,000 forced laborers

were used in the production of Auto Union in their Saxon works, including almost one-fifth from concentration camps," said the study authors.

Conditions in the concentration camp in the city of *Zwickau*, where many workers were held, were particularly appalling, with 1,000 prisoners — many of them forced laborers from France — living in unheated barracks.

"The conditions were devastating," said the historians.

The researchers also discovered that disabled workers were shipped north to the *Flossenburg* concentration camp to be executed, and their numbers replaced with prisoners from that camp.

Towards the end of the war, 688 *Zwickau* inmates were sent on a death march to *Karlovy Vary*, now in the Czech Republic, with almost half of them dying on the way.

Audi recognized its wartime guilt in using forced labor more a decade ago, paying massive amounts into the £3 billion fund which German industry set up to compensate Nazi slave workers and their descendants.

The company was founded in 1932 following a merger of four car makers, and dropped the Auto Union name after a further merger in 1985.

HOLLYWOOD'S UNKNOWN RESCUER

(Continued from page 13)

(The stress of the episode, according to Warner biographer Michael Birdwell, put Harry Warner in the hospital with bleeding ulcers that same month.)

Two weeks later, Jack Warner traveled from London to Paris. There he learned that the German-born sister of one of his employees, Joseph Westreich, had been seized from their parents' home in *Frankfurt* and deported to Poland. Westreich's sister Rosalie recalled Warner's response. "He said, 'Is there anything I can do?' and fortunately my brother had the presence of mind to say yes, if you give an affidavit, my sister might be able to emigrate to the United States," she told an interviewer for the *Shoah* Foundation. "So, he went to the American consulate in Paris, and being Jack Warner he didn't need any of the formalities that were necessary in those days." Warner quickly filed an affidavit. Regina Westreich arrived in the United States safely, before the war broke out.

Through September 1939, when Germany invaded Poland and war was declared between Britain and Germany, Harry Warner continued trying to open the door for large numbers of refugees. His strategy was informed by his years as a movie tycoon who had helped build an empire based on influence and leverage. He sent a film crew to Alaska as part of a plan to convince Roosevelt to resettle Jewish refugees in the territory in a real-world antecedent of the fictional *mise-en-scène* of Michael

Chabon's *Yiddish Policemen's Union*. (After the war, Warner lobbied Truman — unsuccessfully — to revisit the idea as a means of moving Jews out of the DP camps in Europe.) His studio produced a short film, *The Nine Million*, to promote the idea of lifting American immigration quotas for refugees from Fascism. Warner Bros. also put out the explicitly anti-Hitler *Confessions of a Nazi Spy*, despite intense opposition from the censors responsible for keeping American films politically neutral.

There's no question that the Warners — and Harry Warner in particular — cared about the fate of Europe's Jews, far more than most of their fellow Jewish studio heads. While Harry Warner was lobbying Roosevelt, the producer David O. Selznick, always hesitant about being too publicly Jewish, was busy burning down a studio backlot for *Gone with the Wind*, which swept the 1939 Oscars. That year, Louis B. Mayer was the highest-paid executive in America, a man who, for the price of his annual dues at Hillcrest, the Jewish country club just south of Beverly Hills, could have sent 60 German Jews like Johanna Rockmann the \$50 they needed to land in Santo Domingo. Instead, in June of 1939, he hosted a delegation of German reporters on the MGM lot, in an effort to maintain his favor with the Nazi regime; MGM was among the last three American studios to have their hugely profitable distribution rights in the Third Reich

revoked, in 1940.

Yet the Warner archives contain no hint, aside from the survival of the letter itself, of whether Harry Warner ever responded to his supplicant Johanna Rockmann. Her heartrending plea for an affidavit wasn't the only one Warner received. On January 22, 1939, another letter came, this time from Vienna, newly annexed into Nazi Germany. "I came across the speech you held lately in Hollywood and it made a great impression on me," wrote Sigmund Zucker, a 52-year-old engineer, whose British-born wife Gladys had, unfortunately, adopted Austrian citizenship, trapping them both with passports issued by Hitler's Reich. "By helping me with an affidavit, you would be doing a good deed to a worthy man." He attached a small black-and-white photograph, presumably of himself: a handsome man with dark hair brushed back, wearing a suit with a waistcoat and a white handkerchief. He was not smiling.

If Warner did attempt to rescue the Zuckers, he was only partially successful. According to passenger manifests kept by Britain and Australia, the couple left *Southampton*, England, for Australia in May 1939, stopping in Ceylon en route. Johanna Rockmann wasn't so lucky: On January 29, 1943, she was deported from Berlin to Auschwitz, where she was killed the following month.

It's impossible to know how many Hollywood moguls and stars received appeals from strangers like Johanna Rockmann and Sigmund Zucker. As

the situation deteriorated in Germany, the country's trapped Jews became desperate enough to ask the ultimate favor from people they barely knew — in letters that in some cases still exist, buried in archives and in family correspondence. Doctors wrote to colleagues they'd met at medical conferences decades earlier, asking for help. Others scoured the Manhattan phone books, available at the Berlin public library, for people with the same surname — an idea popularized in an underground handbook written by Joseph Wechsberg, a Czech journalist who fled Germany via Montreal. "If you were an American Jew of German ancestry then you were going to get these appeals," said Laurel Leff, who in writing about the *New York Times* and its coverage of the Holocaust came across affidavit requests sent to the Sulzberger family by people claiming distant family relationships. "People found themselves in this situation where if they did nothing they could die, and all they could do was write these pathetic letters."

Along with committing to future financial support, American visa regulations required an affiant to provide proof of assets — arguably easier, or at least more palatable, for a retired mogul or a contract writer than for the working head of a large corporation, or for the head of a family trying to make ends meet. "A lot of people said no," Leff said. "That's the dirty secret."

But, as Carl Laemmle's story shows, they could have said yes.

BERGEN-BELSEN DIARY, 1945

(Continued from page 12)

duced a big parcel of manuscripts. "Did you save them?" I asked him. He answered with his radiant smile: "I saved enough. Only the long poem, 'Israel Noble.'" He started to read the poem.

Suddenly he began to prepare for another journey. I told him: "We have been evacuated already, don't you remember?"

Where are you, Bunim? Where are all our friends? Where are the writers and painters and musicians of the ghetto? We are lonely. We are all together and yet each one of us is alone. What are we going to do with this gift of life? The world is closed to us. Somewhere there is a new beginning. For us time stands still. Long days and nights take us back to the past. The world is rewriting the history of the injustice that has been done to us.

July 5

From everywhere men flood into the camp. They are looking for their women. Every knock on the door makes us tremble with anticipation. With each knock someone new comes into our barrack. They come to ask if we have any news, if we know the whereabouts of their loved ones. They look at us with pleading eyes. They describe their dear ones. Don't they know that the picture they carry in their hearts has long ago been altered, that every day of the many that were spent in the camp changed one's appearance beyond recognition? We too make inquiries. The men answer brusquely, absentmindedly. We tell them what we know, but they have no patience. They jump up and run to another barrack looking for information. From an open door comes the sound of spasmodic sobbing. Bad news! An already forlorn heart has lost its last glimmer of hope. Or perhaps these are the sounds of joy, of a long-cherished dream come true? The sudden emotion has released the pent-up tears so that they gush forth in a stream of joyful relief. For whom does this person cry, for the living or the dead?

We cannot stay still for long. We run downstairs. There is commotion everywhere, as the men move from barrack to barrack. They stand before the open windows and call out long lists of women's names — wives, daughters, sisters. Then they wait to see if the miracle will happen, if from the depths of the rooms there will appear a beloved face. But they are greeted only by the eyes of strangers staring at them from the windows.

— Where do you come from?

— Perhaps you know ... ?

No, he does not know.

— And you, young lady, perhaps you remember my little daughter?

The camp trembles with expectation. We stop every man we meet. It would be so beautiful if one of these men turned out to be our father. How much strength we would need for such an encounter. When I see from

the distance a man resembling my father, my knees give way.

Sometimes a couple walks past us. A man and a woman. They are holding hands, awkwardly caught between pain and joy. They are the lucky ones. We look after them with strange expressions in our eyes.

July 8

Tateh, this very moment I am calling you with all the power of my being. If you are alive somewhere then surely you feel my anguish. Surely you hear my call. Do not lose hope. If you are alive there is no road too far for me to travel. If you are sick, do not give in. Wait. We will come. Our joy will bring you back to life. We will make you well. We are calling you, Tateh!



Left to right: Chava, her father, her sister Henia, and her mother. This is the only known photo of Chava's father.

July 10

We scan the lists of names of survivors of the camps. The long pages are crumpled from passing through too many impatient hands. There are finger marks on every single sheet of paper, like anonymous signatures. My fingers wander over the welter of names, my heart thumping wildly. Behind these names are actual human beings, Jews saved from death. They call to us. "Look, I am alive! I am here! Come find me, brother. Find me, sister, friend ..." How many of these names will not find an echo in any heart? Strange, solitary, lonely names; hundreds of them.

I have found some familiar names, some of people I knew well, some not so well. I'm glad to know that they are alive. But my fingers do not stop at their names, but continue down the list. I am looking for those who are still closer to me. Very often my heart skips a beat. The same name as ...! No, it is another man with the same name. I continue the search.

July 16

We are losing our peace of mind. The uncertainty is destroying us. It is painful to catch the eye of the strange men moving about our camp. They are healthy, with strong, tanned, half-naked bodies. I see them and I can-

not keep from thinking about the men dearest to me.

July 19, Wednesday

We have news of Father! By chance we stopped a man in the camp and asked him if he knew anything about Father. Yes, he knew. He was with Father until two days before the liberation.

July 20, Thursday

Henia and I are going to look for Father. We left the camp this morning.

August 28

We are back in the camp. Why am I telling all this anyway?

For four long weeks we trudged all over Germany. We got lifts on coal wagons, hitched rides with lorries packed with horses. We walked for

chambers. There is nobody left any more for whom to wait.

September 1

I do not read the names on the lists any more. I do not go anywhere. I know that I shall never see my father again. Actually I have known this for a long time. I felt it in Auschwitz the day we parted for the last time.

Now I must find all kinds of refined means to deaden my pain. I am going to make a lot of noise. I am going to run, laugh, busy myself with work, do everything I can to stifle the constant longing in my heart. But where does one get the strength for joy? How does one poison longing? Even Nature has lost its charm for me. I am empty of all desires.

I cannot get away from thoughts of my father's death. I experience it over and over again. I lose myself in thoughts of his lonely suffering — and yet, I am not dying of sorrow. I suppose that there must be still greater depth of pain that I cannot reach.

Last night I had a dream. I saw myself in the concentration camp with Henia. Every day fifty women were taken out of the camp to be shot. Henia and I tried every ruse we could think of to postpone being taken. When it was no longer possible to avoid our deaths, we begged the SS women guards to postpone our execution for just one day, because it was the Sabbath. We knew that we had to die, but could it not be one day later? That one extra day we pleaded for seemed to us to be more beautiful and enticing than our entire lifetimes. We pleaded with the guards and begged for that single day, but they did not want to grant it to us.

They were already preparing the execution grounds, when suddenly Father appeared with a burning staff in his hand. The SS women disappeared and Father told us that he would fight with us. It was true, he said, that we would have to die, but in fighting one does not feel one's death. We were so afraid for our father. He was talking so loudly, somebody might betray him to the guards. Later I saw us fighting. All the camps rose in one great uprising, *Hamburg, Dachau, Buchenwald* and *Bergen-Belsen*. I saw a wave of flame sweeping over all of Germany. And we, the fighters, glowed victorious in that flame. It was a night of fire and everywhere I looked I saw my father with the burning staff in his hand. That staff emitted such fierce flames that the Germans sent airplanes to bomb us and we had to run to the fields in order to escape. It was then that Father suddenly appeared next to us, saying that he wanted to die together with us.

Never before had death seemed so attractive as it was in my dream. Later I saw us all in a cellar, but Father was no longer with us. Somebody opened the door. Our eyes were blinded by a grey shaft of light and I felt a great sorrow in my heart. It was the beginning of a new day.

THE REAL MONUMENTS MAN

Mr. Harry Ettlinger, who served in the US Army's "Monuments Men" unit in World War II, was honored at home plate at Yankee Stadium prior to the Detroit vs. Yankees game on August 6th. The honor was arranged by the Yankees and the Young Leadership Associates (YLA) of the American Society for Yad Vashem. The evening featured an event prior to the game with a

his Rabbi granted the family permission to flee that day, even though it was the Sabbath. Several years later, Harry was drafted into the US Army. Ettlinger was later assigned to the Allied Forces Monuments, Fine Arts and Archives subcommission. This was a special unit instructed to find and preserve art looted primarily from the Jews. Translating and summarizing German documents were among

rescue a medieval altar from a church in Cleves in Germany in March 1945.

"And American architect Walter Huchthausen, who was gunned down trying to rescue an altar piece near Aachen."

The Monuments Men is based on Robert Edsel's book charting the Men's success. As a young man in Florence in 1996, Edsel began to wonder how many great masterpieces had survived WWII. His research into the Men's unit became a labor of love. When Clooney read his work he, too, became passionate about turning the incredible story into a film. These men, Clooney realized, had been airbrushed from history.

"George helped me to lobby for the medal to be awarded to the few remaining Men, such as Harry," Edsel says. "I had the honor of breaking the news of the award to Harry. He looked just like a child who had seen Santa Claus. He so deserves it."

Harry has traveled across Europe and the United States and hopes that his efforts will encourage museums and private collectors to return tainted artwork and artifacts to their legitimate owners and institutions. Harry often says that those who continue the difficult work he started of matching the

owners with their Nazi-looted property are the new Monuments Men, and he wants this to continue until every last heirloom is recovered. "What we had done was something that every American should be proud of," said Ettlinger. "Instead of taking things, we gave them back."

ABOUT THE YLA:

The Young Leadership Associates of the American Society, established in 1997, and the Education Department, established in 1999, provide educators with a better understanding of how to transmit the lessons of the Holocaust to present and future generations through our programs and events. Teaching about this event will promote increased awareness between groups and greater sensitivity and understanding to reduce hatred, intolerance and prejudice.

For more information about our education work and Young Leadership Associates, please contact our Director of Education, Marlene W. Yahalom, PhD, 212.220.4304; mwy@yadvashemusa.org.



Harry Ettlinger with YLA co-chairs Abby Halpern (right) and Barry Levine during the ceremony at Yankee Stadium.

keynote talk by Ettlinger. This event was co-chaired by Abigail Fisch and Michael Distenfeld and included YLA co-chairs Abby Halpern and Barry Levine and Yankees relief pitcher David Robertson.

Harry Ettlinger grew up in Germany in a typical Jewish traditional family. The Ettlingers trace their roots in Germany back to 1450, yet in 1938, it all came to an abrupt end. Although the Ettlingers had just managed to escape, they left everything behind and started a new life here in the United States. Born Heinz Ludwig Chaim Ettlinger in Karlsruhe in 1926, Harry escaped Germany together with his parents and two brothers in September 1938. They managed to get visas for the US and settled in Newark, N.J.

Ettlinger is, in his own words, the only "healthy, living Monument Man" left. In his 88 years, he has had good timing. In 1938, he said, he "was the last bar mitzvah boy in Karlsruhe, Germany, before the synagogue was burned down." During *Kristallnacht*

Ettlinger's main tasks in the MFAA. Their story was told in this year's feature film *The Monuments Men*, which included a character based on Harry Ettlinger. After the war Harry returned home and built his own life in the United States, leaving the work he started in Germany behind him.

Ettlinger's Reaction to the Movie The Monuments Men

"It brought the powerful message that, not only did Hitler want to annihilate an entire race, but he wanted its culture wiped from the face of the earth too. I went back to the Kockendorf two years ago and memories came flooding back. It wasn't hard for me to take arms against my home country. The day I left Germany I was no longer German.

"I have been an American citizen since I was 19, and I am an American patriot. I will never forget the bravery of the Men. Those British men, such as the Cambridge historian Ronald Balfour (played in *The Monuments Men* by Hugh Bonneville), who was killed by a shell burst while trying to

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