

MARTYRDOM & RESISTANCE



Vol. 48-No. 3

ISSN 0892-1571

January/February 2022-Shevat/Adar 5782

YAD VASHEM WELCOMES THE UNANIMOUS DECISION OF THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY TO ADOPT THE RESOLUTION ON HOLOCAUST DENIAL AND DISTORTION

"The international community has a responsibility to proactively combat the scourge of Holocaust denial and distortion."
Yad Vashem Chairman Dani Dayan

Yad Vashem, the World Holocaust Remembrance Center, welcomes the adoption by the General Assembly of the United Nations, unanimously, of the resolution which rejects and condemns any denial or distortion of the Holocaust.

"As the international community focuses its attention on the events of the Holocaust, with the approach of International Holocaust Remembrance Day (January 27), we must redouble our efforts to expand and support unfettered and fact-based Holocaust research and education," states Yad Vashem Chairman Dani Dayan. "Holocaust distortion is so dangerous because, quite plainly, it misrepresents essential facts of history in order to legitimize past and present misdeeds. The Holocaust carries substantial relevance for many vital contemporary issues; denying and distorting the uniqueness and unprecedented aspects of events is not only detrimental to the memory of the Holocaust but to that of other atrocities and genocides as well."

The resolution is an important expression of the substantial responsibility that the international community has taken on

to proactively combat the scourge of Holocaust denial and distortion.

The resolution underscores that, in addition to fighting the generally recognized and denigrated phenomenon of explicit denial of the Shoah, nations and individuals worldwide must also discern and combat

in welcoming the takeover by Nazi Germany of other territories and regions, including sympathy for the virulent racist anti-Semitic policies of Nazism.

— Unsubstantiated, false claims of supposed "multiple genocide" programs (against non-Germans other than Jews) by the Nazis. There were in fact no such programs, and certainly none were implemented.

— Employing Holocaust-related terminology and imagery within contemporary controversies and issues which are objectively not related whatsoever to the Holocaust (for instance, the COVID-19 pandemic). The General Assembly's adoption of this resolution emphasizes that Holocaust denial and distortion are not only "Jewish issues," but profoundly human ones, which must concern nations and

individuals around the world and motivate them to effective action.

Yad Vashem's matchless resources and expertise in documenting, researching and teaching about the Holocaust are valuable tools in this context and are available globally. Yad Vashem looks forward to widening and enhancing its already extensive cooperation with scores of nations, agencies and institutions worldwide in this crucial effort.



Israel's Ambassador to the UN Gilad Erdan (center) holds an enlarged copy of the resolution passed on January 20, 2022, to combat Holocaust denial, flanked by Holocaust survivors at the General Assembly.

more nuanced and complex, but no less dangerous, forms of implicit Holocaust denial and distortion. These include:

— Minimizing local collaboration with the German Nazis' persecution and murder of the Jews before and during World War II, and exaggerating the degree of local non-Jewish sympathy and assistance to the endangered Jews, including claims of collective national righteousness.

— Denying frequent local enthusiasm

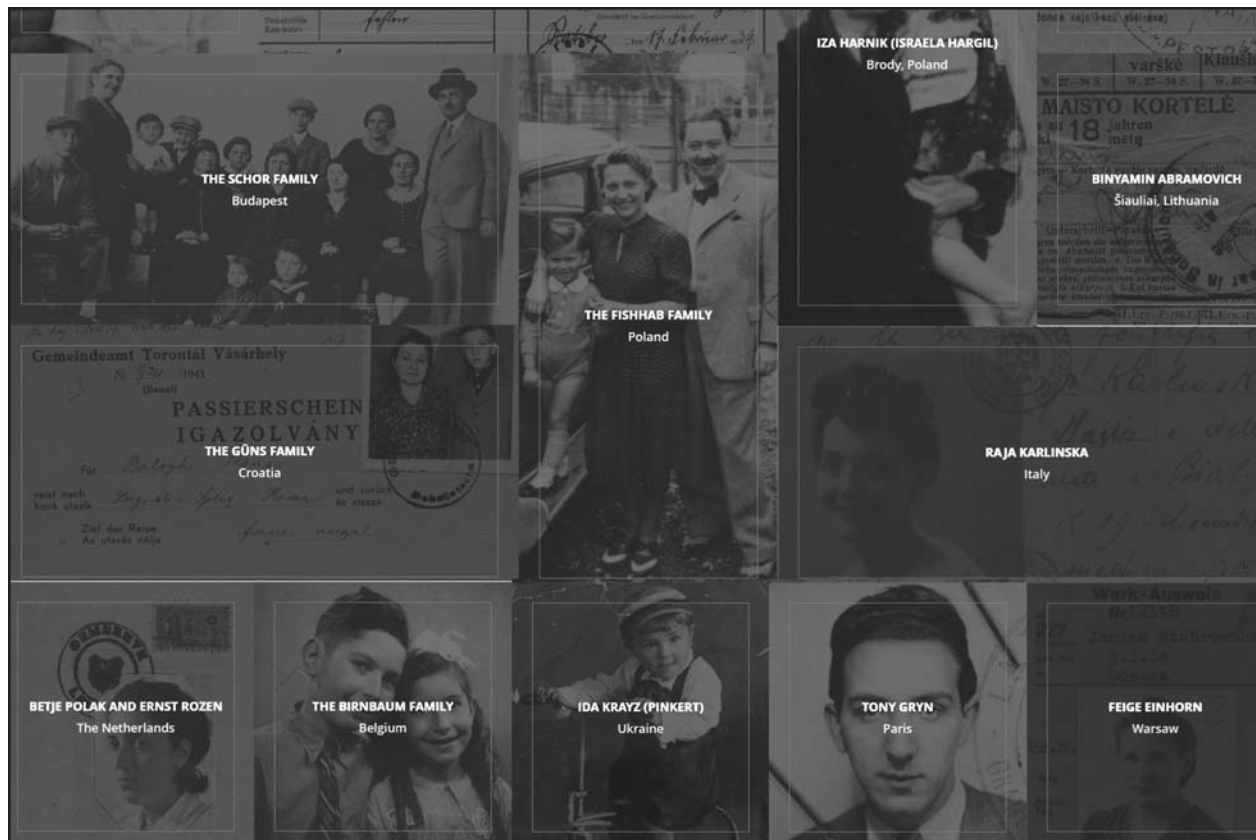
YAD VASHEM LAUNCHES COMMEMORATIVE ACTIVITIES ONLINE

To mark the International Day of Commemoration of the Victims of the Holocaust (January 27), Yad Vashem is launching two unique online events that give the public around the world the opportunity to re-

project creates meaningful opportunities for people all over the world to remember the victims of the Holocaust in their own language." Rosenberg adds, "By partnering together with Meta (Facebook), we are able to reach a wider international audi-

using forged papers that provided them with false identities. For most, this was a daily battle for survival in a hostile environment, which required resourcefulness and the ability to adjust to constantly shifting circumstances. The sentiment portrayed in Brenda Pluczenik-Schor memoir perfectly describes that existential threat these Jews experienced. Even though they were free, they lived in perpetual fear of all people and places, and made every effort to make themselves invisible and to fully embrace the customs of their surroundings. Mistakes were not an option; they could cost them their lives as well as those of their hosts.

To mark International Holocaust Remembrance Day, Yad Vashem has launched a new online exhibition entitled "Remember Your New Name: Surviving the Holocaust under a False Identity." "This exhibition sheds light on how some Jews lived during the Holocaust outside of the disease-ridden ghettos, concentration and extermination camps," states Dana Porath, director of the Digital Department in Yad Vashem's Communications Division. "Imprisoned by the paralyzing fear of being discovered for who and what they truly were, they lived their lives seeing the plight of their fellow Jews, but were powerless to do anything about it. These Jews were



member the six million Jewish men, women and children murdered by the German Nazis and their collaborators.

IREMEMBER WALL

Yad Vashem's unique online commemorative project, the IRemember Wall, allows individuals who register to be randomly linked to one of the names found in Yad Vashem's Central Database of Shoah Victims' Names, which today includes the names of over 4,800,000 Jews murdered in the Holocaust. The participants' names then appear on the IRemember Wall together with the names of the victims of the Holocaust. The users can also choose a specific names of family members or anyone else they know in the Names Database with whom they wish to be matched.

For over a decade, the IRemember Wall has been memorializing hundreds of thousands of Holocaust victims. As in previous years, Meta (Facebook) will use its platform and resources in order to encourage global awareness and outreach of this meaningful project.

"In advance of International Holocaust Remembrance Day, Yad Vashem is again launching the IRemember Wall, available in six languages — English, Hebrew, French, Spanish, German and Russian," explains Iris Rosenberg, director of Yad Vashem's Communications Division. "This

ence, which is crucial in keeping the memory of the Jewish victims alive and the



meanings of the Holocaust relevant to the challenges of today's reality."

NEW ONLINE EXHIBITION: "REMEMBER YOUR NEW NAME"

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

Brenda Pluczenik-Schor

Many Jews tried to save themselves and their families from persecution and death by

often the only members of their family to survive the atrocities of the Holocaust."

"Today, as Holocaust distortion and trivialization become more and more mainstream, fueled by hatred, anti-Semitism and xenophobia, highlighting personal stories from the Shoah is more relevant than ever," remarks Yad Vashem Chairman Dani Dayan. "We owe it to the victims of the Holocaust to share their experiences and voices, for the sake of future generations."

Above: snapshots of the "Remember Your New Name" online exhibition (top) and the IRemember Wall.

AN INSIDE LOOK AT THE EICHMANN TRIAL

“I told Adolf Eichmann my name and that I was an Israel Police commander. He saw the number tattooed on my arm, which spoke for itself and didn’t require any further explanation. Neither did he ask me any questions. For most of the interrogation, Eichmann kept a poker face, but every once in a while we saw that he was getting annoyed and uneasy, especially when we showed him letters from that period with his signature at the bottom of the page,” recounts retired Chief Inspector Michael (Mickey) Goldman-Gilad, 95, one of the police officers who was heavily involved in Eichmann’s interrogation after he was captured.

The recently launched *Bureau 06: Adolf Eichmann’s Interrogation by Israel Police* tells the story of the special police unit that was formed to interrogate Eichmann.

“The book was published to mark the 60th anniversary of the formation of Bureau 06,” explains commander Dr. Yossi Hemi, who has a doctorate in Jewish history, is the deputy commander of the Israel Police Heritage Center, and was in charge of the research and writing of the book.

“One of our goals was to bring to light

the story of the interrogation itself, of which Bureau 06 had been put charge,” continues Hemi.



Discussing the extension of Eichmann’s arrest.

“The evidence that was collected during the investigation played a crucial role in Eichmann’s conviction. The book opens with the story of Bureau 06, including who founded it, who its interrogators were, behind-the-scenes stories, and requests that were sent to the bureau by Israeli citizens. The second part of the book delineates the role Eichmann played in the ‘Final Solution’ up until his capture and identification, which took place upon arrival in Israel. The

third and main part of the book covers the gathering of evidence, the interrogation of Eichmann, the examination of documents and the testimonials collected from Holocaust survivors.”

Only 1,000 copies of the book’s first edition were printed; they were then distributed to police officers, historians and others who work in related fields.

“Our next step is to look into the possibility of making this book available to people outside of the police who might be interested in the subject,” Hemi explains. “The Israel Police is not authorized to sell books, so we might carry this out using a third party — not for profit, of course.”

Goldman-Gilad was born in *Katowice*, Poland. When the Second World War broke out, he fled with his parents, brothers and sister to *Przemysl*, and then from there he was deported to *Szebnie* labor camp. In November 1943, he was sent to *Birkenau*, and then after six weeks to *Auschwitz III-Monowitz*.

Goldman-Gilad succeeded in escaping
(Continued on page 4)

THE AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR YAD VASHEM MOURNS THE PASSING OF MARVIN H. ZBOROWSKI

Marvin (né Mendel) was born on June 4, 1928, in the small town of *Żarki*, Poland. During World War II, his family was confined to the *Żarki* ghetto, but ran away after hearing rumors that the ghetto was about to be liquidated. When they returned, only a few Jews remained.

For the last two years of the war, Marvin, along with his mother and two siblings, was hidden by two courageous Christian families. The first built a false wall in their attic. For eighteen months, the Zborowskis hid in this small cell with barely any room to sit or stand.

During that time, Marvin’s father, who had a work permit, was shot and killed. The family eventually fled to *Bobolice*, where they joined six other Jews hiding in a chicken coop. They remained there until they were liberated in January 1945.

The family then returned home to *Żarki*, but learned they were not welcome when three grenades were thrown

into their home. So they left Poland and made their way to the *Feldafing* displaced persons camp in Germany. Marvin attended school and was later



Marvin and Celina Zborowski.

admitted to the polytechnic school in *Munich*, where he studied for a year before emigrating to the U.S. in 1952.

He married the love of his life, Celina Sternlicht, z”l, also a survivor, in 1954, and the two settled in Queens, N.Y. Marvin be-

came a successful businessman, partnering with his brother Eli in running the All America Export/Import Company. Marvin and Celina devoted their lives to Holocaust remembrance and education. They are Guardians of the Valley of Communities at Yad Vashem and received the American Society for Yad Vashem Remembrance Award in 2018. Marvin and Celina endowed a lecture series on the Holocaust at Queens College and are Patrons of the Diana and Eli Zborowski Interdisciplinary Chair for Holocaust Studies and Research at Yeshiva University. One of the founders of the American Society for Yad Vashem, Marvin served as treasurer for many years and remained an active member of the board until his last day.

Marvin passed away on October 11, 2021. He is survived by his children Mark (Judy) and Ziggy (Galit), and his loving grandchildren Matthew, Lauren (David), Anna, Jeremy, Michael, and Elizabeth. May his memory forever be a blessing.

AN INSIDE LOOK AT THE EICHMANN TRIAL

(Continued from page 3)

during the death march and hid with a Polish family. In early 1945, he joined the Red Army. In May 1947, he boarded the immigrant ship *Hatikva* that set sail for the Land of Israel. The British seized the ship at sea and Goldman-Gilad ended up in a detention camp in Cyprus. After Israel was declared a state, he reached Israel and joined the Israel Police.

In the months leading up to the Eichmann trial, Goldman-Gilad had not been working for the Israel Police.

"In 1958, I left the police because of the meager salary I was receiving," he recalls. "We wanted to have another child and so I needed to find a better-paying job. But then when [prime minister David] Ben-Gurion announced that Eichmann had been captured [on May 23, 1960], I immediately wrote to then police chief Yosef Nachmias, offering him my services. They offered me a chance to return to the police, and I agreed on the condition that I received a higher rank. They agreed, and that's how I began my work with Bureau 06 as a commander."

What was your motive for offering your services to the police?

"Well, I knew German, Polish, Russian and Yiddish, which was important for communicating with the witnesses who testified. I was convinced that I could be of help. I was certainly not doing this as a way to come full circle — I don't think that any of us can ever come to terms with the horrors we experienced — but I was convinced that I could assist with the interrogation of Eichmann. I felt it was a moral imperative to offer my help."

Goldman-Gilad recalls that the unit numbered close to 40 individuals, "including a commander (Avraham 'Rami' Selinger, I.S.), his deputy (Ephraim Elrom Hofstaetter, I.S.), 12 investigative officers, technicians and translators," he describes. "The investigation encompassed all of the European countries that had been under German occupation or influence, which numbered 18 countries. We split up the investigation into regions. I was put in charge of Poland, the USSR, the Baltics, Latvia and Estonia, as well as all the extermination camps located in the region to which Jews had been transported from all over Europe.

"I knew who Eichmann was," continues Goldman-Gilad. "When the *Nuremberg* trials of Nazi war criminals began, I carefully followed the protocols. I knew that Eichmann had headed the Gestapo Department for Jewish Affairs, and was

responsible for sending Europe's Jews to extermination camps, including *Treblinka*, *Auschwitz*, *Sobibor* and *Belzec*. My parents and sister perished in *Belzec*, along with close to 40 members of my extended family. I had a brother who'd been inducted into the Red Army. I was sure he'd been killed during the war, but I found him 17 years later."

What was it like the first time you met Eichmann?

"I'd always pictured him like he was in the photo, wearing his uniform. Then suddenly in April 1961, when he was brought into my room for the interrogation, I looked up and was shocked to see before me a scared and wretched man. It was hard for



Michael (Mickey) Goldman-Gilad, as the young police officer who was heavily involved in Eichmann's interrogation after he was captured.

me to believe that this man was Eichmann, the man who'd sent so many European Jews to their death."

According to Goldman-Gilad, Eichmann never took personal responsibility for anything.

"He consistently presented himself as a cog in the Nazi machine and put all the blame on others, pleading that he was just following orders from above," he recalls. "But we presented him with hundreds of documents with his signature on them that had been located in archives in Europe and the US. He had signed letters and directives that he would give to all of his emissaries in the countries that had been occupied by Germany, regarding the transport of Jews to extermination camps. In order to deflect any personal responsibility for these actions, Eichmann claimed that he'd been merely following orders. We were able to prove, however, that he was the one who gave the orders himself. I spoke with him in German. His testimony was recorded in German. Of course, we had everything translated into Hebrew be-

fore we submitted the statements to the court."

Goldman-Gilad interrogated Eichmann five times.

"I sat with him each time for an hour and a half or two hours," Goldman-Gilad recalls. "My main task in Bureau 06 was to uncover relevant documents that delineated his actions. I also met with Holocaust survivors so I could take down their testimonies, in preparation of calling them up as witnesses during the trial. This part of the job was also tremendously difficult. I would sit and listen to their stories, and then try to convince them to offer testimony in court. They would tell me, 'No one will believe me.'

"And it's true. Back in those days, there were plenty of people who didn't believe the stories survivors told. There was one woman, Rivka Yosselevska, who was shot with her whole family by the SS. But Rivka had only been wounded, and managed to climb out of the pit. She found her way, naked, to a farmer who took pity on her and gave her shelter. This is a famous story that is still taught in Israeli schools."

The Eichmann trial was conducted under a veil of secrecy.

"We were only allowed to go home once a week, for Shabbat. We were forbidden from saying where we'd been or where the interrogation was taking place. And in fact, no information was leaked during that period," recalls Goldman-Gilad.

How did you feel when you heard the verdict?

"We, the investigating officers, weren't sure that Eichmann would receive the death penalty. We were sure that he deserved it, but we weren't sure the judges would sentence him to death. There is no way for us as humans to avenge what the Jewish people suffered. I am sure that only God can take revenge for what they did to us. We are not capable.

"I was also one of the two police officers who were present at Eichmann's hanging, which took place on May 31, 1962. Even at that moment, I didn't feel like this was an act of revenge. Maybe this could be considered justice for one person, but he couldn't be hanged six million times. The true revenge is my five children and my 12 grandchildren."

BY ILANA SHTOTLAND,
The Jerusalem Post

“WE NEVER DREAMED WE’D HUG OUR MOTHER AGAIN”

By rights, sisters Tatiana and Andra Bucci should not be alive today. They were two of the 230,000 children under the age of ten deported by the Nazis from occupied Europe to the death camp of Auschwitz-Birkenau — of whom just 50 survived. An estimated 1.5 million children perished in the Holocaust.

Tatiana and Andra were seven and five when they were liberated by Russian soldiers in January 1945, having spent nine months in the notorious camp. Andra is now 82 and living in California, and her elder sister Tatiana, 84, lives in Brussels.

Their account of their ordeal, as revealed in a new book *Always Remember Your Name*, is as powerful as it is heart-breaking. But an act of great humanity penetrates the darkness of this story. After their liberation from the camp, the girls were brought to *Surrey* as part of a scheme to rehabilitate child survivors of the Holocaust. Relocating from a concentration camp to a beautiful estate deep in the English countryside was a transition so profound, the sisters describe it as being “reborn in paradise.”

In March 1944, the sisters were deported from their hometown of *Fiume* in what was then northern Italy and taken to Auschwitz-Birkenau along with their Jewish seamstress mother Mira, 36, their grandmother Nonna Rosa Perlow, 61, their Aunt Sonia, 42, Aunt Gisella, 40, and their six-year-old cousin Sergio. Their Catholic father, Giovanni Bucci, a 36-year-old merchant navy sailor, was held in a prisoner-of-war camp near Johannesburg in South Africa, having been captured in 1940.

At Auschwitz, the sisters were separated from their mother and placed in the *kinderblock* barrack for children. They don’t know how, but on five occasions their mother managed to visit them outside their block. “Mamma ran tremendous risks to see us, and each time she would hug and kiss us, then urge us to repeat our names. ‘Always remember your names,’ she pleaded, so that if we survived until liberation, we would remember our true identities,” Tatiana says.

After November 1944, the visits stopped. “We were both convinced she had died,” says Andra. With their mother gone, it became harder to hold on to their roots. Memories grow cloudy and fade; their liberation on January 27, 1945, is reduced to a series of snapshots. A smiling Russian soldier handing them a piece of salami, a long journey to a bleak Prague

orphanage and a haunting plea: always remember your name.

But then, on a warm spring evening in April 1946, the sisters’ memories are transformed from gray, to dazzling multicolor. “We were taken on a military plane,” Tatiana recalls. “We didn’t question it — it was just another journey towards an unknown fate. But then we arrived in England.”



Andra, three, and Tatiana, five, with their mother Mira in 1943.

Unbeknown to the girls, they had been brought to England, along with 730 other children who had survived the Holocaust, as part of a rehabilitation scheme organized for the Home Office by the Jewish Refugees Committee. It was felt that Britain should be seen to be taking action to help, and so the Committee for the Care of Children from Concentration Camps was formed.

“We were driven down a tree-lined avenue at the end of which was a beautiful country house,” says Andra, smiling at the memory. “I immediately felt comfortable.” The sisters had arrived at Weir Courtney, also known as Lingfield House, in *Surrey*, owned by Sir Benjamin Drage, an English Jew. He had kept a small wing of the building for his family and given the rest over rent-free as a home for child survivors from all over Europe.

This astonishing act of philanthropy involved many people, but the three who stood out to the sisters were Alice Goldberger, Anna Freud (daughter of Sigmund Freud) and Martha Weindling Friedmann. Between 1945 and 1957, these women took in hundreds of children and helped

them to recover their stolen childhoods by creating a homely and nurturing environment.

“As soon as we got there we were taken to a room full of toys and our hearts skipped a beat,” says Andra. “There was an enormous doll’s house, a rocking horse and toy cars, all for us.” Food was fresh and plentiful and the girls slept in soft, clean beds, in a charming wallpapered room that looked out, not over barbed wire and barracks, but a garden filled with spring flowers.

“Placed on our blankets was a soft, inflated thing we’d never seen before,” says Andra. “It was a hot-water bottle. Things that ordinary people considered normal were, for us, an extraordinary discovery. So extraordinary, in fact, we asked to have it taken away.”

At first, it was difficult for the children to adjust to their new life. Routines were established to instill security. The girls were taught English and Hebrew, alongside practical skills such as how to use a knife and fork, how to fold clothes, knit, wash and clean their teeth — everyday activities that other children took for granted. The children at Lingfield House were also encouraged to care for chickens and rabbits, and helped to plant vegetables and pick fruit from the orchard in the grounds.

Weekends were all about fun, and the girls, alongside the 30 other children at Lingfield, had their sense of joy rekindled. “We celebrated Jewish festivals and birthdays, and played games in the garden. Every Saturday we put on a play on a small stage set up in front of the outdoor swimming pool, or went to the beach or the zoo,” says Andra. “We even went to London to watch *Pinocchio* at the cinema.” Surprise visits came from estate owner Sir Benjamin, a “kind man” the sisters recall, bringing them apples. On one excitable occasion they visited the local town of *Lingfield* to wave and cheer Queen Elizabeth, the future Queen Mother.

However, the sisters, who were by now aged nine and seven, were still missing something vital — a mother’s love. “We told Alice, Anna and Martha that our parents were dead, and they wrapped us up in love and affection. Martha became an adoptive mother, giving us cuddles,” says Andra. Tatiana became good friends with a girl named Miriam Stern from Czechoslovakia, who had been forced to hide in an attic for the duration of the war. “I didn’t

(Continued on page 7)

“NOTHING COMPARES TO THIS”: SURVIVORS DENOUNCE ONLINE ‘TRIVIALIZATION’ OF HOLOCAUST

A comprehensive study of Holocaust trivialization online revealed over 60 million online incidents that compared the Holocaust to the COVID-19 pandemic, prompting calls from a group of survivors to treat such rhetoric as a form hate speech.

The study, commissioned by the Combat Antisemitism Movement (CAM) and conducted by monitoring agency Buzzilla, studied online content from January 2020 to December 2021 on major social media platforms, websites, blogs, forums and comment sections in English, Spanish, French, Italian, Arabic and Hebrew.

This brand of trivialization, said CAM, is becoming mainstream among both politicians and grassroots extremist movements. Demonstrators at protests against pandemic restrictions have routinely been seen wearing the *Judenstern* that Nazis forced Holocaust-era Jews to wear, giving Nazi salutes and even shouting Nazi slogans such as “Heil Hitler.” Meanwhile, online, discussion and debates around measures to contain the pandemic have become increasingly saturated with anti-Semitic references.

“The trivialization of Nazi Germany’s crimes against humanity fuels Holocaust deniers who seek to downplay Nazi transgressions, and allowing it to flourish

unchecked has created safe spaces for anti-Semitic conspiracies, outright Holocaust denial and other extremist ideologies to spread,” said CAM CEO Sacha Roytman Dratwa.

“These comparisons have opened a gateway for the revival of age-old anti-Semitic conspiracies, including blaming Jews for the pandemic as purveyors of disease and accusing Jews of a vast conspiracy for global control through mandates,” Dratwa said. “This trend minimizes both Holocaust remembrance and Jewish concerns for safety during an already-resurgent wave of global anti-Semitism.”

Buzzilla identified 30 keyword combinations linking terms related to the pandemic and to the Holocaust, and sought any posts, comments, reactions and shares in which they occurred. Of the 60 million instances the study found, some 57 million took place in English.

Nearly half the occurrences gathered by the study were seen on social media platforms, with another 40% found in news articles.

Vera Grossman Kriegel, who survived medical atrocities committed by the infamous Nazi doctor Josef Mengele, denounced the comparison of the Holocaust to COVID-19, saying, “Those who compare the two do not understand deep enough, and do not know enough about the Holo-

caust, because there is nothing to compare.

“These were atrocities for which there are no words to describe. In the Holocaust, they sought only to kill people, including with injections,” she said. “Mengele gave us injections for experiments that did not value human life. We receive shots today to live, whereas in the Holocaust we received them to die.”

Another survivor, Dita Kraus, said, “In the Holocaust, they wanted to exterminate the Jews. The ‘Green Pass’ [indicating vaccination] exterminates Jews? That’s simply ridiculous. The comparison is so absurd. It is impossible to compare the Holocaust to anything.

“The Holocaust was unique, nothing is like the industrial-scale extermination of people in gas chambers,” Kraus said. “Nothing compares to this, and nothing ever will.”

Rabbi Israel Meir Lau, a Holocaust survivor, founder of the International March of the Living, and the president of Yad Vashem, issued a plea to “respect the Holocaust, respect the truth.

“The Holocaust has no comparison, and any attempt to compare the COVID pandemic to the Holocaust is shocking and appalling,” he said.

BY BENJAMIN KERSTEIN, *The Algemeiner*

ALL THE HORRORS OF WAR

All The Horrors of War: A Jewish Girl, a British Doctor, and the Liberation of Bergen-Belsen.

By Bernice Lerner. Johns Hopkins University Press: Baltimore, Maryland, 2020. 264 pp. \$27.00 hardcover.

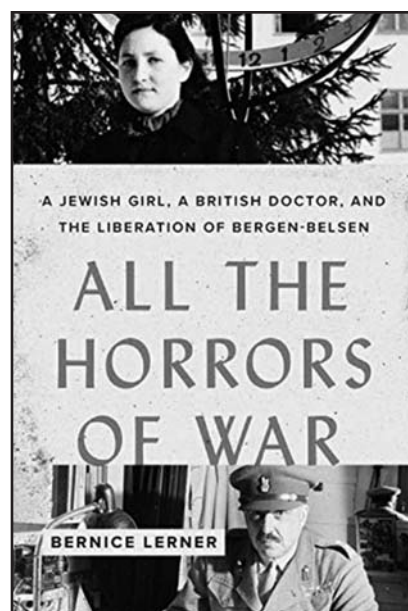
In March, 1944, H.L. “Glyn Hughes, deputy director of medical services (DDMS) of the British Second Army’s 8 Corps,” was in England studying “top-secret documents pertaining to the impending D-Day invasion.” Meanwhile in *Sighet*, Transylvania, “an isolated Carpathian mountain town,” and home to fourteen-year-old Rachel Genuth, the town’s “mayor, deputy prefect, and gendarmerie commanders attended a top-secret conference.” The topic: just how they would “concentrate and expel *Sighet*’s Jews,” now that Fascism held total sway. Neither Glyn Hughes nor Rachel Genuth could know what lay ahead of them. Nei-

ther could know the unimaginable horrors they would soon face. Neither could possibly know the role they would play in the other’s life . . . War, with the chaos and confusion, with the painful upheaval it causes, is like that.

Bernice Lerner, in her book aptly titled *All the Horrors of War: A Jewish Girl, a British Doctor, and the Liberation of Bergen-Belsen*, respectively documents the tale of her two equally important protagonists — Glyn Hughes and Rachel Genuth — making it all especially impactful by borrowing techniques utilized in the cinema. For example, foreshadowing much to come, the first “scene” (chapter) takes the reader to

the September 1945 opening of the *Belsen* Trial. There Brigadier H.L. Glyn Hughes,

the leading medical officer at the *Bergen-Belsen* concentration camp’s liberation, is the first witness against forty-five Nazis charged with war crimes. A man who could not “see an injustice . . . without doing something to try and put it right,” his testimony clearly stated all he saw at *Belsen* — the unbelievable suffering, the inhuman environment, and more. The following “scenes” (chapters), truncating time, draw the reader even further back as utilizing a parallel chronology, Lerner now masterfully begins interweaving Glyn Hughes’ wartime experiences with the experiences
(Continued on page 10)



“WE NEVER DREAMED WE’D HUG OUR MOTHER AGAIN”

(Continued from page 5)

say so at the time, but I felt abandoned,” admits Andra. Perhaps Anna Freud sensed this, as she took Andra under her wing and taught the girl how to use a loom for weaving.



Mira and Giovanni on their wedding day, December 5, 1935.

Andra’s difficulties adjusting were mirrored in the behavior of the other children, many of whom had also witnessed unspeakable atrocities. Some would hide food for fear of it being taken; others would bed-wet or cry themselves to sleep. It was part and parcel of life at Lingfield. But Alice, Anna and Martha’s gentle and consistent care allowed the children to be just that — children — again.

After Tatiana and Andra had been at Lingfield for eight months, in December 1946, they were told some astonishing news. “Alice said to us, ‘Your mamma and papa are alive,’” recalls Tatiana. “We were euphoric.”

Mira had been transferred from *Birkenau* in late November 1944 and moved around various sub-camps, before managing to escape in the chaos of the Third Reich’s collapse in early 1945. Thanks to the Red Cross, she discovered her daughters were living in England. Their father had been freed from the prisoner-of-war camp.

“We became the center of attention at Lingfield because the hope of finding

one’s parents was the dream of all the children there,” says Andra.

On a cold December day, dressed in identical blue coats, the sisters boarded a train to *Dover*. But the reunion with their mother on a station platform in Rome was fraught. “We found ourselves in the middle of a great crowd of people calling our names and waving photos of children.” Word had spread through Rome’s Jewish community, who saw in the sisters’ arrival the possibility of news of their own loved ones. “We were so overwhelmed we burst into tears,” Tatiana recalls. “Mamma hugged and kissed us and did her best to reassure us.”

From there they traveled to *Naples* and then, in January 1947, to *Trieste*, where their parents, already reunited, had decided to settle. It was here that they laid eyes on the father they had last seen six years previously. “We had waited a long time to hug him,” says Tatiana. “He was such a kind-hearted man that, from that moment on, we were able to cherish and love him.”

And so the reunited family settled down to a new life in the ruins of postwar Europe. Out of 13 of their relatives who had been arrested and imprisoned, just four returned; the sisters were particularly affected by the murder of their cousin Sergio.

Their mother was determined not to dwell on the past and spoke about her experiences with only one close friend. “Like so many other deportees, she wasn’t believed when she tried to tell people what happened at Auschwitz-Birkenau, so she stopped talking about it,” says Andra.

“We didn’t speak about Auschwitz to each other either, only about Lingfield. At school, we were known as ‘the girls who’d been in the camp,’ but in general no one asked about our past,” says Tatiana. But the reminders of those dark days were impossible to forget. “People would ask if the numbers inked on our arms were telephone numbers and we said yes. What else could we say?”

Their “strong and vigilant” mother took her story to the grave, dying in 1987,

aged 79, two years after the death of their father. But for Andra and Tatiana, the need to remember overcame the desire to forget.

They have both become prolific speakers on the Holocaust, telling their story for future generations to learn from.

In 1996 they confronted their pasts and returned to Auschwitz-Birkenau. “It was a powerful and difficult experience,” says Tatiana. “As mothers and grandmothers ourselves, we



The sisters in *Trieste*, summer 1947, having been reunited with their parents.

understood better what our mother must have felt — her courage, determination and love for us.”

These exceptional women are dedicated to sharing their story with young people and see it as a commitment to the future because, as they say, “Memory is a slender thread, always in danger of snapping.”

One memory that will always burn bright for the sisters is their golden time in the sleepy *Surrey* village of *Lingfield* and the sanctuary which helped them to recover their stolen childhoods.

BY KATE THOMPSON, *You Magazine*

A MUSICIANS' PROJECT SHEDS NEW LIGHT ON ARTISTIC LIFE IN THE TEREZÍN CONCENTRATION CAMP

Over the past several decades, the *Terezín* concentration camp has come to be synonymous with the music of the Holocaust because of the number of performers who were imprisoned there.

Now, in the latest production associated with a foundation devoted to preserving the camp's legacy, a new book reveals how one prominent musician thought about music at the camp at the time, offering fresh insights about the complicated nature of life in *Terezín*.

Austrian composer Viktor Ullmann came from a Jewish family and studied under the storied Jewish composer Arnold Schoenberg, who fled the Nazis in 1933. The Nazis deported him to *Terezín*, known as *Theresienstadt* under their rule, in 1942.

wig told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency.

Life in *Terezín* was as brutal as at any other concentration camp. Food was scarce, overcrowding was rampant and disease spread rapidly. Out of the 141,000 prisoners in *Terezín*, 90,000 were sent to *Treblinka* and Auschwitz, where they were murdered.

But *Terezín* was also a major part of the Nazis' propaganda machine, and they went to great lengths to make the camp appear luxurious. "*Theresien-spa*," as the camp was informally called, appeared frequently in propaganda films and was the location of choice when international delegations came to inspect the camps.

To aid that propaganda effort, the Nazis ensured that the Reich's wealthiest and most famous Jews ended up in *Terezín*. At

By imprisoning some of Europe's finest artists and musicians together in the same camp, the Nazis had unknowingly created a conservatory of sorts, a "true school for masters" as Ullmann called it.

"I would only like to emphasize that my musical work was fostered and not inhibited by *Theresienstadt*," he wrote.

"Our Will to Live" is the culmination of more than three decades of work by Ludwig's *Terezín* Music Foundation, an organization dedicated to preserving the legacy of *Terezín*'s musicians. Since the 1990s, the *Terezín* Music Foundation has researched the works of these musicians and commissioned new performances of works by Ullmann and other Jewish prisoners at *Terezín*, including Pavel Haas and Hans Krása.

In 2013, the *Terezín* Music Foundation organized a concert at Boston's Symphony Hall featuring George Horner, a Holocaust survivor who played piano in the *Terezín* cabarets, and famed cellist Yo-Yo Ma. A few years later, the foundation organized a performance of works by *Terezín* artists during the Prague Spring Festival.

"For a number of these pieces, we're putting down the first recorded interpretation of the work," Ludwig said. "That's exciting, but it comes with its own sort of responsibilities."

One of those responsibilities, Ludwig said, is ensuring that the audience understands the conditions of the work's production. For *Our Will to Live*, Ludwig worked with German artists who were alive in the middle of the 20th century to understand the people and events Ullmann references in his critiques. These insights are documented in extensive footnotes at the end of each critique.

Ludwig is not alone in his interest in the artists of *Terezín*. A host of other classical musicians, including Japanese pianist Izumi Shimura and Italian pianist Francesco Lotoro, have found themselves drawn to the music of the camp. In 2013, conductor John Axelrod revived one of Ullmann's operas with the Kammer-symphonie Berlin.

Where the *Terezín* Music Foundation stands apart is in its interdisciplinary approach, which is an attempt to evoke the atmosphere in the camps.

"At *Terezín*, the art and music were real-
(Continued on page 9)



Detail from *Entertainment*, a drawing of the *Terezín* concentration camp by Bedřich Fritta, from 1943.

While incarcerated there, Ullmann wrote a series of essays on musical life, painting a portrait of a vibrant artistic scene in the depths of an oppressive ghetto and offering his views on the works composed at the camp. In 1944, after producing a camp opera satirizing Hitler, Ullmann was murdered at Auschwitz, where tens of thousands of his fellow *Terezín* prisoners died.

Ullmann's perspective is preserved in *Our Will to Live*, a new compilation of his critiques edited by Mark Ludwig, a former violinist with the Boston Symphony Orchestra and professor of Holocaust music at Boston College.

"Ullmann is like our Virgil, taking us back into *Terezín* by virtue of his critiques," Lud-

different points, its prisoners included Leo Baeck, the Berlin rabbi who would go on to lead the Reform movement; Dutch-Jewish artist Joseph Spier; and Alfred Flatow, the Jewish gymnast who represented Germany in the first Olympic Games.

Among the camp's prisoners were dozens of musicians and composers from across Europe. Using instruments smuggled into the camp, they formed choirs, cabarets and other musical groups, who then performed for their fellow prisoners — and, at opportune moments for their Nazi captors, for guests like the Red Cross.

To Ullmann, the austere conditions in *Terezín* were not barriers to production but an opportunity to focus on producing art.

Our annual Barbara Gutfreund Arfa Professional Development Conference on Holocaust Education provides educators with innovative resources and techniques to teach students about the Holocaust. We highlight educational resource materials developed by the International School for Holocaust Studies of Yad Vashem.

The Conference's impact is effective and dramatic. Over its 24 year history, the Conference, through its thousands of participants, has touched no fewer than 100,000 students. In 2021, over 260 educators attended the Conference, which was organized by Marlene Warshawski Yahalom, PhD, Director of Education of the American Society for Yad Vashem. The Conference represents a continued collaborative effort among the American Society for Yad Vashem, the Association of Teachers of Social Studies/United Federation of Teachers; United Federation of Teachers Jewish Heritage Committee/Educators Chapter of the Jewish Labor Committee, and the Manhattanville College School of Education.

For the Conference and its other educational works, the American Society for Yad Vashem was awarded the 2015 President's Award from the ATSS/UFT for its contributions to social studies education nationally. The award commends the American Society for Yad Vashem for implementing best educational practices in using documents, inquiry, critical thinking and action for studying the Holocaust. The Conference is one of many educational programs developed by the American Society for Yad Vashem.

The Conference is named in memory of Barbara Gutfreund Arfa z'l, a child of Holocaust survivors. She was an advocate for teaching future generations about the lessons of hope, courage and resilience from the Holocaust. In her lifetime, Barbara Arfa was a supporter of the American Society for Yad Vashem. The Barbara Gutfreund Arfa Endowment for Holocaust Education supports this Conference as well as other important educational initiatives.







VIRTUAL EVENT

WITHOUT A TRACE: THE OBLIGATION OF MEMORY

SUNDAY MARCH 27TH, 2022
9:30AM—11:30AM

WE INVITE YOU TO THE
24TH ANNUAL
ARFA PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE
ON HOLOCAUST EDUCATION

THIS EVENT IS FREE OF CHARGE

CONTACT US

Marlene W. Yahalom, PhD
Director of Education

E: education@yadvashemusa.org
T: 212.220.4304
yadvashemusa.org

Adina Burian
Mark Moskowitz
Co-Chairs

Caroline Arfa Massel
Education Committee Chair

Stanley Stone
Executive Director

Marlene Warshawski Yahalom, PhD
Director of Education

This Conference is generously supported by:

The Barbara Gutfreund Arfa Endowment for Holocaust Education

CTLE hours will be available through Manhattanville College School of Education for participation in this Professional Development Conference.

Full participation will provide up to 10 hours of Content and Pedagogy.

WITHOUT A TRACE: THE OBLIGATION OF MEMORY

FEATURING:

LORI GERSON
Workshop Presenter

PROFESSOR YEHUDA BAUER
Keynote Speaker

Professor Yehuda Bauer is considered to be one of the major scholars of the Holocaust. He was born in Czechoslovakia and made Aliyah in 1939. He received his doctorate in 1960, and the following year, began teaching at the Avraham Harman Institute for Contemporary Jewry at Hebrew University of Jerusalem. His academic career includes visiting professorships at Brandeis University, Yale University, Richard Stockton College, and Clark University, and membership on the editorial board of multiple Holocaust related publications.

Professor Bauer's professional distinction and recognition for his work spans across the globe. He was awarded the Israel Prize in connection with his work on Holocaust studies and is a Member of the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities. This recognition also includes Chair to the Yad Vashem Research Institute, Academic Adviser to Yad Vashem, Chair of the Content Committee of the Stockholm Forum on Holocaust Education and Genocide Prevention, and Academic Adviser of the International Task Force for Holocaust Education and Research (ITF) – now IHRA (International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance). He is currently its Hon. Chairman. Professor Bauer is one of the most influential voices to raise consciousness of the Holocaust and of its ongoing major impact on the world.

LORI GERSON
Workshop Presenter

Lori Gerson is a graduate of Barnard College in New York City. Lori worked for many years in the field of education in the United States. In 2005, Lori moved to Israel with her family and then joined the Yad Vashem team as a guide for educational groups. Since 2016, Lori has taken on the role of Educational Coordinator in Yad Vashem's Overseas Education and Training Department where she lectures, coordinates seminars, develops curricula and guides educators in best practices. She works in the International School for Holocaust Studies at Yad Vashem in the teacher training department.

REGISTER NOW: www.tinyurl.com/asv2022

A MUSICIANS' PROJECT SHEDS NEW LIGHT...

(Continued from page 8)

ly intertwined,” says Jim Schantz, a painter who has worked with the foundation on several performances.

Commissioning visual artists to work with musicians on these performances brings out the original spirit of these works, Schantz added. One performance of a string quartet by composer Hans Krása featured Schantz in the background, painting in response to the music.

Similarly, for *Our Will to Live*, Ludwig paired Ullmann's critiques with posters from the Heřman Collection, a collection of more than 500 items documenting cultural life in *Terezín*. A prisoner named Karel Heřman hid the documents in the walls of the camp's barracks, recovering them after he was liberated from Auschwitz in 1945. The items in the collection range from sketches of Ullmann and his friends to posters for concerts in the camp and sheet music for the original compositions.

In recent years, the foundation has also commissioned more than 40 new works that build on the work of *Terezín* artists or are inspired by the same principles that guided these artists. It has also helped provide resources for musicians in war-torn communities in Syria and Bosnia.

By working on contemporary projects that preserve the spirit of perseverance and dedication to creating music under the most difficult conditions that animated musicians like Viktor Ullmann, Ludwig said he hopes to keep the memories of the *Terezín* artists alive.

“Perhaps that's the ultimate homage to them,” he said. “Helping to uplift new voices of today and tomorrow.”

BY JONAH GOLDMAN KAY, JTA

ROMANIA'S "HOMEGROWN" HOLOCAUST

When typhus broke out at a Romanian concentration camp 80 years ago, authorities at *Bogdanovka* decided to murder 40,000 Jewish inmates and burn down the camp.

Carried out in Romanian-occupied Ukraine by Romanian soldiers, Ukrainian regular police and local ethnic Germans, the *Bogdanovka* massacre has largely been ignored by historians, along with Romania's "distinct" role in the genocide of Europe's Jews.

"I'm embarrassed to say that I had no knowledge of that atrocity," Efraim Zuroff, the Simon Wiesenthal Center's chief Nazi hunter, told *The Times of Israel* in reference to *Bogdanovka*.

"The question is not how gruesome it was, as numerous Holocaust atrocities were unbelievably horrific, but it's a question of 'coverage,' for lack of a better word," Zuroff said.

The Romanian army was behind most of the country's Holocaust massacres, contrasting with the later model of German-built death camps in occupied Poland. Most of the Jews murdered by Romanians came from occupied Ukraine, as opposed to so-called "Old Romania."

Further complicating the narrative, some Romanian Jews fell under the control of Hungary after the "Vienna Diktat" of 1940.

Those Jews remained relatively safe until spring 1944, some three years after Romania's army had "cleansed" occupied lands of Jews.

"In general, the crimes committed by Nazi collaborators outside of their countries get less 'coverage' than those committed on home territory," said Zuroff, who pointed

tonescu a free hand to solve Romania's own "Jewish question," and an estimated 420,000 Jews under Antonescu's control were murdered relatively early in the war.

Before World War II, more than 750,000 Jews lived in Greater Romania. Anti-Semitism was a feature of Romanian life for decades before the Holocaust, but the rise



Romanian gendarmes and local collaborators deport Jews from *Bricevas* in 1941.

to the related example of the Holocaust in Belarus, in which Lithuanians, Latvians and Estonians participated in the murder of tens of thousands of local Jews.

In Romania, Hitler's stalwart ally dictator, Marshal Ion Antonescu, expanded his borders after Germany's invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941. Hitler gave An-

of Fascism included a virulent strain of "racial" anti-Semitism. Beginning in 1940, some 32 laws and 31 decrees were passed against Romania's Jews.

Like the Brownshirts in Germany, Romania had a paramilitary group called the Iron Guard, founded in 1927. Also known
(Continued on page 12)

ALL THE HORRORS OF WAR

(Continued from page 6)

of Rachel Genuth, a Jewish adolescent caught up in the maelstrom of the Holocaust. This, till fate brings them both to *Belsen*. Interestingly, while Rachel would never meet Glyn Hughes personally, she would benefit from all this caring and compassionate individual would do.

Generally, as a leading medical officer with the British troops, Glyn Hughes' job had been to see to the present and probable medical needs of his fighting soldiers — whether they be in the thousands or, later, the many thousands. Thus, any battles, and particularly the D-Day invasion, called for a great deal of "battle-field" planning on his part. Just a few of the questions he had to deal with: How many injured soldiers could he expect? How would they be evacuated? Were there hospitals in the area that could be used? How many medical units were needed? How many doctors? How many nurses? How much blood, plasma and penicillin should be at the ready? Moreover, as the battlefield moved from France to Belgium to Germany, all

these questions had to be dealt with again and again.

Meanwhile in 1944, events in *Sighet* moved swiftly. In April, "several thousand Jews from twenty-six villages in the region were given less than two hours to move to *Sighet*." By mid-May, completely pauperized by the Nazis and their native collaborators, they were shoved onto a train of cattle wagons. After three days they all arrived at Auschwitz-Birkenau, where Rachel immediately lost most of her family, but for her sister, Elisabeth. Needless to say, at this point survival became the girls' only goal. In August, Rachel and her sister, along with "two hundred fifty women and teenagers," were on their way to *Christianstadt*, on the River Bober. *Christianstadt* was a women's slave labor camp within *Gross-Rosen's* complex of sub-camps. In February of 1945 they were part of the "death march" of prisoners exiting the camp — cold and starving. Finally, on March 15, "Rachel and Elisabeth were among four thousand of forty thousand prisoners evacuated from *Gross-Rosen* and its sub-camps to reach" *Bergen-*

Belsen.

Luckily for them, a few weeks later, on April 12, German soldiers waving a white flag "appeared at the front line in *Celle*," Germany. British soldiers initially thought they were surrendering. But, no. Taken to the 8 Corps headquarters, they came to report that there was a "civilian detention camp" not far off. The problem: "Fifteen hundred detainees had typhus. Were a battle to be fought in the area . . . prisoners would escape and spread disease. [Hence] 'responsibility for the camp was international in the interests of health.'" On April 15, Hughes set off for this "detention camp" with a reconnaissance party . . . and a challenge he would never forget: organizing and saving those that could be saved in a hell-on-earth no one could have ever thought existed, *Bergen-Belsen*.

Absorbing and well-written, *All the Horrors of War* deserves a place in the library of any and all students of the Holocaust.

REVIEWED BY DR. DIANE CYPKIN
Professor of Media, Communication, and
Visual Arts at Pace University

HOLOCAUST DOCUMENTARY FEATURES

FOUR STORIES OF CHILD SURVIVORS

A Nazi almost murdered Anita Karl for the sin of trying to have a piece of chocolate. The German asked Karl and her cousin if they wanted a piece of candy. Her cousin was quicker; he sat her on his lap, handed her a piece of chocolate with one hand, took his gun out in his other hand and did something inexplicable.

This is one of several highly traumatic stories in the powerful new documentary *Against All Odds: Surviving the Holocaust*. Karl would be one of only 200 out of 150,000 Jews in the Lvov ghetto to survive.

Directed and produced by Paul Bachow, the film showcases the story of Karl and three other survivors. This no-frills documentary is simple and doesn't boast a big budget. It doesn't need to. It is an extremely potent film that makes you feel like the survivors are your family members telling their miraculous stories in your own living room.

Karl was staying in a home with a gentile woman when she saw a teenage boy shot and killed, his blood splattering the window. She asked the woman what had taken place.

"Oh, don't worry; he's just a Jew," Karl recounts the woman telling her, not knowing her true religion.

Because Karl's mother had gone to a public school and had stayed for Catholic-school classes, she was able to convince authorities that she was Catholic and used an ingenious plan on a train to overcome the problem of not having documents to prove she was not a Jew.

Karl and her mother would see Jews that had been hanged to death with signs that read: "This is what happens to the Jews who try to escape."

Gerald Beigel was one of three family members who survived, while 32 were murdered by the Nazis; and his mother and sister were on the last train to Auschwitz. Living in Berlin, his parents thought of Adolf Hitler as "crazy" and didn't think he would last long in power. Of course, they were wrong.

Still, they attempted to get a visa for America but were told they would not receive it until 1947 or 1948. And so, he took off his Jewish star and went out, risking his life to go to the movies on many occasions.

When he eventually ended up at a death camp, despite being told to go to the left — meaning the gas chambers — he ran after his brother, who was told to go to the right. He survived two death marches, and after his leg was wounded and a doctor said

they would have to amputate it, he said he'd rather die than have them do so. Beigel also recalls that on his 17th birthday, he and his father celebrated with the only food they had: a cooked piece of potato peel.

He also tells of being carted away with two corpses about to be thrown in a fire, injured and barely able to move. But he did, and somehow, his life was spared, and he survived Auschwitz and *Dachau*.

Ryszarda Rozenblum was one of maybe 11 who survived out of initially more than 75,000 children in the Lodz ghetto, the last remaining ghetto in German-occupied Poland.

The head of the ghetto suggested making a camp for youth that comprised about 1,000 children.

There, at first, they got a little bread and soup. Then children were taken to a school, and she'd sing "Hatikvah" to others and work four hours a day. Her brother was 13;



Holocaust survivors as depicted in a new documentary, *Against All Odds: Surviving the Holocaust*.

she was 11. Fortunately, a rabbi gave her father good advice that resulted in saving her life. Born in 1929, her brother and parents, two sisters and about a total of 100 family members would be killed at *Chelmno*, Auschwitz and other death camps.

She recalls crying out, "Oh God, where are you now?" She was eventually saved, as depicted in the film, in a unique way.

When the Red Army came in, the Germans fled. Seeing her in tears, as she saw she was alone, a young Russian soldier told her: "We will take revenge for you, don't cry."

Walter Lebensohn from Vienna, born in 1931, tells of how many Jews committed suicide. Anti-Semites would later throw him into the Danube Canal, but he was able to

get out of the freezing water. He tells of how Jews didn't believe they would be exterminated because they made up about half of the total doctors and lawyers. His father wanted to give him a Hebrew name but was told that because of rampant anti-Semitism, it wouldn't be a good move, and so the person suggested the name "Walter" to his father.

Ironically, a beating by the head of an orphanage he was staying in saved his life. Afterward, his mother was able to send him to an unlikely destination for safety as he took on the fake name of Michael Pepperman. He was on the last transport out of Hungary in 1942 before Adolf Eichmann told the Hungarian leader not to allow any more Jews to leave.

In this film, each story ends when the war ends. There is something known as "Holocaust fatigue," when people have seen so many films or read so many books that they feel the market is saturated and they can't handle any more information. But make room for one more film

— this film. *Against All Odds: Surviving the Holocaust* is extremely riveting, dynamic in its simplicity and harrowing in its storytelling, but with a resounding message.

It is impossible to watch films like this and not wonder what you would have done had you been in a similar situation — being Jewish in the time of the Holocaust. What would it be like to live underground in secret, knowing one false move, breath or word could mean certain death? Survival guilt here is implied and not expressly stated. The film is well edited and hard-hitting, and could (and should) be used in schools. The saga of these Europeans turned Floridians is truly something to see.

BY ALAN ZEITLIN, JNS

ROMANIA'S "HOMEGROWN" HOLOCAUST

(Continued from page 10)

as the Legionnaires or Greenshirts, the organization promised to defeat "Rabbinical aggression against the Christian world."

Following a failed coup attempt in January 1941, the Iron Guard carried out a pogrom against the Jews of Bucharest. At least 125 Jews were murdered before Antonescu put a lid on the violence, but the genocide of Jews — and Roma people — accelerated that summer in Romania's newly acquired lands.

The first large-scale Holocaust massacre in Romania took place in *Iasi*, a university city near the border with Moldova, in June 1941.

Encouraged by Antonescu, Romanian soldiers partnered with the police and local mobs to murder 13,266 Jews. *Iasi's* residents helped arrest Jews and loot their homes, as well as humiliate Jews marched out of town.

As in Bucharest, the Iron Guard led mobs in murdering Jews on the streets and in their homes, deploying crowbars and knives in addition to guns. After the initial massacre, 5,000 Jews were packed into boxcars for a "death train" journey in which 4,000 of them perished.

In contrast to the Holocaust in Germany, there were no black ops in Romania. The genocide was conducted "in broad daylight" under the direction of Romanian authorities. Fake press articles about Jews signaling Allied aircraft helped "justify" the massacres and incite collaborators, but those story placements were not intended to deceive Jews.

"The massacres were largely uncoordinated, and although the ruthlessness with which the Romanian Army slaughtered the Ukrainian and Romanian Jews won Hitler's approval, they nevertheless earned the disdain of many SS officials, who disparaged the primitive techniques employed by the Romanians," wrote historian Christopher J. Kshyk.

However primitive the Romanian methods appeared, the country's army, police force and civilian collaborators set a "blueprint" for Holocaust massacres elsewhere, including Kyiv.

The September 1941 massacre of 33,771 Jews at *Babyn Yar*, a ravine in Kyiv, was similarly catalyzed by false press reports of Jewish sabotage. At the massacre site, German SS *Einsatzgruppen* units partnered with Ukrainians, echoing the Romanian army's use of local collaborators earlier that summer.

Five months after the *Iasi* pogrom, the Holocaust in Romania would reach a frenzied — but largely forgotten — climax at

the *Bogdanovka* concentration camp.

Located in today's Ukraine, *Bogdanovka* was a series of camps — called "colonies" in Romanian — set up near a former Jewish collective farm on the Southern Bug River. By November 1941, the camp held 54,000 Jews from Romanian-controlled *Odessa* and *Moldova's* *Bessarabia* region.

In December 1941, a few cases of typhus were reported at *Bogdanovka*. In response, the district's German advisor and Romanian administrators decided to murder 40,000 of the inmates and burn the facilities down.

Beginning on December 21, Romanian soldiers and collaborators — including local ethnic Germans under Ukrainian po-

reasons, Antonescu decided to spare an estimated 290,000 Jews in "Old Romania," and he quasi-facilitated the emigration of 5,000 Jews to Palestine for a large fee.

In reversing the genocide of Jews under his control, Antonescu was looking toward Romania's bargaining position at a post-war peace conference. As early as spring 1942, the canny dictator pieced together that Germany would lose the war. After Soviet forces entered Romania in 1944, Antonescu was arrested and, two years later, executed outside Bucharest.

Although a large number of Romania's Nazi collaborators were prosecuted and punished in the immediate postwar period, many Holocaust perpetrators managed to



A vandalized monument to Holocaust victims in *Bogdanovka*, Ukraine, on September 15, 2020.

lice command — forced thousands of disabled and elderly Jews into two locked stables. The structures were doused with kerosene and set on fire, killing everyone inside.

After that inferno, the perpetrators led groups of 300 to 400 Jews into the forest, where they were shot in the neck at a site Romanian soldiers called "the great valley."

German death camp technology was still months away from fruition, so Romanian soldiers watched thousands of Jews freeze to death along the riverbank during the final days of 1941.

"The rest [of *Bogdanovka's* Jews] were left freezing in the cold, waiting on the banks of the river for their turn to die," according to Yad Vashem. "With their bare hands they dug holes in the ground, packing them with frozen corpses and trying in this way to shelter themselves from the cold. Nevertheless, thousands of them froze to death."

During the second half of 1941, Antonescu managed to outpace Nazi Germany in the genocide of Europe's Jews.

In the fall of 1941, Antonescu tentatively agreed to deport the remainder of Romania's Jews to death camps, but those plans were canceled in 1942. Partly for economic

escape justice. To date, said Zuroff, only four people have been convicted of involvement in Holocaust atrocities in post-Communist Eastern Europe, and only two of the four were punished.

"We did receive potentially valuable information in at least one case of a person who allegedly participated in the mass murder of Jews in *Odessa*," said Zuroff, referring to the Simon Wiesenthal Center's "Operation Last Chance" effort to bring Holocaust perpetrators to justice.

"Unfortunately, he died before he could be prosecuted," said Zuroff.

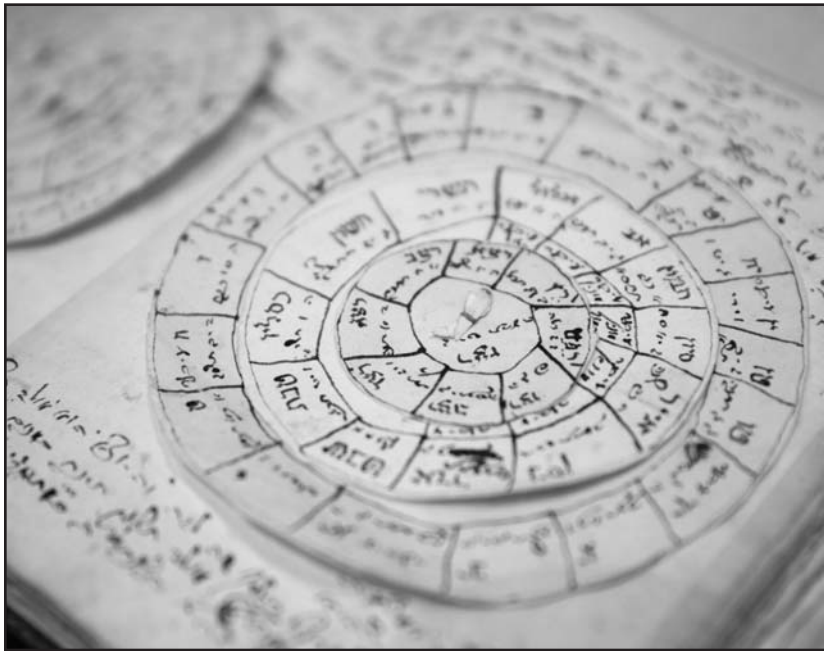
In 2003, Romania's government acknowledged the country's role in the genocide. However, there has been "backtracking" on that acknowledgment and tensions over Bucharest's nascent Holocaust museum. A memorial at *Bogdanovka* has been vandalized several times in recent years.

"As far as Holocaust denial and distortion are concerned, Romania has had a large share of both, as is typical in all the post-Communist 'new democracies' of Eastern Europe," said Zuroff.

BY MATT LEBOVIC,
The Times of Israel

“A LOST JEWISH HISTORY RECLAIMED”: NEW DIGITAL ARCHIVE REVEALS PRE-HOLOCAUST WORLD

A lost Jewish history has been reclaimed and recently unveiled. For the first time, more than 4.1 million pages of original books, artifacts, records, manuscripts and documents — cultural survivors of the Holocaust — have been digitally reunited through a dedicated web portal and now accessible worldwide. It includes everything from copies of the rarest sermons of 18th-century Chassidic rabbis to a singular collection of Yiddish pornography.



Astronomy manuscript, 1751, by Issachar Ber Carmoly (also known as Behr Lehmann).

The YIVO Institute for Jewish Research (YIVO) announced that it has completed the Edward Blank YIVO Vilna Online Collections Project (EBVOCP) — a seven-year, \$7 million initiative to process, conserve and digitize YIVO’s divided pre-World War II library and archival collections. According to YIVO, the project is the first of its kind in Jewish history, and sheds new light on prewar Jewish history and culture throughout Eastern Europe and Russia.

“It’s very difficult to understand how little we truly know, especially in the United States, of what that past was. For most of us, what we know is handed down from our grandparents or great-grandparents who may have come from Eastern Europe,” Jonathan Brent, CEO of YIVO, told JNS. “That is to say that most of us know a family history. And even that, in my case for instance, was confined to the fact that I knew my one set of grandparents came from *Zhytomyr* and another from *Chernigov*. They lived basically in mud holes and were humiliated most of the time, and that was

it. That was the culture that I came from.

“And so, now comes the fact that we now can reveal for Jewish people of Ashkenazi descent all over the world what the real splendors of that civilization were for 1,000 years — a civilization that took pride in itself, a civilization that had aspirations, that had ambitions, that had tremendous driving force, and a civilization that encompassed not just the pious and not just the victims of anti-Semitism, and not just the poor and impoverished people from whom so great a proportion of America Jewry derives, but rather, a people that spanned the entire gamut of human experience,” said Brent.

This project is an international partnership between YIVO and three Lithuanian institutions: the Lithuanian Central State Archives, the Martynas Mažvydas National Library of Lithuania and the Wroblewski Library of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences.

In 1941, the Nazis ransacked the YIVO Institute in Vilna, destroying countless documents. A group of Vilna

ghetto workers were forced to sift through the rest, sending select materials to *Frankfurt*, Germany, for review at the Nazi Institute for the Study of the Jewish Question. Those materials were largely recovered by the U.S. Army and sent to YIVO in New York. Other documents were secretly smuggled out by the ghetto workers and then saved again in 1948 from the Soviets by the Lithuanian librarian, Antanas Ulpis. They remained hidden in the former Church of St. George until they were uncovered in 1989.

Five years ago, approximately 170,000 additional documents were also discovered in the National Library of Lithuania, including rare and unpublished works. Even with some 4 million documents digitized, Brent

believes that much more will be discovered.

“We thought the totality of all this had been compiled in 1991,” he explained. “Then, in 2014, a friend of mine in Vilnius told me that I might be interested in stuff in the booklet of Wroblewski Library, which is a library of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences. So I go there and there is a long table, and on the table are boxes. And in the boxes are documents that are stamped ‘YIVO Institute.’ We thought all of our materials were in the National Library.

“This is all brand-new stuff,” he stated.

“So, I look at the director and I say, ‘You’ve had these since 1948, and you’ve kept them secret? What were you doing with these materials?’ She said, ‘We were waiting.’ I said, ‘Well, what were you waiting for?’ She said, ‘We were waiting for you.’ And it sent a shiver went up my spine. They were waiting for us, and there are still more materials that are waiting for us. And what we have to do is discover them and come and find them,” said Brent.

Stefanie Halpern, YIVO director of archives, told JNS that as recently as 2019, completing the project on time seemed an insurmountable challenge. The institute decided then that it was time to open an in-house digital lab rather than contracting out the work. The move coincided with the coronavirus pandemic, giving YIVO staff



Pinkas (“Communal Record Book”) of the *Hevra Lomde Shas* (Learners of the Talmud Society) in *Lazdijai*, a town in southwestern Lithuania, 1836.

the opportunity to continue their work from home with fuller control over the process. In July 2020, small rotating teams came into the archives to continue the work until everyone came back in regularly in January of last year.

“The conservators looked at every page
(Continued on page 14)

AUSCHWITZ CELLIST FINDS HER VOICE IN FIGHT AGAINST FASCISM

One of the last living members of the women's orchestra at Auschwitz, Anita Lasker-Wallfisch, is at 95 among the most prominent survivors raising her voice against hate.

But for four decades she kept her silence.

Even her two children were long kept in the dark about what their steely, stoic mother suffered at the Nazi death camp in today's Poland and at *Bergen-Belsen*, where she was liberated 75 years ago.

Born in 1925 into a Jewish family in what was then the German town of *Breslau*, today *Wroclaw* in Poland, Anita was sent to Auschwitz in 1943 while still a teenager. Her sister Renate was deported on a separate train.

Already an accomplished cellist, she was able to join the camp's orchestra for women and girls — a fact she says likely saved her life.

The musicians were forced to play marches for slave laborers on their way to and from work each day, and for the SS guards.

But the scars left by those years were long her closely guarded secret.

"I didn't want to overwhelm my children with my terrible past, I wanted to leave it behind," she told AFP by telephone from London in an antiquated German, having spoken only English to her children.

That toxic silence in the intervening decades passed the trauma down to a second generation also scarred by their parents' suffering and loss, her daughter said.

Maya Jacobs-Wallfisch is now a psy-

chotherapist specializing in transgenerational trauma.

For years, there were no words for Anita to tell her daughter and son, the cellist Raphael Wallfisch, how their grandparents were murdered in April 1942, or how Aunt Renate returned from the camps "a skeleton with gaping wounds on her legs."



This photo taken on January 31, 2018, shows Holocaust survivor and cellist Anita Lasker-Wallfisch addressing the Bundestag.

Nor could she find a way to explain how she, reduced to the camp registration number 69388, played her instrument "a few meters from the crematorium, with an awful view of the selection ramp" for labor or the gas chambers. The pain she carried with her "hung in the air," Anita said, but she never spoke about it — not even with her husband, pianist Peter Wallfisch.

Lasker-Wallfisch struggled with the burden of her memories, but her children were not fooled. Maya said she knew all along that her mother guarded a dark, corrosive secret. She grew up with "strange parents" who spoke German among themselves, a language their children didn't understand, while hating everything that came from

Germany.

Friends asked Maya why her mother had a "telephone number" tattooed on her lower arm. One day, rummaging through a drawer, she found shocking photos from *Bergen-Belsen*, where her mother and aunt were transferred in March 1944.

Lasker-Wallfisch says she owes her life to music. It is also what led her back to Germany for the first time in more than 40 years, when she began to speak out about her experiences.

"I never wanted to return to Germany," she said.

But "my curiosity to see *Bergen-Belsen* was too great," she added.

In July 1989 she visited the camp where more than 50,000 people, including Anne Frank, lost their lives, to attend a concert of the English Chamber Orchestra she co-founded.

She also returned to her birthplace in *Wroclaw*, and to Auschwitz-Birkenau.

Seeing the camp "empty, without a single person, was... unreal."

In January 2018, on the occasion of Holocaust Remembrance Day, she delivered a fiery speech to the Bundestag lower house of parliament.

In an unwavering voice, she told the deputies that hatred of Jews and Holocaust denial were staging a dangerous comeback.

"Anti-Semitism is a 2,000-year-old virus that is apparently incurable," she said.

"Hatred is simply a poison, and in the end you poison yourself."

BY YANNICK PASQUET,
The Times of Israel

"A LOST JEWISH HISTORY RECLAIMED"

(Continued from page 13)

— cleaning dirt, mending rips, flattening creases. Then the processing archivists read every document, put them in order, created a description, and digitized and uploaded them, making everything available on the Internet," Halpern told JNS, explaining that the archive wasn't built only for scholarly work but to make everything accessible for the layperson without being overwhelmed by the sheer volume of the collection.

"There is a ton of visual material, so you don't need knowledge of any of the dozen languages featured. There are hundreds of thousands of photographs that really show you what everyday Jewish life was like. They can be found using the keyword search in our database. Just type in 'pho-

tographs,' and a list of collections pops up. It is difficult and daunting if you've never navigated an archive before, so we also have guides available for how to look through our databases, and the YIVO archivists walk individuals through, step by step, how to actually do research," said Halpern.

She said those struggling are encouraged to contact the archives directly, and Zoom research sessions organized by YIVO help those looking for information to find it in real time.

"This project has to do with building the Jewish future," she said.

"I came from a family in which the past and Eastern Europe were a matter of legend. It was Sholem Aleichem and a few

recipes that Bubbe would cook in her pot. As opposed to that, this project has to do with how the future is built on the past and how young people, as they begin to become acquainted with these materials, will discover a world of accomplishment, a world of ambition, a world of excellence, a world of dreaming, a world of scheming."

Brent emphasized the completion of the project further, saying the discoveries depict "a world of everything, and it fortifies your sense of what it means to be a Jewish person. We were not simply the beat-up remnants of a civilization, the victims of anti-Semitism. It was a dynamic, thriving, self-reflective and ambitious culture."

By MIKE WAGENHEIM, JNS

FANNY'S MIRACLE — A HIDDEN CHILD OF THE HOLOCAUST

Fanny Slonim taught her children to believe in miracles. She can only attribute her survival in Hitler's France to a miracle — and to the Gentiles who saved her life.

Fanny Owyszer's parents fled Poland for Paris as refugees in 1924. She was born in 1935, the third of a family that would include seven children. Fanny's father brought his mother, brother and sisters to Paris from Poland. The family was close and lived near one another in Paris. Fanny, just a child, could not conceive of the disaster her family and all Jews in France faced with the German invasion. This was especially so, considering that the family was of Eastern European origin and most vulnerable to arrest and deportation to death in Poland.

Most of Fanny's extended family was rounded up by the Germans in the early years of the war. Fanny's parents cried in devastation upon the news that members of the family had been arrested. Fanny writes about looking back to those terrible days: "We, the children, did not understand what happened and were terrified." This was compounded by the fact that while her grandmother was a religious Jew, Fanny's parents rarely mentioned anything about the family's Jewish identity. All that she knew was that before the war the family was "happy together, that is all."

Among Fanny's earliest memories of the Holocaust was the collapse of her father's business. He was a tailor who specialized in heavy coats. Strangers, men whom Fanny could not identify, seized her father's merchandise — all the coats — and he no longer had a livelihood. The Jews of Paris faced dark days ahead.

One day her mother took Fanny and her older sister, Jacqueline, to an office. Her mother left them there. The girls could not stop crying. Fanny remembers this toward the end of 1941, when she was only six years old. The people at the office explained to the two girls that they must leave Paris. A counselor took Fanny and her seven-year-old sister to a village in France and left them at a farm. The female counselor left forged papers with the farmers to present to the authorities to prove the children were not Jews but Christians, but the girls had to move on.

"I remember going in the train full of German soldiers," writes Fanny, "and I was frightened." They arrived at another farm and worked in the fields. Despite their fear, there was some humor. "The first day we were in the field, we were terrified because there was a big group of cows coming toward my sister and me, and we had never seen those big animals." They slept uncomfortably in the barn and were able to find refuge elsewhere. They traveled throughout France seeking refuge but were

and both were captured and deported to Auschwitz. The Germans murdered them. The whereabouts of her father were not known except that he was hiding somewhere in France.

Fanny describes *Gouvieux* as a "big village" four miles from the German headquarters in larger *Chantilly*. The HQ was housed in a beautiful castle. The Germans used a nearby quarry to fire V1 rockets into England. Raids were conducted by the Allies day and night. The

villagers where Fanny and her sister hid were "horrified by the destruction." She admitted, "We lived in fear all the time, life and death meant nothing anymore."

Each Sunday the Jewish girls went to church because the woman who hid them played the organ and sang the prayers. Fear was in the air, even in a house of worship. German soldiers would come in the church and sing behind these hidden children who could not even say their family name. Fanny and her sister knew all the

Catholic prayers and songs but knew nothing about being Jewish and almost nothing about Judaism. "We prayed to God to be alive and well and happy."

The war ended. Fanny's father and most of her immediate family survived. Her father sent her to a Jewish school in the southeast of France, where she was placed with children who suffered terrible loss of family. She attended the school for three years "and life came back to me again. I met, at 16 years old, my sisters and brothers. And life continues!"

Fanny is involved in an organization in South Florida made up of people who endured and survived the Holocaust as children. It is always a delight to see her on Shabbat morning at the *shul*. She concludes her notes of those horrific years: "I do believe in miracles and teach my children to stand firm for what they believe, and learn to be happy with what they have, and to love their family and friends dearly, as one never knows what can happen the next day."

BY ELI KAVON, *The Jerusalem Post*



Rubble from the Nazi era pictured at an exhibition in Berlin.

denounced as Jews and were constantly on the move. The military bombardments made their travels hazardous. They were always guided by counselors and were hidden by many families until their identity was revealed, and then they were on the run for their lives.

Fanny and Jacqueline had never attended school, had never met other children, and could say their family name to no one. Thanks to her sister, Fanny did not forget her past but had to hide it. "My sister was always taking charge of me," Fanny remembers. By her eighth birthday she found out that the rest of her family was hiding in France. In 1943, Fanny and her sister were placed with a family in *Gouvieux*, 35 miles from Paris. "The family was very nice and looked after us with a little food and clothes, and sent us to a convent to go to school. We learned once again that we were forbidden to mention our family name and were to be called only by our given name."

It was while she was with this family that Fanny learned her mother had a baby boy



ZBOROWSKI Legacy Circle

The Legacy Circle, named in memory of Eli Zborowski, is open to anyone who includes ASYV/Yad Vashem in their estate plans.

This includes:

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

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

With your support, ASYV can strengthen the efforts of Yad Vashem as together we remember the past and shape the future.



The American Society for Yad Vashem, founded in 1981 by a group of visionary Holocaust survivors, was led by Eli Zborowski, z"l, until his passing in 2012.

For further information about the Zborowski Legacy Circle, please contact:

Robert Christopher Morton, Director of Planned Giving at ASYV
212-220-4304 or Cmorton@YadVashemUSA.org

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

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

Martyrdom & Resistance

Stanley H. Stone
Editor-in-Chief

Yefim Krasnyanskiy, M.A.,
Editor

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

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