



THE HOLOCAUST
AND THE UNITED NATIONS
OUTREACH PROGRAMME

DISCUSSION PAPERS JOURNAL



Volume III

Their Holocaust and Their United Nations Outreach Programs

Discussion Papers Journal

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and the United Nations Outreach Programme

Discussion Papers Journal — Volume III



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The discussion papers series provides a forum for individual scholars on the Holocaust and the prevention of genocide to raise issues for debate and further study. These writers, representing a variety of cultures and backgrounds, have been asked to draft papers based on their own perspective and particular experiences. The views expressed by the individual scholars do not necessarily reflect those of the United Nations. The discussion papers series is also available online at www.un.org/holocaustremembrance.

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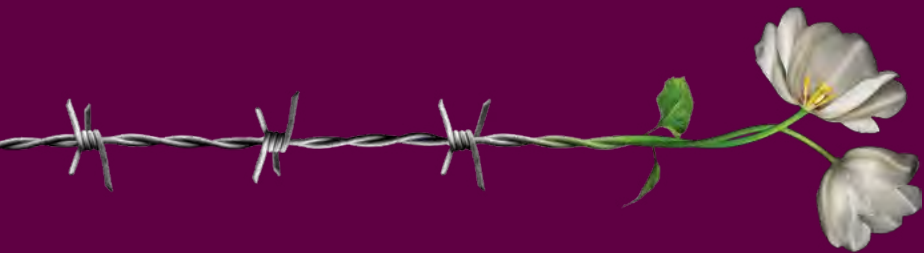
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Contents

Foreword <i>by Ms. Cristina Gallach</i> , Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information	v
Rescue during the Holocaust: The Courage to Care. 25 January 2013, <i>by Professor Mordecai Paldiel</i>	1
Journeys through the Holocaust. 27 January 2014, <i>by Mr. Steven Spielberg</i>	13
Liberty, Life and the Legacy of Holocaust Survivors. 28 January 2015, <i>by Mr. Avner Shalev</i>	23
The Legacy of the Danish rescue. What can we learn from the Danish example about the relation between Holocaust history and Holocaust education?, <i>by Professor Cecilie Felicia Stokholm Banke</i>	33
Remembering the Dead, Documenting Resistance, Honouring the Heroes: the Sinti and Roma 25 January 2013, <i>by Professor Ethel Brooks</i>	47
Why We Need the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, <i>by Mr. Mario Silva</i>	61
The Semlin Judenlager in Belgrade: A Contested Memory, <i>by Professor Jovan Byford</i>	73
Music and the Holocaust, <i>by Professor Shirli Gilbert</i>	85
Holocaust Remembrance and Education in Morocco, <i>by Mr. Elmehdi Boudra</i>	95
Rabbi Leo Baeck and the Leo Baeck Institute: A Response to Nazi Persecution and Displacement and Post-Holocaust Memory, <i>by Mr. William H. Weitzer</i>	107
From Commitment to Action: The Enduring Importance of the Responsibility to Protect, <i>by Mr. Adama Dieng and Ms. Jennifer Welsh</i>	121

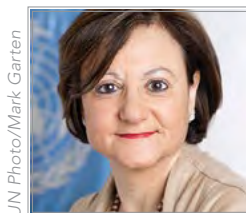
Annexes

- I. United Nations General Assembly Resolution 60/7
on Holocaust Remembrance (2005)*
- II. United Nations General Assembly Resolution 6/255
on Holocaust Denial (2007)*
- III. Holocaust and the United Nations Outreach Programme*



FOREWORD

**By Ms. Cristina Gallach,
Under-Secretary-General
for Communications and
Public Information,
United Nations**



Cristina Gallach

For the past decade the Holocaust and the United Nations Outreach Programme has mobilized students and educators around the world to never forget the lessons of the past. We are grateful to our many partners who have contributed to this work. In 2015 alone, with the support of our United Nations Information Centres, Holocaust commemorative activities took place in more than 40 countries. The global reach of this important educational Programme is stronger than ever.

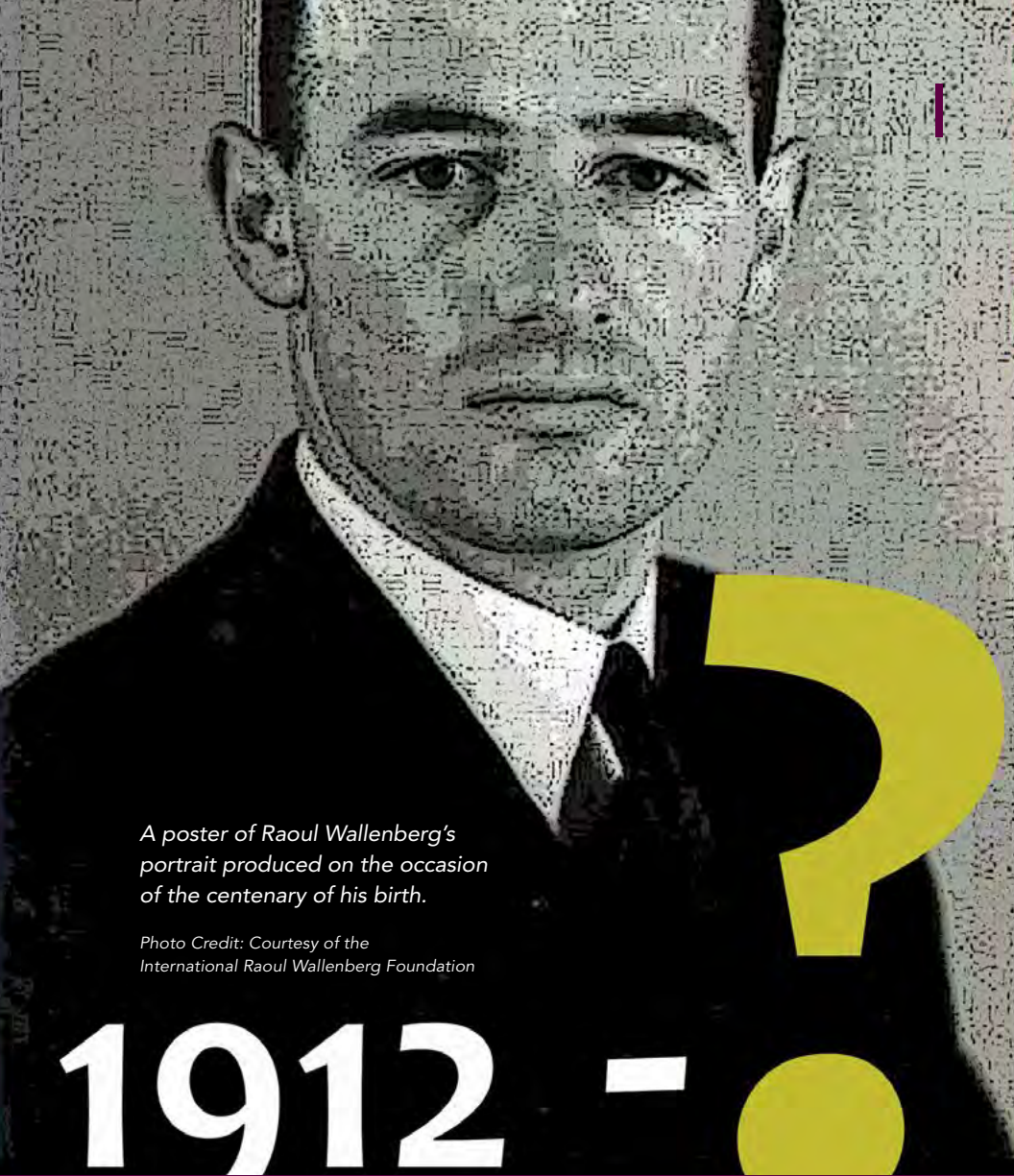
Today, the world is being re-shaped by further globalization, migration and climate change. Long-simmering disputes have erupted into armed hostilities and too many people continue to suffer from war, discrimination and other violations of their human rights. Violence and bias, according to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, are “stark reminders of the distance still to travel in upholding human rights, preventing genocide and defending our common humanity”. The Secretary-General has been clear: “We must redouble our efforts to eradicate the deep roots of hatred and intolerance. People everywhere must unite to stop the cycles of discord and build a world of inclusion and mutual respect.” Indeed, as we mark the 70th anniversary of the end of the Second World War and the founding of the United Nations, let us commit anew to protecting the vulnerable, promoting fundamental human rights, and upholding the freedom, dignity and worth of every person.

These discussion papers are a remarkable and moving demonstration of these values. The collection is the third in this series and one

of the many educational tools produced by the Holocaust and the United Nations Outreach Programme. Since its creation in 2005 by the United Nations General Assembly through its resolution 60/7, the Programme has developed an innovative approach in all six official languages that includes online and print educational products, DVDs, exhibits, social media campaigns, student video conferences and high-level events. It also continues to combat Holocaust denial, as called for by the United Nations General Assembly in resolution 61/255. I invite you to view a short film on the Programme's tenth anniversary that is available on its website (un.org/holocaustremembrance).

The papers in this volume were written by a diverse group of authors on a wide range of topics, from their distinct personal perspectives. Among the contributors are academics, researchers, and sociologists, the chairman of a world-renowned Holocaust museum, the Special Advisers to the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide and the Responsibility to Protect, a Hollywood filmmaker, and a former United Nations intern. They are from Canada, Denmark, Israel, Morocco, Senegal, Serbia, the United Kingdom and the United States. Their articles deal with a fascinating wide range of issues including Holocaust education in Denmark, and in Morocco; the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance; music and the Holocaust; rescue; the preservation of former Nazi concentration and death camps; crimes committed against the Roma and Sinti during the Second World War; the post-Holocaust memory of German-Jewish achievements; and the prevention of atrocity crimes.

I encourage you to read and share this publication. While the views expressed by individual scholars might not necessarily reflect those of the United Nations, the writers offer insights that help to raise the level of dialogue, as well as define possible means to curtail human rights abuses. The articles provide an opportunity for deeper reflection, discussion, and will hopefully instil in our readers the desire to take positive action. We look forward to your reactions and continued support for the Holocaust and the United Nations Outreach Programme.



A poster of Raoul Wallenberg's portrait produced on the occasion of the centenary of his birth.

Photo Credit: Courtesy of the International Raoul Wallenberg Foundation

1912 -

RESCUE DURING THE HOLOCAUST:

The Courage to Care

UN Photo/Rick Bajornas



biography/

PROFESSOR MORDECAI PALDIEL

Professor Mordecai Paldiel, the former Director of the Department of the Righteous at Yad Vashem, teaches History of the Shoah at Stern College and History of the 20th Century at Touro College. Professor Paldiel, a leading authority on rescue during the Holocaust, has written several books including *The Path of the Righteous: Gentile Rescuers of Jews during the Holocaust*, *Whosoever Saves One Life: The Uniqueness of the Righteous Among the Nations* and *Sheltering the Jews: Stories of Holocaust Rescuers* and *German Rescuers of Jews: Individuals versus the System*. In 1991, Professor Paldiel was the Ida E. King Distinguished Visiting Scholar of Holocaust Studies at the Richard Stockton College of New Jersey. He received a BA from Hebrew University and an BA, MA and PhD in Religion and Holocaust Studies from Temple University. Professor Paldiel delivered the keynote address at the United Nations Holocaust Memorial Ceremony in January 2013.

Rescue during the Holocaust: The Courage to Care

by Professor Mordecai Paldiel, former Director of the Department
of the Righteous at Yad Vashem

It was a clear moonlit night as I, a six-year-old boy at the time, trudged along an isolated tree-covered field with my parents, my grandmother, and five siblings — one of which I carried in my arms with difficulty. We slowly made our way toward the double barbed wire fence that separated France from Switzerland. It was the evening of 8 September 1943, the day Italy surrendered to the Allies, and the Germans were about to take over the watch of that section of the border. Up until then, the Italians had been charged with this responsibility.

Before this attempt to escape, my family had moved from one place to another, over a period of three years, seeking safety in the Vichy zone of France. We had fled there from Belgium after the Germans invaded the country on 10 May 1940. Our first move was from the little town of St. Gauden, situated at the foot of the Pyrenees Mountains, where we attempted to cross into Spain. Having failed, we moved on to Marseilles. Soon after the Germans occupied the city in November 1942, we fled to the little village of Varcès, located in the Italian zone of France near Grenoble.

Now, with the Italians gone, my parents decided, in a last desperate attempt, to cross into Switzerland. With the help of two Frenchmen, we made it across safely, only to be arrested by a Swiss border patrol. We were interned, but luckily we were not turned back into France, which was now fully controlled by Nazi Germany.

The man who made this possible was a French cleric named Abbé Simon Gallay, who lived in the little town of Evian-les-Bains. My mother had met him only a few days earlier, but had been told Abbé Simon Gallay was a friendly cleric who would help us. When my mother approached him, he immediately promised to arrange our flight to Switzerland. And he kept his word.

Many decades later, when I headed the Righteous Among the Nations Programme¹ at Yad Vashem, The Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Authority, I promised myself that I would try and find him. I had hoped that he was still alive so I could thank him in person on behalf of my family and the institution for which I worked. My parents, who were still alive in the late 1980's, had told me how fortunate they were to have discovered this rescuer. When they met him, they were at their wits end trying to find a way to elude the Germans. From other documents made available to me, I learned how Abbé Simon Gallay had helped other Jews who had tried to flee to safety. To my surprise, I had the good fortune of locating him in a Catholic retirement home in Annecy. He told me about his meeting with my mother, who had come to plead for his help.

This programme was established to honour the non-Jewish rescuers of Jews during the Holocaust. When Abbé Simon Gallay was awarded the title of Righteous Among the Nations in 1990 for having risked his life to save my family and others, I journeyed to France to personally give him the medal and certificate of honour on behalf of Yad Vashem and the State of Israel. I presented the award to him in a prestigious ceremony that was attended by civic and religious officials.

That same year, I planted a tree in his name on the Avenue of the Righteous, at Yad Vashem. I was happy to have fulfilled a self-imposed commitment to give thanks and appreciation to my family's rescuer – to Abbé Simon Gallay – to a man who made it possible for my family to stay alive by staying out of reach of those who wished us dead for the simple reason that we were born.

The example of Abbé Simon Gallay was an inspiration to help other survivors to honour their rescuers through my position as the

Director of the Righteous Among the Nations Department at the Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial. During my 24-year tenure as head of that department, I was instrumental in identifying and honouring thousands of other non-Jewish rescuers of Jews, men and women from various countries and walks of life who risked their lives to save Jews from the Nazis. In doing so they reasserted their commitment to an ethical-bound humanity that was in short supply during the dark period of Nazi rule, and that was being challenged by one of the most brutal and immoral forces that has tainted the annals of civilized life.

The programme was established through legislation passed by the Parliament of Israel in 1953. It took another nine years for this provision to actually be launched, and this was largely prompted by the revelations that were made during Adolf Eichmann's trial in Jerusalem, which ended in 1962. Eichmann was one of the senior SS² officers in charge of the so-called "Final Solution of the Jewish Question". Eichmann was captured by Israeli agents in Argentina in 1960, where he had lived under an assumed name since the end of the Second World War, and brought to Israel for trial. All of the horrific details of the massive extermination of Jews were laid bare at this trial, through the words of witnesses. But some of the testimonies revealed how survivors were aided and helped by others, by non-Jewish persons.

Some of the witnesses include Avraham Berman, who gave testimony about members of the Polish underground who aided Jews to escape from the Warsaw ghetto; Abba Kovner, who led the uprising at the Vilna ghetto, spoke of the help Jews received from German military Sergeant Anton Schmid; Joseph Melkman, who identified the Dutch rescuer Joop Westerweel, who was murdered by the Germans for

"When Abbé Simon Gally was awarded the title of Righteous Among the Nations in 1990 for having risked his life to save my family and others, I journeyed to France to personally give him the medal and certificate of honour on behalf of Yad Vashem and the State of Israel."

his actions; Henrietta Samuel who spoke about Norwegian Ingebjorg Sletten-Fosstvedt, who helped Jews escape to neutral Sweden; Hulda Campiano, who gave testimony about the help her family received in Italy by members of the Catholic clergy, as well as lay persons; and other witnesses who spoke about the rescue of the Jewish community in Denmark. In 1962, as the Eichmann trial came to a close, the Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial in Jerusalem decided to launch a programme under which non-Jewish persons who risked their life to save Jews would be publicly acknowledged and honoured by the State of Israel. A commission chaired by a Supreme Court justice was nominated in order to establish the criteria for this award. This public commission would function for as long as there was credible evidence identifying rescuers of Jews to be honoured.

“In 1962, as the Eichmann trial came to a close, the Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial in Jerusalem decided to launch a programme under which non-Jewish persons who risked their lives to save Jews would be publicly acknowledged and honoured by the State of Israel.”

The first chairman to be appointed to the Commission was Supreme Court Justice Moshe Landau, who presided over the Eichmann trial. He was succeeded by Supreme Court Justice Moshe Bejski, who had been rescued by Oskar Schindler, and who had also given testimony at the Eichmann trial.

The Commission decided that the basic criteria that must be met in order to be eligible for the “Righteous” title was that a person needed to have risked his own life and safety by attempting to save at least one Jewish person, with no material advantage to the rescuer, and that the rescuer’s story could be corroborated by the beneficiary party. Each rescuer that met this criteria would then be

entitled to a tree in his or her name located in a specially constructed grove at Yad Vashem, named Avenue of the Righteous. This avenue leads to the Holocaust museum, which holds archived records of the horrific events of the Final Solution. The trees are there to remind visitors that the final word was to be left to the rescuers and not to



Jan Karski portrait, 1944.

Photo Credit: Courtesy of Hoover Institution Archives



Karski at the Museum of the City of Lodz in his birthplace of Lodz, Poland in 1999.

Photo Credit: Courtesy of the Museum of the City of Lodz, Poland



Participants at the 2013 United Nations Holocaust memorial Ceremony. From left: Ellen Rose Silver and Anoush Simonian, musicians of the Motyl Chamber Ensemble; Ethel Brooks, Sociology Professor at Rutgers University; Peter Launsky-Tieffenthal, Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information; H.E. Mr. Ron Prosor, Permanent Representative of Israel to the UN; H.E. Mr. Raymond Serge Balé, Vice-President of the sixty-seventh session of the General Assembly; H.E. Ms. Signe Burgstaller, Deputy Permanent Representative of Sweden to the UN; Professor Mordecai Paldiel, Holocaust survivor and keynote speaker at the commemoration event; Cantor David Berson, Cantor at The Jewish Centre in New York; and Julie Artzt Becker and Aleeza Wadler, musicians of the Motyl Chamber Ensemble.

Photo Credit: UN Photo/ Mark Garten

the perpetrators of these crimes. After some 2,000 trees were planted, and with space lacking for continued tree plantings, it was decided to construct a special site at Yad Vashem to continue honoring the Righteous — the Garden of the Righteous. Here, the names of those so honoured each year, are etched in stone for time immemorial. In addition, each rescuer was to receive a specially minted medal bearing the name of the rescuer along with a certificate of honour. For those not able to come to Israel, these honours were to be distributed through the diplomatic representatives of Israel residing abroad, to signal the State of Israel's validation of the rescuer's heroic and humanitarian behavior.

To date, at this 50-year celebration of the Righteous programme, some 25,000 names of rescuers adorn the Yad Vashem memorial. In addition, a 10-volume encyclopedia published by Yad Vashem describes the humanitarian and life-risking actions that earned these individuals recognition, and ensures that the memory of these role models will be preserved for generations to come. Space does not allow me to mention all of these knights of the spirit such as Joop Westerweel of the Netherlands, who led fleeing Jews across the Belgian and French borders to the high peaks of the Pyrenees mountains that border Spain; the Belgian Andrée Geulen, who was instrumental in finding safe places for several hundred Jewish children; the French Franciscan cleric Pierre Marie-Benoit, who saved Jews both in Marseilles and, under the name of Father Benedetto, in Rome; the Italian Giorgio Perlasca, who saved Jews in Budapest by posing as the diplomatic representative of Spain; the German Oskar Schindler, who saved over one thousands Jews, both in Cracow, Poland, and Brunnlitz, Moravia; Metropolitan Damaskinos, who invited fleeing Jews to seek shelter in Greek Orthodox religious institutions in Athens; equally his counterpart in Bulgaria, Metropolitan Stefan; the Pole Jan Kozielowski, who under the code name of Karski travelled on a special mission to England and the United States to sound the alarm on the destruction of Polish Jews; the brave Pole Irena Sendler who was instrumental in saving hundreds of Jewish children who were secretly spirited out of the Warsaw ghetto; the Lithuanian Jonas Paulavicius who sheltered a

dozen Jews and several Soviet POW's in his home outside Kaunas, and finally, Janis Lipke, the Latvian stevedore who smuggled Jews out of German labour camps in the Riga area and hid them at his isolated farm near the Baltic Sea coast.

Individuals who are identified as "Righteous Among the Nations" receive certificates bearing this title. In some cases, whole communities were honoured as 'Righteous' for their role in rescue efforts. Some examples include the French Protestant community of Le Chambon-sur-Lignon, where an estimated several thousand Jews found shelter at different periods of time; the Dutch village of Nieuwlande, in Drente province that also sheltered hundreds of Jews; the Danish underground organization that facilitated the flight of Jews to nearby Switzerland. A tree was also planted by the Polish Righteous Wladyslaw Bartoszewski (later the Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs) in Zegota's name, the clandestine Polish organization dedicated to helping Jews on the run. Several dozen diplomats were also recipients of the Righteous title for disobeying or misinterpreting their government's restriction or prohibition in issuing visas to Jews. Some of these names include Aristides de Sousa Mendes, the Portuguese consul-general in Bordeaux, who handed out thousands of transit visas to Jews and others who had reason to fear Nazi retribution. And lest we forget, the legendary Raoul Wallenberg, the Swedish diplomat sent to Hungary to save the Jews, numbering in the thousands, and whose disappearance at the hands of the Soviets still remains an agonizing mystery.

I was privileged to have been part of this program over a 24-year-period, and to have had the opportunity to write numerous books and articles on this inspiring and uplifting phenomenon. Now that I am teaching here in New York, I continue to seek out persons who survived thanks to the help of others. As a teammate of the ADL/Hidden Child Foundation and as a consultant at the Raoul Wallenberg Foundation, I help these survivors draw up their testimonies and documentation and then send it to Yad Vashem for consideration under the Righteous Among the Nations programme. For we have an obligation

to pass on to future generations not merely the legacy of the horrors of the Holocaust, but also the story of the Righteous. The lessons of these deeds can arouse the spark of goodness in others that is an innate part of humanity. Such goodness may start with one small act, then, as shown by many rescuers, expand and grow to helping more than one person over greater lengths of time. One need not be a saint with a halo over one's head to do such a saintly deed. Most of those on Yad Vashem's list of the Righteous were persons who went about their regular business, and then, when suddenly challenged to help a fleeing Jewish person, found themselves suddenly and instinctively transformed, perhaps overwhelmed, into rescuers.

Such is the story of the barely articulate Lorenzo Perrone, the Italian bricklayer who, in 1944, found himself on a team assigned to a certain building project in the Auschwitz camp. It was here that he accidentally met fellow Italian Primo Levi, a Jewish prisoner, who had been assigned to help him out with the cement mixture. At that moment, something was kindled in Lorenzo's mind and heart. It was not only a liking for the affable Levi but something more — a commitment to help him survive Auschwitz, a hell on earth that could serve as the backdrop for Dante's *Inferno*. Initially this commitment took the form of supplying Levi with food stolen from the Italian kitchen. For the next six months, every morning Lorenzo brought Levi a military mess tin full of soup, carefully hidden under some boards, and told him to bring it back empty before evening. Late at night, when all the Italian workers were sound asleep, Lorenzo sneaked into the kitchen and scraped the leftovers from the cauldrons, and this is what he brought to Levi the following day. A slice of bread was sometimes added to the daily soup. One very pressing matter in Primo Levi's mind was how to communicate to his mother, who was in hiding back in Italy, that she need not worry too much for he was alive, albeit in a German concentration camp. Jews were strictly forbidden to write, however non-Jewish civilian workers such as Perrone were allowed to do so. Lorenzo agreed to write a letter, penned by Levi in coded language, and send it to Levi's mother through a non-Jewish woman friend.

Surprisingly, in August 1944, Primo Levi received a letter from home, followed by a package from Primo's sister and mother, who were both in hiding in Italy. The package contained ersatz chocolate, cookies, and powdered milk. "To describe its real value, the impact it had on me ... is beyond the powers of ordinary language", Levi wrote after the war. It goes without saying that if the real purpose and the author of these letters had been uncovered, both Levi's and Perrone's lives would have been in serious danger. In the words of Levi, Perrone "was good and simple and did not think that one did good for a reward".

Primo Levi was, to put it mildly, dumbfounded by Lorenzo's goodness — in of all places a camp where civilized conduct and moral behavior had been ground into dust. "A man helping other men out of pure altruism was incomprehensible, alien, like a savior who's come from heaven... No one knows what I owe that man; I shall never be able to repay him", Levi wrote in a letter to a friend, on 6 June, 1945, soon after the end of the war.³ After the war, when the two met again, in Italy, Lorenzo confided to Primo that back in Auschwitz he had helped others, but he had not thought it necessary to talk about it. "We are in this world to do good, not to boast about it", he told the startled Primo. In the words of author Carole Langier, "Without Lorenzo Perrone we would not have had one of the greatest witnesses and writers of the Shoah (Holocaust), perhaps the greatest of all", referring to Primo Levi. In 1998, Yad Vashem conferred the title of Righteous Among the Nations on the late Lorenzo Perrone.

Lorenzo's goodness left a deep mark on Levi's thinking, as he testified in his first post-war book, *If This Is a Man*:

Why I, rather than thousands of others, managed to survive the test, I believe that it was really due to Lorenzo that I am alive today; and not so much for his material aid, as for his having constantly reminded me by his presence, by his natural and plain manner of being good, that there still existed a just world outside our own, something and someone still pure and whole, not corrupt, not savage, extraneous to hatred and terror...for which it was worth surviving...His humanity was pure and

*uncontaminated, he was outside this world of negation. Thanks to Lorenzo, I managed not to forget that I myself was a man.*⁴

Lorenzo Perrone and thousands of others on Yad Vashem's roster of Righteous Among the Nations acted according to the dictum of that ancient Jewish sage, Hillel: "If I am only for myself, then what is my merit?" A later Talmudic passage also affirms that, "Whosoever saves one life is as though he had saved an entire world." That is a lesson worth remembering, for the sake of our future, and a more morally upright humanity.

- (1) This programme was established to honour the non-Jewish rescuers of Jews during the Holocaust.
- (2) SS: This paramilitary elite group of the Nazi party, known as "Shutzstaffel" in German, was responsible for implementing the security and population policies of the Third Reich, among other duties.
- (3) Righteous Among the Nations Department, Yad Vashem, file: Perrone Lorenzo, 02/8157.
- (4) Primo Levi, *If This Is A Man* (New York: Orion Press, 1959), page 142.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

RESCUE DURING THE HOLOCAUST: The Courage to Care

1. Who are the "Righteous Among the Nations"?
2. Did you know about the Righteous Among the Nations Programme before reading the paper by Mordecai Paldiel? What message does this programme send to students?
3. Do you know if anybody from your country has been awarded the title Righteous Among the Nations? If yes, what are their stories?
4. What values do you think the rescuers demonstrated? Why do you think they were willing to risk their lives to help others?
5. To what extent is individual responsibility essential in combating genocide?



Steven Spielberg
directing Liam Neeson on
location for Schindler's List
in Krakow, Poland in 1993.

Photo Credit: David James.
Universal City Studios, Inc.
and Amblin Entertainment, Inc.

JOURNEYS THROUGH THE HOLOCAUST

UN Photo/Evan Schneider



biography/ **STEVEN SPIELBERG**

Born in Cincinnati, Ohio in 1946, Steven Spielberg rose to the pinnacle of the film world as a director, screenwriter and producer. Three of his productions — *Jaws* (1975), *E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial* (1982), and *Jurassic Park* (1993) — broke records as the highest-grossing film in the year they were each released. He also teamed with George Lucas to create the *Indiana Jones* series of films. Taking on large-scale themes of humanistic and historical import, Spielberg also directed *The Color Purple*, *Schindler's List*, winning Academy Awards for Best Picture and Best Director, *Amistad*, *Saving Private Ryan*, for which he won his second Best Director Oscar, and *Lincoln*. He solidified his commitment to keeping alive the memory and lessons of the Holocaust by founding the USC Shoah Foundation — the Institute for Visual History and Education. Established to collect and preserve testimonies of survivors and other witnesses to the Holocaust, the Institute maintains one of the world's largest video digital libraries — nearly 52,000 video testimonies in 32 languages from 56 countries (<http://sfi.usc.edu/>). Steven Spielberg delivered the keynote speech at the United Nations Holocaust memorial ceremony in January 2014.

Journeys through the Holocaust

By Steven Spielberg, Director

I'm honored to speak to you on the United Nations International Day of Commemoration in memory of the victims of the Holocaust.

To the Holocaust United Nations Outreach Programme, I'm grateful to you for inviting me to address this year's theme, "Journeys through the Holocaust", and for years of partnership with the University of Southern California's Shoah Foundation. It's particularly meaningful to me that Rena Finder and other survivors of the Holocaust and genocide are here with us today. I'd like to dedicate my remarks to them.

The United Nations is one of the most important institutions that humanity has created, not only because of our shared hope that it will accomplish what's set out in its Charter, but because the United Nations provides a place where representatives of all the peoples of the world listen to witnesses tell of their experiences, and after listening, policy is made. This is a place where testimony forms the basis of action.

When I began to consider what I'd say about this year's theme, "Journeys through the Holocaust," I was confronted with two questions. The first was whether I could speak meaningfully, since I'm not a Holocaust survivor. I'm a Jewish-American man, born a year after the end of World War II. My initial awareness of what had happened to the Jews of Europe under fascism came from my grandparents telling me horrifying accounts of the fates of relatives and friends.

When I was three or four years old, I remember sitting with my grandmother as she taught English to Hungarian survivors; they showed me the concentration camp tattoos on their arms. I'd been told this is when I started to learn to read numbers.

Like a lot of Jewish kids, I encountered versions of anti-Semitism growing up, and I examined those encounters in the light of the history I'd absorbed of pogroms and death camps.

Anti-Semitism led to the construction of Auschwitz, and while I sensed a connection between bigoted slurs and genocide, I wondered how the American version of anti-Semitism I'd experienced had been rendered so infinitely less destructive.

The effort to answer this question shaped my politics, as did learning that, in addition to six million Jewish lives claimed during the Holocaust and the genocide of the Roma, Nazi persecution victimized many other groups such as homosexuals, the disabled, and political dissidents — all vulnerable to prejudice and oppression and the fascist killing machine.

I became a filmmaker because it was important to me to communicate my concerns and preoccupations to my audience, and, when I became a father, to my children. It took me approximately 20 years of directing sharks, aliens and dinosaurs before I believed I might be ready to make a film about the Holocaust. Once I'd started directing *Schindler's List*, I realized that I felt anything but ready for the task at hand.

During the filming, survivors of the Holocaust told me their histories. Many said, "Please, tell my story after you tell Oskar Schindler's." They weren't asking to have a movie made about them; they were asking me to help ensure the existence of an indelible record of what had befallen them, their loved ones, their cities, their entire culture and their civilization. I believed that given the opportunity, they could become the world's teachers. We needed only to give them the platform.



Director Steven Spielberg with Holocaust survivor Rena Finder, at United Nations Holocaust memorial ceremony held on 27 January 2014.

Photo Credit: UN Photo/ Evan Schneider



Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon meets with Steven Spielberg, United States academy award-winning film director, producer, and screenwriter. 15 April 2008

Photo Credit: UN Photo/Eskinder Debebe

We built that platform when we began the Shoah Foundation in 1994. In the first four years, we travelled around the world, recording approximately 250 interviews with Holocaust survivors each and every week. Rena Finder's journey is recorded in her Shoah Foundation testimony —along with the journeys of 51,413 other survivors, living in 56 countries, speaking in 32 languages.

“My Holocaust journey, and that of everyone not a survivor, is a journey toward understanding.”

Directing *Schindler's List*, interviewing survivors: this was my way to try to understand the Holocaust. Breaking down a phenomenon of overwhelming horror into individual moments was the only way I knew how to approach and better understand it. Those who lived through it know what we'll never know. But we can learn. They want to teach us.

Survivors and witnesses often say that their dearest hope, the hope that helped keep them alive, was to be heard and believed and understood. So, although I have no personal journey through the Holocaust to recount, I offer my journey to the journeys of survivors. My Holocaust journey, and that of everyone not a survivor, is a journey toward understanding.

My second question, regarding our theme “Journeys through the Holocaust”, pertains to the preposition “through”. That word made me pause. In this context, it strikes me as being a tremendously optimistic word; it suggests that it was possible, and remains possible, to enter and then exit the Holocaust. That for those who experienced it, and for the world in which it occurred, there was a beginning and an end. Of course there were both, historically speaking. A small minority of people did survive the camps and went on to live productive and long lives. Extraordinary lives, during the course of which many felt they'd decisively triumphed over the evil that tried and failed to devour them. Survivors of horror often express an undaunted, undamaged optimism. There's nothing I know about human beings more marvelous and beautiful than this capacity to transform rage and grief into a wellspring of wisdom, progress and justice.

But the survivors' powerful determination to contribute to a future without genocides doesn't come from leaving the Holocaust behind, from escaping history. Their determined demand is that we engage fully with history, that the Holocaust remain with us, in memory. Theirs were journeys into the Holocaust. They cannot emerge from it. And neither can the world until there are no more genocides, until the unthinkable becomes impossible. Tragically, we are all aware that the Holocaust is with us today, in ongoing attempts at genocide all around our planet.

In response to this reality, we expanded the Shoah Foundation's collection to include testimony from the genocides in Armenia, Cambodia, Rwanda and the Nanjing Massacre and eventually we'll include testimony from Srebrenica.

I was recently informed by the Foundation staff that survivors of the Rwandan genocide have asked to see Holocaust survivor testimonies because they want to learn how people rebuilt their lives after facing death and losing loved ones. Victims of genocide in the past are now teachers to victims of recent genocide. When I first heard this, I was deeply moved, and I felt glad that our work gathering memories of the Shoah was helping in this unexpected way. But also, I became terribly sad.

“There's nothing I know about human beings more marvelous and beautiful than this capacity to transform rage and grief into a wellspring of wisdom, progress and justice.”

Why have successive generations after the Holocaust fallen victim to mass murder? If genocide is as unstoppable today as it seemed to be in the 1930s and 1940s, don't we have to ask ourselves why bearing witness matters? Why gather testimony, if genocide persists?

At the end of his interview, Holocaust survivor George Papanek looks directly into the camera and urges humanity to come together, despite the risks, to create the momentum we need to act together to stop genocide. It is, as I said, a great accomplishment of our species

that testimony like George's can be heard, and is heard, in the high chambers of power. In chambers such as these, survivors tell us that genocide is prepared for, that intervention, once the killing machine is in place, is sometimes successful. But more often it's not. They ask us to learn to anticipate the warning signs and predictors of genocide and insist that mass graves don't have to open up before we act. They ask that we learn from what they suffered.

The challenge of genocide is to confront, simultaneously, a literally unimaginable totality. The numbers numb us. They exceed the human mind's capacity to make sense of the world.

Here's one way to comprehend how incomprehensible genocide is. If a person wanted to watch every one of the nearly 52,000 testimonies of Holocaust survivors in the Shoah collection, he or she would have to watch testimony 24 hours a day for nearly 15 years to see the Visual History Archive in its entirety. And this Archive, we should remember, is less than one per cent of the Holocaust's Jewish victims, less than half of one per cent of the total number of victims of the Holocaust.

Neuroscientists say we're hard-wired for the concrete reality of small villages. At best, a few thousand people. Hundreds of thousands of people, millions of people are more than we can comprehend. So to confront the reality of genocide is to confront murder in numbers so great that abstraction cannot be avoided. And with abstraction, I fear, comes a diminishment of our compassion, perhaps of our moral imagination.

How can we possibly assimilate such quantum evil and then form plans for action?

The answer is simple: How can we not?

The numbness we feel in the face of genocide can be paralyzing. We must refuse paralysis. Genocide is evil; but I think perhaps the greatest evil is when people who have been spared the horrors permit themselves to despair. The despair of those who would otherwise act is evil's triumph. Genocide presents us with an image so appalling

that it can be damaging even to look. But we know we must look. And when the persistence of genocide asks us why we bother to gather testimony and remember, we respond: because we're human, and we know that justice lives in memory. We know that repressing memory, willed forgetting, is perhaps the greatest danger we face as a species. Because we've been spared, we know that despair is a choice and remembering is a choice. But if we want to remain fully human we have no choice but to confront and remember the past, to learn and to act on what we've learned.

There are no bystanders to history. History doesn't flow around us and past us — it flows through us — or rather, we are history's flow. Every human life is historical, every person is composed of history. History is simply another way of saying human life.

**“History doesn't
flow around us and
past us — it flows
through us — or rather,
we are history's flow.”**

When testimony and witness form the basis of policy, when truth, rather than narrow national or local interests, forms the foundation for action, there is great cause to hope for resolution of what appear to be unsolvable problems. That is why the broad perspective the United Nations commands is so critical.

This institution, in which so much of the world's hope has been placed, exists in defiance of imponderable difficulties. That the United Nations exists at all, and has endured, and expanded its mission, is proof against despair. That the United Nations dedicates itself to bearing witness, and joins its authority to the witness of others, is an unanswerable argument for efforts to remember the past, to learn and to take inspiration in the urgent name of action.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

JOURNEYS THROUGH THE HOLOCAUST

1. Spielberg began working with the USC Shoah Foundation — The Institute for Visual History and Education — in 1994. The Foundation has recorded the testimonies of more than 50,000 Holocaust survivors, living in more than 55 countries and speaking nearly three dozen languages. How did these testimonies help turn survivors into “the world’s teachers”?
2. Spielberg talks about the use of the preposition “through” in “Journeys through the Holocaust”. It suggests, he says, that it was possible and remains possible, to enter and then exit the Holocaust. Do you believe it was possible for survivors to move “through” the Holocaust? How are you inspired by the survivors who went on to live productive lives?
3. Spielberg urges people to refuse the despair and paralysis that can result when we confront the evilness of genocide. What does he suggest we gain from listening to testimonies from survivors such as George Papanek? How do you react when you read or hear news of mass murders and attacks on people because of their skin colour, ethnic group, religious beliefs or sexuality?
4. Spielberg believes the broad perspective offered by the United Nations is critical to help resolve what appear to be unsolvable global problems. He believes its endurance as an institution over the past 70 years demonstrates that people can fight against despair. Do you believe the United Nations has a role to play today in helping prevent genocides and hatred? How can the United Nations increase its impact?
5. Spielberg refers to other acts of genocide which have occurred for example in Cambodia and Rwanda. What actions can your generation take to make sure genocide is not repeated?



The Children's Memorial at Yad Vashem, the Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Authority in Jerusalem, Israel.

Photo Credit: Yossi Ben David courtesy of Yad Vashem

LIBERTY, LIFE AND THE LEGACY OF HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS



biography/
AVNER SHALEV

Avner Shalev has been Chairman of the Yad Vashem Directorate since 1993. He is Chief Curator of the landmark Holocaust History Museum that opened in 2005, and of Yad Vashem's permanent exhibit in the Jewish Block at the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum, which opened in 2013. Yad Vashem, under the leadership of Avner Shalev, has been a highly valued partner of the Holocaust and the United Nations Outreach Programme. The institution has provided expertise and co-sponsored exhibits, co-produced educational publications and conducted training for United Nations staff members. Shalev served in the Israel Defense Forces between 1956 and 1980, reaching the rank of brigadier general. After retiring from military service, Shalev served as Director General of the Culture Authority in the Ministry of Education and Culture, and Chairman of the National Culture and Art Council. In that capacity, Shalev instituted new standards for Israel's leading cultural bodies, and initiated programs — such as nationwide art, music and drama festivals — in order to increase cultural awareness and involvement. He has served on the boards of various Israeli national museums and cultural institutions. Among his publications are *To Bear Witness — Holocaust Remembrance at Yad Vashem* (2005) and *We Are Here — Holocaust Survivors in Israel* (2008). He holds a BA from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in modern history of the Middle East and geography, and is also a graduate of the IDF Command and Staff College and National Security College. Mr. Shalev delivered the keynote speech at the United Nations Holocaust memorial ceremony in January 2014.

Liberty, Life and the Legacy of Holocaust Survivors

By Avner Shalev, Chairman of the Yad Vashem Directorate, Jerusalem

On 28 November 1944, during the last months of the operation of the Auschwitz-Birkenau extermination camp, 20 Jewish children (10 boys and 10 girls ages six to 12) were chosen by the notorious Nazi doctor Josef Mengele and sent by train to the Neuengamme concentration camp near Hamburg, Germany: Rivka; Edward; Mania; Roman and his sister Eleonora; brothers Edward and Alexander; Jacqueline; Sergio; Leah and 10 others.

Mengele was cooperating with the request of his colleague, the SS¹ physician Dr. Kurt Heissmeyer, to supply him with subjects for his pseudo-scientific study of infectious diseases.

Upon arrival, the children were infected with tuberculosis and the terrible effects of the disease upon them were studied for several months. As Dr. Heissmeyer testified 20 years later at his trial in East Germany: "I did not think that the children had full value as human beings...for me there was no basic difference between Jews and guinea pigs".

Auschwitz-Birkenau was liberated by the Red Army exactly 70 years ago, but the murder continued wherever the Nazis still held control.

In Neuengamme, this meant the murder of the 20 Jewish children. Eight days before the British Army entered Hamburg, the children

were brought to a school building, where they were injected with morphine, and then hung to death on hooks set in the wall.

Nazi Germany and its collaborators had murdered one-third of the Jewish people. The extermination of six million Jews in Europe was motivated and driven by a murderous, racist anti-Semitic ideology that viewed all Jews, everywhere in the world, as a lethal danger to the German nation and to Germany's new world order. So every last Jew, everywhere, had to be destroyed, at any cost.

Recalling the horrible scope and nature of that genocide is the core of Holocaust remembrance, but remembrance extends deeper and further. When the Second World War ended, much of the world rejoiced in the Allied victory. But the Jews who survived could not rejoice. Mourning for their families and communities, scarred by their own horrible Shoah experiences, they could well have become desperate, bitter and vengeful. And yet, remarkably, they did not.

“When the Second World War ended, much of the world rejoiced in the Allied victory. But the Jews who survived could not rejoice.”

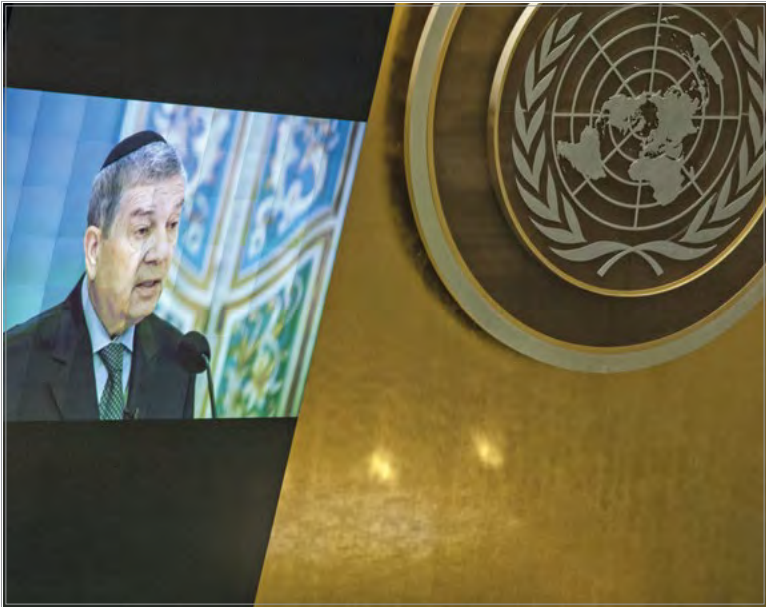
In fact, the vast majority of the Holocaust survivors did the contrary — they chose hope. The majority of the survivors chose to strike new roots in their ancestral Land of Israel, my own birthplace, where they joined a viable and self-sufficient pre-Holocaust Jewish entity. In every place around the globe that the survivors reached, they demonstrated their restored commitment to human free-

dom and faith in humanity. Upon these values they rebuilt their own lives, and those of their new families and communities.

In 2002, hundreds of Shoah survivors gathered at Yad Vashem, on the Mount of Remembrance in Jerusalem, to participate in an international conference devoted to the Legacy of Holocaust Survivors. They signed a joint “Survivors Declaration” stating:

After the Shoah, we did not turn into wild animals, hungering only for revenge.

This is a testament to the principles we possess as a people



Avner Shalev, Chairman of the Yad Vashem Directorate, addresses the United Nations Holocaust memorial ceremony held on 28 January 2015 via video message.

Photo Credit: UN Photo/ Loey Felipe



The exhibition titled "Auschwitz — the Depth of the Abyss" opened in the General Assembly Visitors' Lobby on 24 January 2005, three days before the official sixtieth anniversary of the liberation of the Nazi death camp in Europe. Avner Shalev, Chairman of the Yad Vashem Directorate, delivers opening remarks.

Photo Credit: UN Photo/ Eskinder Debebe

imbued with enduring faith in both man and Providence. We chose life.

During the first decades following the Holocaust, many of its survivors expressed concern that it would fade from the world's consciousness. They feared that it would remain recorded only in history books. But it didn't. My mentor, Professor Yisrael Gutman, himself a Holocaust survivor, said: "The Shoah refuses to become history".

"In the decades since the spring of 1945, large portions of humanity have come gradually to perceive the Holocaust as a pivotal landmark event for modern civilization."

In the decades since the spring of 1945, large portions of humanity have come gradually to perceive the Holocaust as a pivotal landmark event for modern civilization. Even regions and cultures not originally related to the events of the Holocaust find it compelling and meaningful.

But why? Why does the Shoah refuse to become history? Why does it remain so relevant to so many different people?

Genocides and other terrible human atrocities occurred before the Shoah and — to our great sorrow — since the Shoah. It is not the specific Jewish identity of the victims that provides the Holocaust with its universal implications. Rather, I submit — that what resonates so powerfully in our modern and post-modern existence, is the shocking ease and speed with which the Holocaust's perpetrators and their ideology succeeded.

To this day, we struggle to understand how Nazi Germany and its collaborators were able to implement their brutal and barbaric ideology. How could hundreds of years of human progress yield such massive horror?

Modern society deludes itself that technological progress goes hand-in-hand with moral advancement. Sadly, that is not true. The Nazis sought to totally destroy the Jewish people and to impose a ruthless totalitarian regime. This was conceived by highly educated

individuals and implemented by a technologically advanced German society.

The deadly mentality that the Nazis expressed and executed is not likely to return in its exact historical form of the 1930s and 1940s. But as Auschwitz survivor and author Primo Levi cautioned: "It happened. Therefore, it can happen again."

Nowadays, destructive evil, including vicious anti-Semitism, reappears in different contexts and ideologies. These ideologies deny human rights and dignity in other dangerous ways and circumstances. Confronted by this reality, I ask: How can we ensure that moral values will still be as essential to our lives as technology advances? With this question, I have come to this General Assembly, a venue usually associated with statesmen and politicians.

I am an educator, and a teacher of other educators. It is as a Holocaust educator, that I accepted the gracious invitation of the United Nations to address you today, on this tenth anniversary of the International Day of Commemoration in memory of the victims of the Holocaust. Together with partners and associates worldwide, Yad Vashem teaches thousands of Holocaust educators each year, from dozens of nations, to draw contemporary insights from the annals of the Shoah.

They learn that in addition to its immense atrocity, the Holocaust was *also* the context for a dramatic struggle of the human spirit. The Jews fought to retain their humanity through countless acts of solidarity, mutual assistance and physical, cultural and spiritual resistance.

The Righteous Among the Nations, though relatively few in number, chose heroically to endanger themselves while attempting to rescue

"The deadly mentality that the Nazis expressed and executed is not likely to return in its exact historical form of the 1930s and 1940s. But as Auschwitz survivor and author Primo Levi cautioned: It happened. Therefore, it can happen again."

Jews. These inspiring role models help educators teach about our responsibility to act as a buttress against social hatred and violence, to identify racism, xenophobia and persecution and to fight them — openly and effectively. Of course, the responsibility for moral education rests not only upon teachers. Political, economic and social leaders — like many of you in this hall and those whom you represent — must also assume responsibility for shaping moral norms and ethical standards.

“Of course, the responsibility for moral education rests not only upon teachers. Political, economic and social leaders — like many of you in this hall and those whom you represent — must also assume responsibility for shaping moral norms and ethical standards.”

Our world today is plagued with cruel conflicts for dominance and resources. In the shadow of these conflicts, we can and must educate the next generation of citizens and leaders to choose to behave ethically and humanely. To Primo Levy’s warning, we add: it did not have to happen then, and so — it does not have to happen again.

My dear friends, from this podium, I call upon my fellow educators in every corner of the world to strive and persevere in our constant battle for human morality. A battle which helps ensure that no person will ever again be referred to, as were the 20 Jewish children at Neugamme, as having “no value as human beings”. Holocaust survivor, philos-

opher Victor Frankel stated: “Everything can be taken from a man, except the freedom to choose one’s own way.”

For mankind, there is always a choice. That choice, highlighted in the Biblical book of Deuteronomy, is eternal.

Thank You.

הַאֵךְ
בוטָה תֵאָן סִיחָה תֵאָ סוֹיָה דִינְפֹלֵ יתִתְנֵ
עֵרָה תֵאָן תּוֹמָה תֵאָן
סִיחָבֵ תְרַחֲבֵ
הִיחָתֵ וְעִמֵלֵ
דְעֵרְזֵן הַתֵאָ

*Behold,
I have set before you this day
Life and good,
Death and evil.
Therefore choose life
That you may live —
You and your children.*

- 1: SS: This elitist paramilitary organization within the Nazi party tasked with implementing the security and population policies of the Third Reich, and in particular the mass systematic murder of Jews, known as the Final Solution. Its main modes of operation were repression, terror and murder.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

LIBERTY, LIFE AND THE LEGACY OF HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS

1. Mr. Shalev believes that remembering the Holocaust goes beyond recalling the horrible scope of the genocide. In remembering the past we also must recognize the survivors' remarkable commitment to human freedom and faith in humanity. Could you believe in humanity after suffering through the Holocaust and losing your family? Why or why not?
2. What made it possible for Holocaust survivors to choose hope rather than becoming bitter and vengeful? Why is it important to discuss people's struggle for life and meaning?
3. According to Mr. Shalev, the Shoah was a pivotal event for modern civilization, an event which remains compelling for many people. Why does the Holocaust remain so relevant for so many people of different regions and cultures?
4. What role do political, economic and social leaders bear for shaping moral norms and ethical standards?
5. What responsibility do pupils, educators and schools have in sharing contemporary insights into the Holocaust?

A fishing boat carries Jews to safety from Snekkersten harbour to Elsinore, Denmark, in October 1943.

Photo Credit: AFP



THE LEGACY OF THE DANISH RESCUE:

What can we learn from the Danish example about the relation between Holocaust history and Holocaust education?



biography/

CECILIE FELICIA STOKHOLM BANKE

Cecilie Felicia Stokholm Banke, PhD and MA, is Senior Researcher at the Danish Institute for International Studies (DIIS) where she works with Danish and European foreign policy, specializing in how societies come to terms with their atrocity past. From 2009-2013 she was in charge of Holocaust and genocide studies at the DIIS, and has since 2005 been representing Denmark in the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance. She was a member of the Danish Parliamentarian Delegation to the UN General Assembly 2008, and of the Danish delegation to the Stockholm International Forum 2004 and to the OSCE-meetings 2004-2005 on anti-Semitism and other forms of intolerance. In 2007 Dr. Banke was Visiting Fellow at the Remarque Institute, NYU and in 2009 Visiting Professor and Fulbright Scholar-in-Residence at the Strassler Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies, Clark University. Her publications on the Danish refugee policy during Nazism include *The Holocaust Memory in Postwar Europe*, and *The Politics of Memory in Europe*.

The Legacy of the Danish Rescue

By Cecilie Felicia Stokholm Banke, Senior Researcher,
Danish Institute for International Studies

With this paper, I will share some of my thoughts on the relationship between Holocaust education and Holocaust memory in Europe. I will do this by presenting the experience gained in Denmark over the past decade and by giving a general overview of Holocaust memory as it emerged in Europe from the mid-1990s.

One cannot understand the situation in Denmark without considering the general European context. Of course, there was the uniquely Danish phenomenon of the rescue of 95% of its Jewish population which during early October 1943 fled to Sweden with the help of the local population, the resistance movement, Danish authorities and members of civil society (Bak 2010). In an international perspective, this rescue operation is considered unique, and the “Danish Rescue” stands as a light in the generally very dark history of the Holocaust. This “Danish exceptionalism” has had perhaps the unintentional result that little attention has been paid to the history of the Holocaust in Denmark until recently.

However, in 2003, Denmark joined other European nations in marking Holocaust Remembrance Day, which commemorates the victims of the Holocaust and other genocides. This day is observed on the 27th of January, the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz. In observance of this day, several educational activities take place around the country, through which Danish children, 15 years of age and older, are introduced to the history of the Holocaust. The

activities are financed by the Danish government and organized by the Danish Institute for International Studies in cooperation with the Ministry of Education.

One may ask why was it decided to mark Holocaust Remembrance Day and expose Danish school children to the history of the Holocaust and other genocides? In answering this question, we need to view this development as part of a general European trend that occurred during the 1990s.

Holocaust memory in Europe after 1989

Since the fall of the Berlin wall in 1989, the issue of the Holocaust — how it is remembered and the influence this memory exerts on the present — has played an, perhaps unexpectedly, important role in current European consciousness and politics. Take, for instance, the many official apologies offered by European Heads of State during the 1990s — France and the Netherlands in 1995, and Poland in 2001.

Even Denmark, with its sterling record of rescue, apologized officially in August 2005 for having denied Jewish refugees entry, sending them back to an uncertain fate in Germany. Add to these national acts of contrition, the resolution adopted by the European Parliament in 2005 to preserve the memory of the Holocaust, and the Stockholm Declaration, signed by the Heads of State and representatives of 40 countries in January 2000.

The Stockholm Declaration also established certain basic commitments on the part of its signatories to promote Holocaust education, remembrance, and research. These national and international efforts serve as evidence of a general acknowledgement in Europe, and the rest of the world, that the Holocaust plays a crucial place in European and national memories.

In this context, Swedish Prime Minister Göran Persson, together with Tony Blair and Bill Clinton, established the International Task Force on Holocaust Education Remembrance and Research in 1998,



The Danish Institute for International Studies organized a conference on the Holocaust and the Nordic Countries in Copenhagen, Denmark, in October 2015. From left: Professor Oula Silvennoinen, Helsinki University; Kimberly Mann, Chief of Education Outreach at the United Nations Department of Public Information; Cecilie Felicia Stockholm Banke, Senior Researcher at the Danish Institute for International Studies; and Tamas Ibolya, Conference Coordinator.



German soldiers walking on the Højbro Square in Copenhagen, Denmark, during the Second World War. Photo Credit: Courtesy of Museum of Copenhagen.

culminating 10 years of intensive activity in Europe surrounding the institutionalization of Holocaust memory. Today, the renamed International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance consists of 31 member states with their government representatives and national experts. This institutionalization was intimately linked with an emerging political culture, based on international law and human rights. The lessons of the Holocaust were to be taught and remembered for future generations in order to help prevent future genocides. The Holocaust was recognized in that sense as the paradigmatic genocide (Gerner & Karlsson 2005).

One way of understanding this development is by considering the impact on European consciousness of the wars of succession in Ex-Yugoslavia. What happened in the former Yugoslavia, following the collapse of communism, came as a shock to post-1989 Europe – a continent full of hope and dreams for a new beginning. New questions arose: What went wrong? How could Europe passively look on while their Serbian neighbors slaughtered 8,000 Muslims? Had Europe not learned from the past? Was Europe about to repeat the same kind of madness – the killing of innocent civilians on a massive scale – as happened during the Second World War? Was ethnic nationalism coming back? Or rather, had ethnic nationalism ever really disappeared?

The shock not only led to a debate about Europe's unconflicted past, but also contributed to an increased interest in the Holocaust, both within the public and among politicians. One could say, therefore, that the growing interest in the Holocaust was led by an increased focus on international human rights. A development that Nathan Sznaider and Daniel Levy also point to in their book *Holocaust and Memory in the Global Age*. Although we cannot neglect the national differences in each European country, stemming from different national experiences during the Second World War, we can understand that what happened in Ex-Yugoslavia during the 1990s was, nevertheless, the beginning of a Europeanization of the Holocaust, both as memory and as a moral guidepost (Banke 2012 & 2011).

Lessons learned

It is within this framework that we have to understand why a so-called “righteous nation” like Denmark considered it necessary to establish a Holocaust Remembrance Day, which is observed each year as a theme-day in schools around the country. On 27 January, Danish youngsters learn about the Holocaust and other genocides and the general public participates in ceremonies held by the municipalities around the country.

What lessons can be learned from a country where Holocaust education was only recently introduced and which has a unique status in the history of the Holocaust because of the unprecedented rescue of its Jews in October 1943?

First we must conclude that, although the annual Auschwitz Day is a popular activity among most Danish high schools, we do not know very much about how effective it is as a vehicle for Holocaust education. From a study conducted by a group of Danish and German scholars, we know that, for a Danish student, the Holocaust represents the strongest lesson to be learned from the Second World War (Bjerg 2011), a fact confirmed by a recent poll conducted by the Danish daily *Berlingske Tidende*. Danish youngsters tend to refer to the history of the Second World War not as the history of the German occupation of Denmark, but as the history of the Holocaust (Berlingske, 30.09.2013) suggesting a transition from a national narrative to a global one (Bjerg, Lenz & Bjerregaard, 2007).

Second, during the past one to two decades, research has provided us with more knowledge about the local aspects of Holocaust history. The Holocaust has become more nuanced and multifaceted, which, in my view, requires that we reevaluate how to teach the subject today. Allow me to emphasize my point. As mentioned, Auschwitz

“One may ask why it was decided to mark Holocaust Remembrance Day and expose Danish school children to the history of the Holocaust and other genocides?”

Day was marked for the first time in Denmark in January 2003. Every year since then, on 27 January, victims are commemorated at ceremonies around the country and students learn about the Holocaust and other genocides during specifically organized workshops and seminars. As such, Auschwitz Day works “to improve the awareness of the Holocaust among Danish students” and the principle that one should “never forget what the past can teach the future”.

“The Holocaust has become more nuanced and multifaceted, which, in my view, requires that we reevaluate how to teach the subject today.”

Thus, Auschwitz Day is dedicated to commemorate the victims and support the survivors, to promote education and public awareness about the Holocaust and other genocides in schools, high schools and universities and in the public at large. Or, as stated officially: “Denmark believes that keeping alive the memory of the Holocaust through education, research and commemorative activities is an important way to teach future generations about fundamental human rights, and the necessity to protect them elsewhere.” (10 Years ITF-folder, 2008)

However, though we have learned that political will can be activated and can lead to institutions like the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance and the Swedish Living History Forum, to mention a few examples, we are not certain about the impact of these institutions. We do not know whether teaching the history of the Holocaust and other genocides actually helps to create more tolerant and non-discriminating people. We do not know whether this teaching actually keeps alive the memory of the Holocaust. And we do not know whether teaching the Holocaust may have an unintended negative impact leading to Holocaust fatigue and denial. Thus, after a decade of intense activity, it may be time to evaluate our efforts and, based on gained experience and new research, readdress how to teach and learn about the Holocaust in a way that makes sense for the next generation as well.

Additionally, during the past ten years, newly developed research has taught us more about local perpetrators, particularly in Eastern European countries. Naturally, Holocaust historians knew about the local perpetrators and the mass shootings that took place on the Eastern front at the beginning of the war. But the increased activity that followed the Stockholm International Forum in January 2000 led to an increased interest and expanded knowledge in the general public about the different aspects and phases of the murder of European Jews.

As such, the Holocaust has, for the past decade, become more than Auschwitz and the gas chambers. The public knows more about the intimate killings that occurred in places like Ukraine and Belarus, as illustrated in the debate following Timothy Snyder's book *Bloodlands*. And today we know much more about the local perpetrators. We know more about Jewish life before and during the Holocaust.

This development also includes the case of Denmark, where, for many decades, the rescue of the Danish Jews overshadowed the less heroic aspects of Danish Holocaust history. Today, thanks in part to the Stockholm Declaration and the globalization of Holocaust memory, we know more about Jews who fled Nazi Germany only to be denied entry to Denmark (Banke 2005; Kirchhoff 2005; Rünitz 2005; Kirchhoff & Rünitz 2007). And we know about those Jews in Denmark who were not rescued in October 1943, but were deported to Theresienstadt (Levin 2001; Lundtofte 2004; Sode-Madsen 1995 & 2003).

Also, thanks to a new generation of historians, we know that Danish industries and the Danish agricultural sector among other things collaborated with the Germans during the war (Lund 2005; Andersen 2003). A recent study has also provided us with more knowledge

“Thus, after a decade of intense activity, it may be time to evaluate our efforts and, based on gained experience and new research, readdress how to teach and learn about the Holocaust in a way that makes sense for the next generation as well.”

about the Danish Waffen SS and the young men who left for Germany to volunteer as soldiers on the Eastern Front (Bundgaard, Poulsen & Smith 1998).

As in other countries, these recent developments within the historiography of Denmark during the Holocaust have to be integrated into the teaching about the Holocaust. The history of the Holocaust is, in part, local history with local aspects and local actors. Based on the Danish example we may say that teaching about the Holocaust is also teaching about how one's nation responded to the persecution of Jews during the Second World War. It's about rescue and refugees, about collaboration and resistance. All the complexities that the history of the Holocaust contains.

“The history of the Holocaust is, in part, local history with local aspects and local actors.”

Additionally, a country's individual experience of past atrocities, human rights abuses, and genocide is also an important element in its definition of Holocaust education. In fact, you may argue, as do Gundare and Batelaan, that “Holocaust education is not, and should not be, the same everywhere” (Batelaan and Gundare, 2003).

But integrating Holocaust history into local history can often be easier said than done, which brings me to my third and final point, namely: the relation between teaching the Holocaust as a universal lesson and as part of the human rights curriculum on one hand, and teaching the Holocaust as part of local history, on the other.

If the Holocaust becomes too much a universal history lesson, as indicated by Levy and Sznajder, among others, with their work about global memory, there is a risk that we will lose the local aspects and, with them, the impact of these important history lessons. Thus, local aspects of the Holocaust and local experience with human atrocities, human rights abuses, and genocide have to be integrated into a country's definition of Holocaust education. There has to be a relationship between the universal message about “never again”, on

the one hand, and the local experiences of genocidal violence, mass atrocities, and racism and discrimination, on the other.

We can observe this phenomenon in the European context by considering the case of the former communist countries, which, after becoming members of the European Union, insisted that their experiences with communism — the other totalitarian past — should be acknowledged and remembered in the same way as the history of National Socialism and the Holocaust. As Mälksoo argues, Baltic and Polish memory politics have brought up the controversial and intensely debated comparison between Nazi and Stalinist regimes and their respective crimes, thus contesting the uniqueness of Nazi crimes and questioning the singularity of the Holocaust as the crime against humanity of the 20th century (Mälksoo 2009, p. 656).

One of the challenges that Holocaust education in Europe faces at the moment is thus how to balance the universal legacy of the Holocaust with local history of human rights abuses, genocide and political mass violence. This challenge raises a fundamental question, which we have to consider: How to avoid that the never again-imperative becomes so universalized that the message loses its actual impact? After all, we do want to teach the Holocaust in a way that also makes sense for the next generation.

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

THE LEGACY OF THE DANISH RESCUE:

What can we learn from the Danish example about the relation between Holocaust history and Holocaust education?

1. Explain what the author means by “Danish exceptionalism” and how it has impacted the history of the Holocaust in Denmark.
2. How has the Holocaust — how it is remembered and the influence of its memory on the present — played a role in European consciousness and politics?
3. What can be learned from the Danish experience with Holocaust education?
4. What is the relationship between teaching Holocaust on a universal level and as a part of local history?
5. Do you think Holocaust education can help change behaviour? Why or why not?



German police guard a group of Roma and Sinti who have been rounded up for deportation to Poland, 1940-1945.

Photo Credit: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of Lydia Chagoll

REMEMBERING THE DEAD, DOCUMENTING RESISTANCE, HONOURING THE HEROES:

The Sinti and Roma

UN Photo/Rick Bajornas



biography/
ETHEL BROOKS

Ethel Brooks is Associate Professor in the Department of Women's and Gender Studies and Sociology at Rutgers University, New Brunswick, New Jersey. A Romani-American who grew up in New Hampshire. Ms. Brooks' work as a professor, lecturer and author incorporates her interests in gender, race, class, labour practices and globalisation. Ms. Brooks recently received a Fulbright-University of the Arts London Distinguished Chair Award and spent the 2011-2012 academic year at TrAIN, the Research Centre for Transnational Art, Identity and Nation in London, where she was researching a project involving Romanis. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from Williams College, Williamstown, Massachusetts, and a MA and PhD in Politics from New York University, New York City. Professor Brooks delivered remarks at the United Nations Holocaust Memorial Ceremony in January 2014.

Remembering the Dead, Documenting Resistance, Honouring the Heroes: the Sinti and Roma

by Ethel Brooks, Sociologist and Associate Professor
at Rutgers University in New Jersey

In October 2012, in Berlin, the “Memorial to the Sinti and Roma of Europe Murdered under the National Socialist Regime” was dedicated, directly across from the Reichstag in the Tiergarten. That memorial came thirty years after Germany officially recognized the racially based motives for annihilation of the Sinti and Roma. Its inauguration occurred nearly 40 years after the first activists began calling attention to the losses suffered by Sinti and Roma communities, after their persecution had gone unacknowledged in the decades that followed the Second World War. At the inauguration of the Sinti and Roma memorial, Romani Rose, head of the German Council of Sinti and Roma, a Sinto activist who lost 13 members of his family at Auschwitz-Birkenau, said: “There is not a single family of Sinti and Roma in Germany who has not lost immediate family members. It shapes our identity to this day.” Scholarly estimates of deaths in the Sinti and Roma genocide range from 220,000 to 500,000. However, the unreliability of pre-Holocaust population figures for Sinti and Roma and the paucity of research, especially on their fate outside Germany during the Holocaust, make it difficult to estimate the number and percentage who perished.¹

Roma originated in northwest India — most likely in the Punjab region — and first came in groups to Europe between the 8th and 10th Centuries (CE). Romani subgroups include Roma, Sinti, Kale, Manouche and others. The word “Gypsies” is an exonym, given to Romani groups because they were mistakenly thought to have come from Egypt. In Central and Eastern Europe, the word “Gypsy” takes on a greater pejorative, since in many languages — such as the German *zigeuner* or the Romanian *tsigan* — the word comes from the Greek word meaning “untouchable”. While Sinti and Roma have lived throughout Europe for centuries, they have faced persecution, violence and exclusion throughout much of that history.²

The persecution of Sinti and Roma predated the Nazi era with historiographic evidence of pogroms, harassment and genocide reaching as far back as the Middle Ages through the nineteenth century. While under Article 109 of the Weimar Constitution, Sinti and Roma were accorded full and equal citizenship rights in Germany; by 1926, Bavaria required registration of all Sinti and Roma and instituted measures for “Combating Gypsies, Vagabonds and the Work-Shy”. In 1936, a central office for “Combating the Gypsy Nuisance” opened up in Munich, and the Interior Ministry set up directives authorizing police to conduct raids on Gypsies in preparation for the Olympic games that would be held in Berlin. Roma were also subject to the Nuremberg Race Laws³ of 1935, and many Roma who came under the scrutiny of the state were forcibly sterilized. The first concentration camp for Sinti and Roma (called *zigeunerlager*, or “Gypsy Camp”, by the Nazis) was established on 6 July 1936 at Marzahn, on the outskirts of Berlin. Located between a sewage dump and a cemetery, the camp imprisoned Sinti and Roma who had been rounded up during the preparations for the 1936 Olympic Games. Directly after, local municipalities established concentration camps for Sinti and Roma throughout Germany and beyond, set up by the Nazis and their collaborators who were located throughout Europe.⁴

Among the body of evidence that supports the murderous intention of the Nazis and their collaborators are photos that document Sinti



The Memorial to the Sinti and Roma Victims of National Socialism in Berlin, Germany.

Photo Credit: Marko Priske



Romani Rose, Chairman of the Central Council of German Sinti and Roma, opens the exhibit titled "The Holocaust Against the Roma and Sinti and Present Day Racism in Europe", at United Nations Headquarters in New York on 30 January 2007.

Photo Credit: UN Photo/ Paulo Filgueiras

and Romani experiences of life before the Holocaust such as the identity cards with anthropometric measurements and racial categorizations and the roundups and internments that began in Nazi Germany in the mid-1930s. The photos portray individuals, families and communities, whose fate we know nothing about, and whose stories remain untold in history books and undocumented in national archives.

While concentration camps are the best documented sites of wartime atrocity by the Nazis and their collaborators — where prisoners were tortured, worked to death, gassed or murdered by other means — they are just one facet of the genocidal project of the Holocaust in Europe. The Sinti and Roma were often forced to wear a black triangular patch, or a badge with the letter “z” for *ziguener* (“gypsy”) assigned to them on racial grounds. Approximately 20,000 concentration camps were set up across Europe — some for transport, others for forced labour, and still others for mass murder. Along with the concentration camps that imprisoned millions, ghettos were set up in major cities, set apart by brick walls, barbed wire and armed guards, housing Jews, Sinti and Roma, and others. In Poland, the Czech Republic and beyond, German troops (*Wehrmacht*) and police murdered countless Sinti and Roma, and then buried them in mass graves in the countryside.⁵

Along with the pogroms that took place throughout Europe, mobile death squads (*einsatzgruppen*) were deployed across the countryside as the Nazis pushed eastward into the Soviet Union. The number of Sinti and Roma who perished in the camps is only part of the story — the excavation of unmarked mass graves and the identification of those buried in them is an ongoing process taking place in Eastern Europe today. There is much work to be done to document Romani experiences of the Holocaust, and still much more to determine an accurate estimate of the numbers who were murdered, both inside the camps and by mobile killing squads, pogroms and other forms of violence. In the seventy years since the end of the Second World War, there is still no accurate count of the number of Sinti and Romani lives lost during the Holocaust, especially in the East, where the

Romani population was greater and, we can assume, the number of those murdered rose accordingly.

I believe that it is crucial for us to hold memorial ceremonies and set aside spaces and monuments dedicated to those who were murdered, to those who lost family, loved ones and community, to those who returned from the camps or hiding only to find their culture decimated and to those who survived genocide. The theme of the 2013 International Day of Commemoration for the victims of the Holocaust, “Rescue during the Holocaust: The Courage to Care”⁶, encourages us not only to remember the dead and commemorate the survivors, but also to celebrate the heroes of the Holocaust – those who reached out beyond their families and communities, and who, in saving the lives of others, ran the risk of losing their own lives.

I am often asked about Sinti and Roma resistance to the terror and destruction carried out by the Nazis and their collaborators. One of the most significant – but understudied – acts of resistance carried out by Sinti and Roma prisoners occurred between 15 and 16 May 1944 in the *zigeunerlager* of Auschwitz-Birkenau. Sinti and Roma prisoners were deported to Auschwitz in family groups, and at least 23,000 were murdered in the gas chambers there. Throughout the network of death camps and mobile gassing units, Jews and Gypsies were the two groups systematically targeted for murder.⁷ By the end of 1943, the Nazis had imprisoned 18,736 Sinti and Roma in the Birkenau Gypsy Camp; by May 1944, only 6,000 remained. The others had been gassed or deported to other camps for forced labour.⁸ On 15 May 1944, the prisoners in the *zigeunerlager* discovered that the Nazis planned to gas all 6,000 of those who remained; when the SS⁹ guards, armed with machine guns, surrounded the camp for the transport to the gas chambers:

...[T]hey met armed resistance. After stealing scraps of sheet metal, the prisoners had sharpened the metal into crudely fashioned knives. With those improvised weapons, and with iron pipes, clubs, and stones, the Gypsies defended themselves. Guards shot some resisters”¹⁰

Unnamed heroes carried out this armed resistance to the SS guards, over the course of those two days in May. Their brave actions prevented the camp from being liquidated for a few months. However, on 2 August 1944, guards gassed the remaining 2,897 residents — men, women and children — in the middle of the night. Even at that last moment, there was resistance. According to documents located in the Memorial Museum at Auschwitz-Birkenau. “The prisoners attempted to resist, but the SS crushed their opposition brutally.”¹¹ The near impossible uprisings by the Sinti and Roma at the death camp of Auschwitz-Birkenau are part of a larger story of uprisings and other forms of resistance in which Sinti and Roma played a part. We have no documentation on Romani participation in ghetto uprisings, but Sinti and Roma were active in resistance activities, camp uprisings and in work to save individual lives from murder by the Nazis and their collaborators.

As an American Romani woman and a scholar, I sometimes find it a strange and new experience to research and write about Holocaust testimonies of Romani survivors. I grew up in a Romani community where people did not talk about the losses our people suffered in Europe during the Holocaust. My community has been in the United States since the 1880s and did not know the extent or the details of what our brothers and sisters were suffering in Europe at that time, but we all lived under the cloud of that unspoken genocide afterwards. My father and uncles¹² fought against the Nazis in the Second World War. Before they died, I never thought to ask them whether they were part of any camp liberations, or what they had witnessed during that period of their lives, or what work they had carried out during their time as soldiers. They, too, were part of the resistance against the Nazis. Yet this, also, was left unspoken.

As community members, scholars and policymakers, it is important for us to record, analyze and publish historical facts pertaining to the persecution and genocide of the Sinti and Roma, much of which remains untold and undocumented. We also need to tell these stories of resistance and struggle, of heroes and heroines, and of how the

common compassion that people have for one another can help to fight the worst forms of oppression. A focus on rescue, and on “The Courage to Care”, can teach all of us to look for and emulate the courage of those who stood up against dehumanization and genocide. This theme points us to lessons that we can learn from those whose kindness and humanity remained strong, even as fascism and barbarity swept through Europe.

Take, for example, the story of Dutch Romani survivor Zoni Weisz. At the age of seven, Zoni Weisz was saved, along with his aunt, by the kindness of a guard who kept them on the station platform while Weisz’s parents, brothers and sisters were forced to board the train that would transport them to concentration camps, and eventually to their deaths. At the ceremony inaugurating the Berlin memorial, Weisz recalled the last glimpse of his family before the train took them away, the vivid blue colour and the feel of the soft wool of his sister’s coat as he held onto it when his family was boarding the train. That was his last memory of his family, haunting him even as he remembered the quiet heroic actions of the platform guard.

**“The Courage to Care’,
can teach all of us to
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As Belgian photographer Jan Yoors recounts in his autobiography, Sinti and Roma across Europe took part in partisan and resistance activities. Yoors lived in France with a Lovaro Romani family during the Second World War, and his autobiography is a record of day-to-day life during that time and the work that those Sinti and Roma who were not deported carried out with the partisans. Yoors documents the ways in which Sinti and Roma were able to help the Resistance:

Roma... used their wagons to transport refugees and smuggle small arms and explosives. The frequent movement of those Gypsies also allowed them to accrue ration cards under different names in a variety of places. Those ration cards were important in supplying food to resistance fighters. When

*German authorities began tighter scrutiny of rations, the Yoors group joined French partisans in raiding ration distribution posts. They also brought the partisans news heard on BBC radio broadcasts.*¹³

Another way of resisting the Nazis was through efforts to save the lives of children by hiding them. Alfreda Markowska, a Polish Romani woman, was born in 1926 in a caravan in Stanisławow, Poland.¹⁴ As the President of Poland recounted in 2006:

*In 1941, her family was murdered and she was taken captive... After her escape from prison, she and her husband resided first in the Lublin ghetto, and later in Łódź and Bełżec. She escaped from each of these places, saving Jewish and Romani children. Upon receiving the news of yet another pogrom, she would visit execution sites in search for surviving children. She then transported the survivors to her "base" and procured false papers for them. Some of them she gave back to their ... guardians, others she placed in the care of [Romani] families or brought up herself.*¹⁵

Mrs. Markowska saved nearly 50 Jewish and Romani children over the course of the war. On 17 October 2006, the President of the Republic of Poland awarded Alfreda Markowska a Commander's Cross with Star of the Order of Polonia Restituta for heroism and exceptional courage, and for outstanding merit in saving human life.¹⁶ Her life has been marked by her courage to care and by her resistance under seemingly insurmountable odds. Alfreda Markowska is one of our true heroes — she showed true heroism by saving her own life in the face of the murder of her family and then going on to save the lives of others. When we start to look for examples of rescuers in the footnotes of history, and in the hundreds of oral and video testimonies of Sinti and Roma survivors, there are other stories of compassion and heroic acts. Take for example those Sinti and Roma who were part of the resistance movement such as Amilcare Debar, who worked with the Italian communist resistance group *Garibaldi Brigade* in reconnaissance activities — scouting and delivering messages, procuring weapons

and carrying out ambushes and other military operations. Another example is Iosif Teifel, a Rom from Czechoslovakia, who worked clandestinely in the Mukacevo ghetto. Through his work with the partisans, he was able to hide people, provide food aid and carry out resistance activities inside and outside the ghetto during the war.¹⁷

As I ponder how much my people had to go through to survive mass extermination, it gives me great pleasure simply to repeat the names of these true heroes: Zoni Weisz. Amilcare Debar. Iosif Tiefel. Alfreda Markowska.

These are just a few of the lives that have been marked by the enormity of the Holocaust. They are just a few of the Romani survivors whose stories make us aware of the power and meaning of ordinary kindness and compassion that spared lives during the Holocaust. I fully concur with what the architect of the Berlin "Memorial to the Sinti and Roma of Europe Murdered under the National Socialist Regime", Dani Karavan, said in Hebrew at its inauguration:

I feel like my family was killed and burned with the Sinti and Roma in the same gas chambers and their ashes went with the wind to the fields. So we are together. It is our destiny. Our destiny is documented in the work of remembering the dead, in listening to the survivors and in giving credit to the heroes.

Although scholarly estimates of the death toll of the Sinti and the Roma murdered during the Holocaust range between 220,000 and 500,000, I believe that this number would be much higher if the casualties that lie beneath the mass graves could be taken into consideration. I welcome the opportunity to speak up and recall the names of some of our Sinti and Roma survivors, of some of our heroes, and to mark our place in the resistance against the Nazis. It is a time for the

“Although scholarly estimates of the death toll of the Sinti and the Roma murdered during the Holocaust range between 220,000 and 500,000, I believe that this number would be much higher if the casualties that lie beneath the mass graves could be taken into consideration.”

world to listen to our history, as part of the history of the Holocaust and as part of the history of Europe.

Much work still needs to be done by us Sinti and Roma historians, leaders and activists to fully document our loss, and honour the victims and survivors of this genocide in official commemorations and everyday acts of remembrance. We need to recognize our victims and that which we lost, but also the heroism that saved lives and preserved even a small part of our culture. This recognition includes continuously fighting against discrimination, persecution and racial and ethnic violence, which the Sinti and Roma still face in many places in Europe.

“Memorial ceremonies, events of remembrance and scholarly articles are fitting places to raise such concerns: We need all to be vigilant and stand up against xenophobia, hate crimes and discrimination.”

Memorial ceremonies, events of remembrance and scholarly articles are fitting places to raise such concerns. We need all to be vigilant and stand up against xenophobia, hate crimes and discrimination. Just as ordinary kindness and compassion could help to spare lives during the Holocaust, there remains a need for solidarity, compassion and heroism in our uneasy times, in which some politicians and extremist groups in Europe are renewing calls for our destruction.

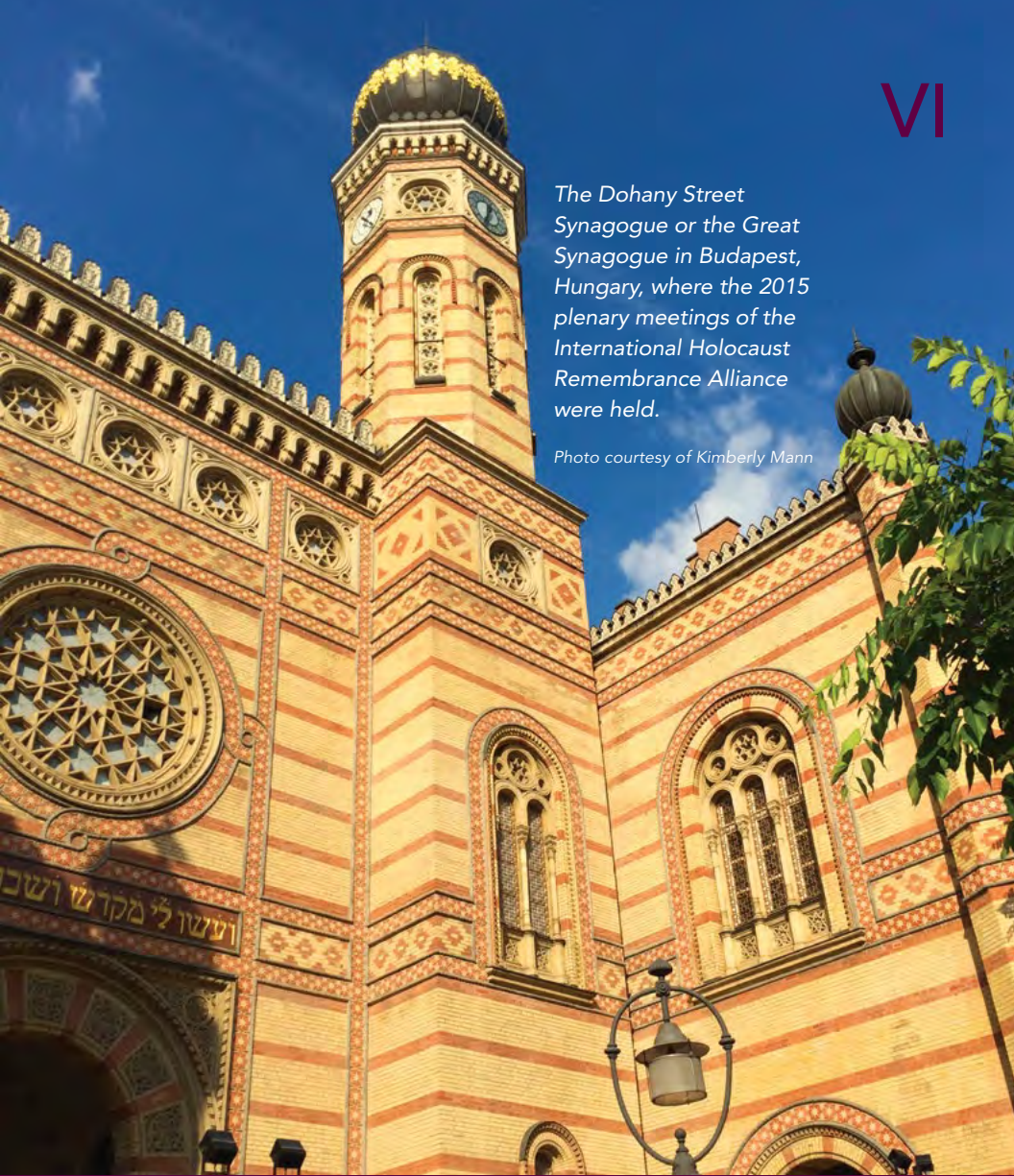
Even as we remember the dead, we honour the living – the survivors and heroes among us – and we renew our commitment to documenting, listening to and claiming our history as part of the larger history of the Holocaust, and as part of the history of Europe and of the world. In so doing, we also renew our commitment to the legacy of those who rose up in the face of imprisonment, gas chambers and death squads; to the legacy of individuals such as Amilcare Debar, Iosif Tiefel, and Alfreda Markowska; to the legacy of countless unnamed heroes who rose to the occasion and risked their lives in the face of xenophobia, intolerance, extremist violence and mass murder. May we all have, as they did, the courage to care.

- (1) For more information on Roma and Sinti in Europe, see USHMM, *Roma (Gypsies) in Prewar Europe*. [2 August 2013]. See also "Sinti and Roma", [2 August 2013].
- (2) For an historical account of anti-Gypsy laws, persecution and oppression, see Ian Hancock, *The Pariah Syndrome: An account of anti-Gypsy slavery and persecution* (Ann Arbor: Karoma Publishers, 1987).
- (3) The Nuremberg Race Laws were laws created under Nazi leadership in 1935 which institutionalized many of the racial theories prevalent in Nazi ideology. These laws denied German Jews citizenship and basic human rights. Groups considered to be racially inferior were also prohibited from marriage or sexual relations. See USHMM. *The Nuremberg Race Laws*.
- (4) United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM). *Sinti and Roma: Victims of the Nazi Era*; hereafter cited as *Sinti and Roma*. [16 July 2013].
- (5) Gerhard Baumgartner. *Concentration Camps. Project Education of Roma Children in Europe, Council of Europe*. [June 13, 2013].
- (6) For more information on the 2013 Calendar of Events, see the Holocaust and the United Nations Outreach Programme website. [June 13, 2013].
- (7) USHMM. *Resistance During the Holocaust* 54 pages, [16 July 2013]; hereafter cited as *Resistance*.
- (8) Ibid.
- (9) SS is an acronym for *Schutzstaffel*. The SS or "protective squadrons" became a state within a state in Nazi Germany, staffed by men who perceived themselves as the "racial elite". See United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, *Holocaust Encyclopedia*. [16 July 2013].
- (10) *Resistance*.
- (11) Teresa Wontor-Cichy, "*Sinti and Roma (Gypsies) in Auschwitz*", accessed June 13, 2013.
- (12) Members of my family who served in the US military during World War II include my father and uncles from both sides of my family, Romani and non-Romani alike.
- (13) *Resistance*.
- (14) I am grateful to Andrzej Mirga for first sharing Alfreda Markowska's story with me.
- (15) Bronisław Komorowski, President of Poland. *Outstanding Heroism*. [17 January 2013].
- (16) Ibid.
- (17) The complete testimonies of Amilcare Debar and Isosif Teifel can be found in the Visual History Archive of the Shoah Foundation Institute at the *University of Southern California*.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

REMEMBERING THE DEAD, DOCUMENTING RESISTANCE, HONOURING THE HEROES: The Sinti and Roma

1. Who are the Roma and Sinti people?
2. What happened to the Roma and Sinti during the Holocaust?
What was the basis of Nazi discrimination against them?
3. How did the Roma and Sinti organize themselves to resist the Nazis?
4. Why does Professor Brooks feel it is important to hold memorial ceremonies and set aside spaces and monuments to those that died during the Holocaust?
5. What action can young people take to stand up against hate crimes, xenophobia, racism and discrimination?



The Dohány Street Synagogue or the Great Synagogue in Budapest, Hungary, where the 2015 plenary meetings of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance were held.

Photo courtesy of Kimberly Mann

WHY WE NEED THE INTERNATIONAL HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE ALLIANCE



biography/
MARIO SILVA, PhD

Mario Silva's career includes service as an elected official in Canada between 1994 and 2011, as well as being an author and international legal scholar. In December 2011, he was appointed by the Government of Canada to serve as the 2013 Chair of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA). The IHRA is an inter-governmental body comprised of 31 member countries with a mandate to engage the support of political and social policy leaders to encourage Holocaust education, remembrance, and research both nationally and internationally. Mr. Silva is a graduate of the University of Toronto, the University of Sorbonne in Paris and holds a MA in International Law from Oxford University as well as a PhD in law from the National University of Ireland in Galway. He has been honoured by the French President with the title of Knight of the Order of the Legion of Honour and has also been awarded the Order of Merit of Portugal, the Order of Rio Branco from Brazil. Mr. Silva is the recipient of the Bridge Builder Award by the Parliament of Canada All Party Interfaith Friendship Group and the Holocaust Education Humanitarian Award of the Hamilton Jewish Federation.

Why We Need the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance

by Mr. Mario Silva,
2013 Chair, International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance

The Holocaust was an unprecedented crime against humanity and a defining historical moment, one that fundamentally altered how the world views and treats acts of genocide. As such, it provides us with many important lessons that can help prevent such crimes from happening again. The challenge is to ensure that those lessons are remembered, shared and applied. In this way, the world can honour the memory of those we failed to protect. It was with this goal, conceived in 1998 by then Swedish Prime Minister Göran Persson — as the Task Force for International Co-operation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research — that the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) came into being. IHRA is a unique international body, with country delegations that include government officials and non-governmental Holocaust experts — academics, museum professionals, educators and researchers. The Chair of IHRA rotates annually between member states and Canada is proud to be the Chair from March 2013 to March 2014.

Origins

Prime Minister Persson was motivated by a number of factors. One of them was his personal experience of visiting the site of the former Nazi concentration camp at Neuengamme, near Hamburg, and reading about the Jewish children who were murdered there. Another was a poll that suggested a worrisome lack of Holocaust knowledge amongst Swedish youth.

“The commitment of the international community to the principles of the Stockholm Declaration was the starting point for many countries to begin a public debate on their national history and to acknowledge their role during the Second World War related to the Holocaust.”

Prime Minister Persson invited President Bill Clinton and Prime Minister Tony Blair to join him in this venture. In Stockholm, from 27-29 January 2000, 46 governments – represented by Heads of State, Prime Ministers, Deputy Prime Ministers and Ministers – unanimously adopted the *Declaration of the Stockholm International Forum on the Holocaust*. The commitment of the international community to the principles of the Stockholm Declaration was the starting point for many countries to begin a public debate on their national history and to acknowledge their role during the Second World War related to the Holocaust. What happened during the war? What did our country do? What did it not do? And what

are the lessons for us to learn to ensure it never happens again? Today, IHRA has expanded from its three founding members to an international network of experts on the Holocaust and related issues, and strengthened political co-operation among its 31 member countries, which work together in a consensus-based framework.

Member states that join IHRA commit to the principles of the *Stockholm Declaration*, which states that “the unprecedented character of the Holocaust will always hold universal meaning,” and that in a world “still scarred by genocide, ethnic cleansing, racism, anti-semitism and xenophobia, the international community shares a



Participants in the Raphael Lemkin Seminar for Genocide Prevention, an IHRA-funded project, visit Auschwitz-Birkenau in November 2012.

Photo Credit: Courtesy of the Auschwitz Institute for Peace and Reconciliation



International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance plenary session held at the embassy of Canada in Berlin in 2012.

Photo Credit: Trevor Good

solemn responsibility to fight those evils". Governments must pledge to strengthen efforts to promote Holocaust education, remembrance and research.

Partnerships

Since the *Stockholm Declaration*, international organizations such as the United Nations, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the Council of Europe, the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) have made Holocaust remembrance a fundamental part of their mission. IHRA works collaboratively with these organizations, which have status as Permanent Observers. The seeds of this collective effort were sown sixty-five years ago, when the United Nations General Assembly adopted Resolution 260, the *Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide* on 9 December, 1948. Furthermore, in November 2005, the United Nations declared 27 January — the date in 1945 when Russian forces liberated Auschwitz — as the International Day of Commemoration in memory of the victims of the Holocaust. United Nations General Assembly "Holocaust Remembrance" resolution 60/7 recalls the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* and reaffirms that "the Holocaust, which resulted in the murder of one-third of the Jewish people along with countless members of other minorities, will forever be a warning to all people of the dangers of hatred, bigotry, racism and prejudice". Knowledge about the background, purpose and significance of the Holocaust is essential to raise public awareness and mobilize forces to push back against the prejudices and stereotypes that led to it. Hate crimes, be it based on xenophobia, anti-Semitism or Holocaust denial, are a global phenomenon. Individually and collectively, we have an obligation to fight discrimination that leads to the exclusion of groups of people and spreads hatred. As Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper stated in 2010,

“remembering the Holocaust is not merely an act of historical recognition. It must also be an understanding and an undertaking: an understanding that the same threats exist today, and an undertaking of a solemn responsibility to fight those threats”.

Engaging Youth

In recent years, youth in particular have become increasingly exposed to discriminatory views through the Internet and social networks. However, the answer is not censorship but education, which is an important part of the mandate of the IHRA. IHRA's international network of educational experts has developed a series of documents to help educators teach both the Holocaust and its relationship to other genocides.

Studying the Holocaust helps students think about the uses and abuses of power, and the roles and responsibilities of individuals, organizations and nations when confronted with human rights violations. It can heighten awareness of the potential for genocide in the contemporary world. Furthermore, a study of the Holocaust can help students develop an understanding of the ramifications of prejudice, racism, anti-Semitism and stereotyping in any society. It helps students develop an awareness of the value of diversity in a pluralistic society and encourages sensitivity to the positions of minorities.

As students gain insight into the many historical, social, religious and political factors that resulted in the Holocaust, they gain awareness of the complexity of the historical process. They gain perspective on how a convergence of factors can contribute to the disintegration of democratic values. Students come to understand that it is the responsibility of citizens in a democracy to learn to identify the danger signals and to know when to react. Through academic institutions

“Studying the Holocaust helps students think about the uses and abuses of power, and the roles and responsibilities of individuals, organizations and nations when confronted with human rights violations.”

or involvement in civil society, students have the opportunity to increase their understanding and raise awareness with others.

Civil Society

Over the past ten years, IHRA has undertaken significant efforts to promote the development of civil society through an annual grant program of approximately €500,000. The goals of the IHRA's Grant Programme include:

- Increasing government involvement in creating programmes and infrastructure that will focus awareness on the Holocaust and contribute to combating anti-Semitism and xenophobia;
- Creating sustainable structures for Holocaust education, remembrance and research and, to that end, co-funding large-scale projects targeting multipliers;
- Funding multilateral projects and thereby stimulating the international exchange of expertise and a shared culture of remembrance.

Projects funded under the Grant Programme involve:

- Training for teacher trainers;
- Raising Holocaust awareness amongst key groups, like the diplomatic corps in many countries;
- Instituting best practices in Holocaust commemoration and approaches to Holocaust Remembrance Days; and
- Fostering new research through seminars and academic conferences.

This work takes place both in IHRA member states and in important non-member countries affected by the Holocaust, such as Ukraine, Belarus and the Russian Federation.

Current Priorities

Today, IHRA is pursuing a multi-year work plan formulated by experts and advanced under the leadership of the former Dutch and Belgian Chairs, with priorities in the following areas:

- Locating, commemorating and preserving the “killing sites”, places where mass shootings took place and which are still relatively unknown;
- A review of existing research on Holocaust education to allow for a strategic and coordinated approach to teaching and learning about the Holocaust;
- Research into the accessibility of Holocaust-era archives across IHRA member states, in line with the Stockholm Declaration’s commitment to “throw light on the still obscured shadows of the Holocaust”. Archival access is particularly important, given that anecdotal evidence suggests that hundreds of millions of documents related to Holocaust history are currently inaccessible in private and state archives around the world.
- Support of meaningful Holocaust Memorial Day events that serve an educational purpose and contribute to general awareness-raising in member countries and beyond.

Special committees of experts also work on other issues, such as the Holocaust and other Genocides, Roma Genocide, Antisemitism and Holocaust Denial, and Special Challenges in Education, while three larger working groups on education, remembrance and research exchanges ideas on how to support Holocaust activities more broadly in member countries and around the world. With its new name, following a decision in December 2012, IHRA is also seeking to improve the availability of information on the Holocaust through an updated Web site and social media. This reflects its evolving mandate, from its origins as a networking forum to a collective of experts developing resources for political and social leaders around the world.

Canadian Chair Year

International Activities: As IHRA Chair, in addition to supporting ongoing activities, Canada will seek to improve co-operation with international organizations, with a view to coordinating efforts to prevent genocide and combat anti-Semitism, xenophobia, hate crimes, and other forms of extremism. We will work with Permanent Observers, and also explore other possible partnerships.

I will visit IHRA observer countries, Portugal, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Bulgaria and Turkey, to encourage their ascension to full membership, and continue outreach to non-IHRA states such as Ukraine. Canada believes that the international community shares a responsibility to learn from the Holocaust and that IHRA provides an important platform to help prevent future human rights abuses. I will also encourage greater transparency and communication of IHRA priorities and progress through an annual report to highlight initiatives in member states, IHRA-funded projects and efforts of expert working groups.

National Activities: With the support of active community partners, the Government of Canada has invested significantly in Holocaust education, remembrance and research, including major projects such as the creation of a National Holocaust Monument in Ottawa and a Canadian Human Rights Museum in Winnipeg. In conjunction with the Chair year, Canada will support a number of new initiatives aimed at increasing the understanding of the Holocaust across Canada. The Government of Canada will provide funding to help preserve survivors' testimony. Our country has been profoundly shaped by the 40,000 Holocaust survivors who settled in Canada after the war. Survivors have been a vital component of Holocaust education in Canada and preserving their testimony is crucial as we move to a post-survivor environment.

In acknowledgement of the vital contributions teachers make, the Government of Canada will present a national award to an educator who demonstrates best practices in Holocaust education.

Canada is also participating in an international poster competition on the theme of "Keeping Alive – Journeys through the Holocaust", inviting students in graphics, or art and design to compete with others around the world. Held in partnership with the Holocaust and the United Nations Outreach Programme and other institutions, a number of United Nations information centres in various countries are taking the lead in organizing regional participation in the contest. The winning posters will be unveiled on the International Day of Commemoration in memory of the victims of the Holocaust on 27 January 2014 and exhibited at the United Nations Headquarters in Vienna.

In addition, Canada will continue its efforts to commemorate Jewish Canadian experiences under Canada's restrictive immigration policies. Throughout 2013, travelling exhibits will bring attention to the internment of Jewish refugees in Canada during the Second World War and the tragic story of the MS St. Louis. An international academic conference at the University of Toronto in October will focus on young scholars and emerging scholarship. And our national institution, Library and Archives Canada, will develop a research guide on their Holocaust-era records and how they can be accessed. These initiatives are being developed with the support of government and community partners, including a National Advisory Council, co-chaired by Canadian Senator Linda Frum, with academics, museum directors, CEOs, and leaders from the Jewish, Ukrainian and Polish communities.

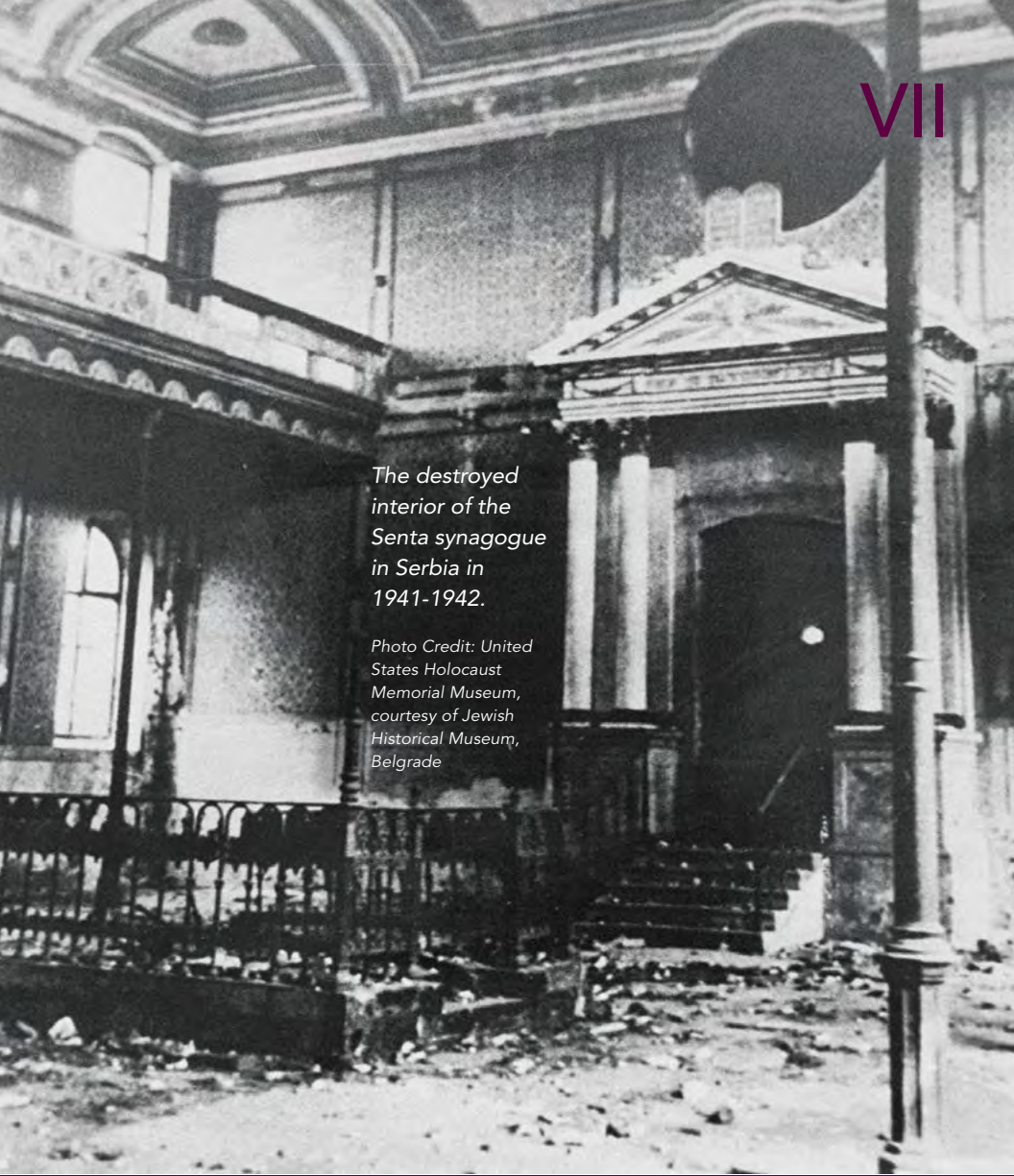
Conclusion

As Chair for 2013, I will work to raise awareness of the Holocaust in Canada and around the world, and to demonstrate the relevance of IHRA. As long as discrimination based on ethnic, religious and other grounds exists in the world, there is a role for education, research and remembrance of the Holocaust. To this end, IHRA will continue to play a major role as an intergovernmental body dedicated to learning from and sharing the lessons of the Holocaust with political and social leaders around the world.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

WHY WE NEED THE INTERNATIONAL HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE ALLIANCE

1. How did the IHRA come about and what is its main goal?
2. What kind of support does IHRA provide to students and educators?
3. What are the priorities in IHRA's current work plan?
4. What is Canada's main goal as Chair of IHRA?
5. What role can the IHRA play in helping to promote human rights around the world?

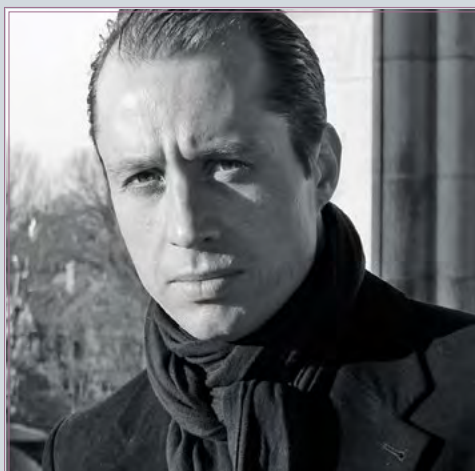


The destroyed interior of the Senta synagogue in Serbia in 1941-1942.

Photo Credit: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of Jewish Historical Museum, Belgrade

THE SEMLIN JUDENLAGER IN BELGRADE:

a Contested Memory



biography/

PROFESSOR JOVAN BYFORD

Professor Jovan Byford is Senior Lecturer in Psychology at the Open University, UK. He is the author of four books including *Staro Sajmište: a site remembered, forgotten, contested* (in Serbian, 2011), *Conspiracy Theories: A Critical Introduction* (Palgrave, 2011) and *Denial and Repression of Antisemitism: Post-Communist Remembrance of the Serbian Bishop Nikolaj Velimirović* (CEU Press, 2008). He is also the author of numerous articles and book chapters on conspiracy theories, antisemitism and Holocaust remembrance in Serbia. In 2010-2011 he was the Charles H. Revson Foundation Fellow at the Centre of Advanced Holocaust Studies at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, where he worked on a project examining testimonies of Yugoslav survivors of the Holocaust recorded in the 1980s and the 1990s.

The Semlin Judenlager in Belgrade: A Contested Memory

by Professor Jovan Byford, Senior Lecturer in Psychology
at the Open University, United Kingdom

Between 1941 and 1944, approximately 20,000 people perished in the Semlin concentration camp in Belgrade, Serbia. Established by Nazi Germany in December 1941, in the pavilions of what before the occupation were the Belgrade Fairgrounds, Semlin (also known by its Serbian name *Sajmište*) was the largest concentration camp on Serbian territory and one of the first Nazi camps in Europe created specifically for the mass internment of Jews. Between December 1941 and March 1942, approximately 7,000 Jewish women, children and the elderly – almost half of the total Jewish population of the part of Serbia which was under direct German occupation – were brought to what at the time was known as the Semlin *Judenlager*: the camp for Jews.

The incarceration of Jews at Semlin marked the beginning of the second phase of the destruction of Serbia's Jews. The first phase, which lasted between July and November 1941, involved the murder of between five and six thousand Jewish men, who were shot as part of retaliatory executions carried out by the German army – the Wehrmacht – in response to acts of insurgency and sabotage. Jews interned at Semlin were members of their families whose age, gender or physical condition precluded them from being used as hostages in reprisal shootings. Ultimately however, they suffered

the same fate. In just six weeks, in April and May 1942, the Jewish inmates at Semlin were systematically murdered by the use of a mobile gas van which had been dispatched to Belgrade from Berlin especially of that purpose.

Shortly after the gas van completed its deadly mission, Serbia was declared “Judenrein” — cleansed of Jews — and Semlin became an *Anhaltelager*, a temporary detention camp for political prisoners, captured partisans and forced labourers. Of the 32,000 inmates of the *Anhaltelager* (most of whom were Serbs), around a third perished at the camp, mostly from starvation, exposure, or disease, or were murdered by the guards and members of the camp administration. The others were transported to labour camps throughout the Third Reich, mostly in Germany and Nazi-occupied Norway.¹

In the context of the Holocaust's six million victims, the destruction of 7,000 Serbian Jews might seem like a minor episode, a local tragedy of relatively little broader consequence. And yet, the fate of Jews who perished in the Semlin Judenlager has attracted significant interest from historians of the Holocaust, who have described the killings with the gas van in the spring of 1942 as an important landmark in the escalation of the Nazi policy towards Jews. One of the preeminent historians of the Holocaust, Christopher Browning, suggests that “the development of the gas van and its use to murder the Semlin Jews presaged the efficiency and routinized detachment of the death camps.”² In his view, the killing at Semlin was “the consummation, in Serbia of a wider plan to destroy European Jews, which later culminated in the mass killings in Auschwitz, Sobibor and Treblinka.”³

In spite of its importance as a place of the Holocaust, for much of the post-war period the tragic history of the Semlin camp occupied a marginal place in Yugoslav-Serbian public memory. Both under communism and since the dissolution of Yugoslavia in the early 1990s, relevant institutions failed to appropriately honor its victims or preserve the memory of their suffering. Today, almost seventy years after the liberation of Belgrade, the site where the camp was



The arrival of Jewish inmates at the Semlin Judenlager on December 1941.

Photo Credit: Courtesy of Archives of the Museum of Novi Sad, Serbia



The Belgrade fairground in 1937.

Photo Credit: Courtesy of Archives of the Jewish Historical Museum, Belgrade

located, locally known by the name Staro Sajmište — the Old Fairgrounds — stands practically in ruins.⁴ The former camp complex, located less than a mile from downtown Belgrade, is a derelict and impoverished settlement, inhabited by a few hundred families who maintain the dilapidated buildings and unpaved paths, often at their own expense. Scattered among the residential properties are several artists' ateliers (remnants of an artists' colony that existed there in the 1950s), but also car repair shops, stores, warehouses and workshops, as well as a high school, tourist agency, bookshop, restaurant and even a small stage, which for the past ten years has served as a venue for rock concerts, boxing matches, theatre plays and dances. Residents of Belgrade remain largely unaware that amid the vegetation on the left bank of the River Sava, right next to the busy Branko's Bridge, are the remnants of a Nazi concentration camp. The only reminder that Sajmište represents a place of remembrance are two largely forgotten and partially damaged memorials, one from the 1980s and another from the 1990s, which survive as mementos of inadequate attempts at memorialization in previous decades.

In a recently published book entitled *Staro Sajmište: A Site Remembered, Forgotten, Contested* I explore in detail the post-war history of the site of the Semlin Judenlager and seek to uncover the roots of this longstanding neglect.⁵ In the book, I approach the "Sajmište question" from two distinct, but equally important angles. The first relates to the site as a *physical space*. Sajmište comprises the area of some 0.2 km² of land on the left bank of the River Sava. Before the Second World War, as well as during the period under Nazi occupation, the site was on the periphery of the capital city, enclosed on one side by the river and the others by inhospitable marshlands which separated Belgrade and the nearby town of Zemun. After the war, with the westward expansion of the city and the construction of what is today New Belgrade, Sajmište found itself in the very centre of the emerging metropolis, marking the space that connects the old and the new part. It should, therefore, come as no surprise that

since 1945 Sajmište has attracted the interest from experts in the fields of architecture and urban planning, as well as from city and state officials who viewed its future mainly in terms of the urban and economic development of Belgrade. In fact most plans for the site's development since 1945 sought to incorporate it into the urban matrix of the capital city, largely ignoring its tragic history. Sajmište was, and still is, widely regarded as a piece of land that is simply too valuable to be "just" a memorial museum, or a heritage site.

On the other hand, in the 1960s Sajmište came to be recognized as an important symbolic space and place of historical significance. Since then, its tragic fate has been the subject of official, institutionalized, albeit not always particularly widespread or public remembrance. The post-war history of Sajmište was largely determined by the interplay of those two perspectives — i.e. by the clashes, but also efforts to find a compromise between those who were keen to commemorate the site's tragic history, and those who viewed the fate of Sajmište solely in the context of Belgrade's urban development.

The fate of Sajmište after 1945 was made more complicated by the fact that even among those who sought to transform this space into a memorial complex, there were (and still are) differences of opinion about what it is that Sajmište symbolizes. Put differently, for much of the post-war era, Sajmište was a contested space not only in terms of whether or not it should be a memorial site, but also in terms of what is memory-worthy about its past. Only for the local Jewish community, which has traditionally had little say over the site's future, has Sajmište always been, first and foremost, a place of the Holocaust. Others, however, did not see it this way. During the communist period, like elsewhere in Eastern Europe, Jewish victims of the Holocaust were subsumed under the category of 'victims of fascism', and remembered only in the context of the broader memorialisation of the People's Liberation War, anti-fascist resistance and, in the case of Yugoslavia, the Socialist Revolution which coincided with the Second World War. In commemorative ceremonies held at Sajmište, as well as in the official historiography of the

camp, motifs of “resistance”, “Yugoslav unity”, “heroism” and “revolution” dominated the proceedings, at the expense of the Holocaust. The inscription on the first memorial plaque unveiled at Sajmište in 1974 mentioned “forty thousand people from all parts of our country”, who were “brutally tortured and killed” there. Thus, the suffering of Jews was interpreted as no more than a manifestation of the broader ‘reign of terror’ instituted by the Nazis against the Yugoslav civilian population. The memorial made no reference to the Semlin Judenlager, or the fact that Jews were the only group of interns of this camp (and the only community in Nazi-occupied Serbia) who were the object of systematic and complete destruction. An identical inscription appears on a second memorial, erected at Sajmište in 1984, which still exists.

The onset of post-communism in the late 1980s and early 1990s brought along a new, and very different, interpretation of the history of Sajmište. The late 1980s were a time when the cult of “the fallen hero of the People’s Liberation War”, dominant during the communist era, gave way to a new interpretation of the Second World War. At its core was the story of the Serbs’ collective martyrdom in the Independent State of Croatia between 1941 and 1945. In particular, the gaze of Serbian historians, politicians, church leaders and the media became fixated on crimes which the Croatian Ustashe units committed against Serbs, Jews and Roma at the concentration camp Jasenovac.⁶ Above all, as a place of Serbian suffering, Jasenovac quickly became the focal point of national memory for the Serbs. Regrettably, in the context of the Yugoslav wars of succession, it also became the object of instrumentalisation and was transformed into a source of Serbian nationalist mobilization. The broader ideological shift in the remembrance of the Second World War directly affected the interpretation of Sajmište. In re-writing the history of the Semlin camp, the Serbian nationalist elite accentuated the tentative links between this camp and Jasenovac, and in doing so transformed Sajmište into a place for commemorating *Serbian* suffering in the Independent State of Croatia, not the Holocaust in Serbia. Annual

commemorations held at Sajmište in the 1990s, in front of the large “monument to the victims of genocide” erected there in 1995, often completely ignored the history of the camp that once stood there, or the fate of Serbia’s Jewish community. Instead, the site was used as a memorial “outpost” for Jasenovac, a camp located some 300 km to the west, in Croatia.

Over the years, the two very different interpretations of Sajmište — one drawing on the traditions of the cult of the People’s Liberation War and the other on the ideology promoted in the late 1980s and the early 1990s by Serbian nationalists — have generated a rich pool of motifs, images and symbols, which persist to the present day and pervade on-going debates about the future of Sajmište as a usable memorial space. Their continuing presence and resilience is important because what they have in common is the failure to adequately recognise the importance of Sajmište specifically as a place of the Holocaust. The fact that in Serbia today, the Holocaust is, for the most part, not treated as a distinct object of memory and a unique case of human suffering, is a legacy of the way in which events at Semlin were remembered both during communism and in the post-communist period.

“The fact that in Serbia today the Holocaust is, for the most part, not treated as a distinct object of memory and a unique case of human suffering, is a legacy of the way in which events at Semlin were remembered both during communism and in the post-communist period.”

In recent years, however, another interpretation of Sajmište has acquired wider currency in public discourse in Serbia. Its emphasis is not on the war-time history of Sajmište, but on its function before 1941. The Belgrade Fairgrounds, whose pavilions were converted into a concentration camp in 1941, are today often hailed as a jewel of pre-war Yugoslav architecture and a symbol of the entrepreneurial spirit of Belgrade’s business elite of that era. This aspect of Sajmište’s past is presented as equally important as its tragic war-time history,

if not more so. Thus, a number of recent initiatives regarding the future of Sajmište, including those endorsed by the city council or by professional bodies such as the Belgrade Institute of Urbanism or the city's Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments, have emphasized Sajmište's "multi-layered" history, and argued that it can never be just a memorial to the victims of the concentration camp that once stood there. Instead, they appealed for Sajmište to be returned, at least in part, to its original, "authentic" function, as a place for trade fairs, cultural events, commercial activities and mass entertainment. According to these proposals, one or two of the smaller buildings would house a museum devoted to the Semlin camp and the Holocaust, while the rest of Sajmište would be freed up for uses that have little to do with Holocaust memorialization.

Few in Serbia have raised their voice against the notion that the destruction of Jews at Semlin, or the suffering of any of the camp's 20,000 victims, represents just one of several equally memory-worthy aspects of Sajmište. In this context, it is worth recalling that Semlin is not the only concentration camp with a pre-war history. The Dachau Camp in Germany, for example, was built in a former munitions factory. Before it was converted into a detention camp for Jews, the Risiera di San Sabba in Trieste, Italy, was a rice-husking facility. Part of the Jasenovac Camp in Croatia was located in the workshops and factories which before 1941 belonged to the wealthy local businessman Ozren Bačić. And yet, it is inconceivable that anyone would advocate that memorials in Dachau, Trieste or Jasenovac should be devoted in equal measure to the different "phases" in the history of these sites, or that they should be returned, at least partially, to their original, pre-war function. Any such suggestion would be rightly regarded as an unacceptable attempt to erase the traces of a tragic past, and as an insult to victims. Regardless of what went on at the sites of concentration camps in Europe before the rise of Nazism or the onset of German occupation of Europe, from the moment the first victims were brought there, there has only been one relevant object of memory.

Clearly, the same criteria do not seem to apply to Sajmište. This is, above all, because of its central, “exclusive” location, on the bank of the River Sava, which is why Sajmište was never regarded by the authorities as a unique heritage site, which ought to be preserved in line with the norms which govern the conservation and memorialization of authentic sites of Nazi concentration camps. Therefore, despite their pretensions to be fresh, innovative and original, the recent initiatives promising to “renew”, “renovate” or “gentrify” Sajmište and transform it into a “functional space”, are just a continuation of a well-entrenched tradition of neglect.

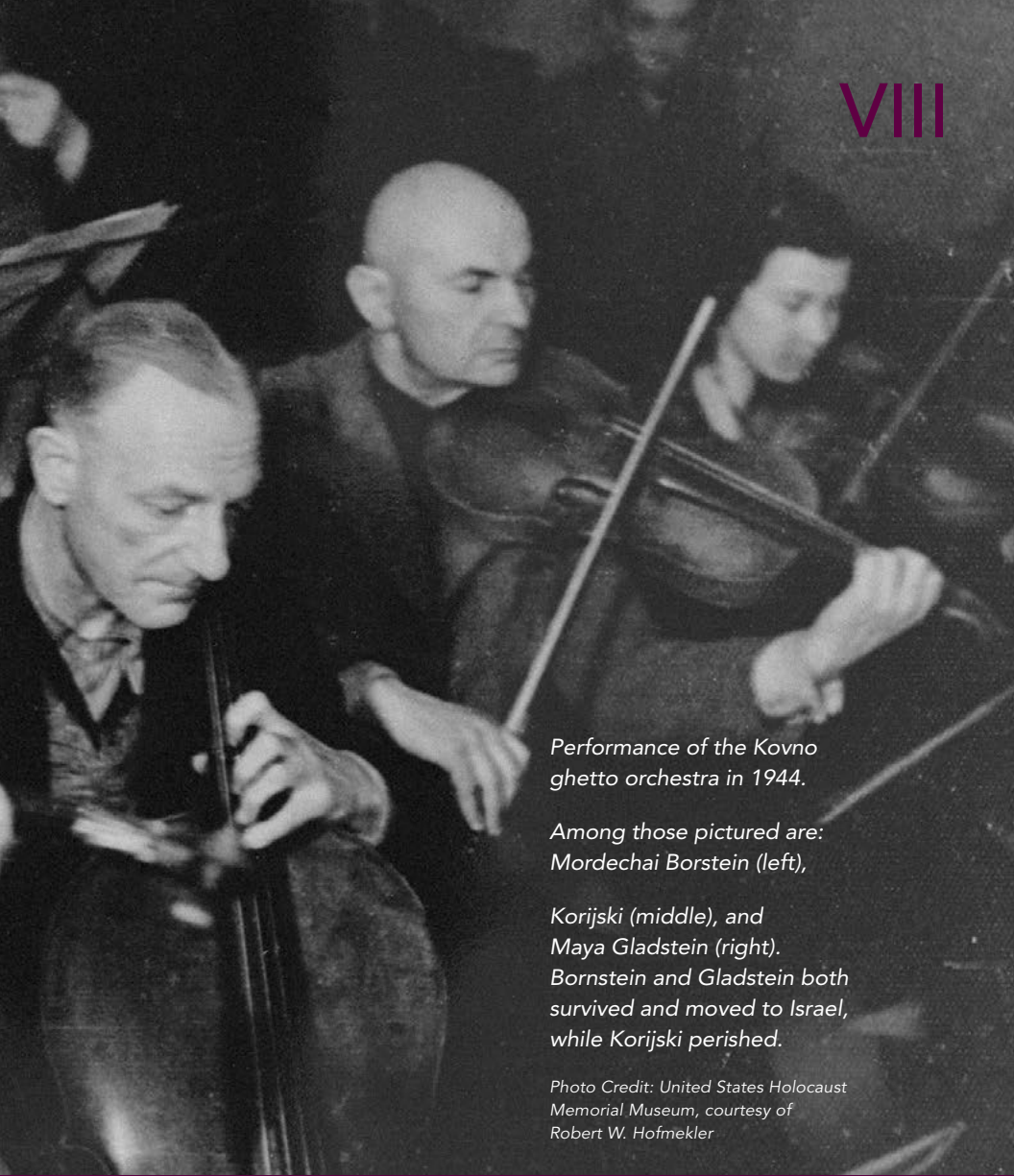
Staro Sajmište in Belgrade deserves to be transformed into a proper memorial, one that would provide a continuous and powerful reminder of the gap in the life of the Serbian capital left behind by the near complete destruction of its Jewish community. Belgrade and Serbia owe this memorial also to the thousands of other non-Jewish victims who were killed in Semlin between 1941 and 1944. However, before this long-overdue objective can be realized, some deeply entrenched assumptions (one might even say illusions) about what Sajmište is or what it should be will need to be revisited and reassessed. If not, mistakes from the past will be repeated, the Holocaust will continue to linger on the margins of Serbian public memory, while its victims will remain unrecognized as worthy of remembrance and respect.

- (1) For more information on the Semlin camp and the Holocaust in Serbia see the website 'Semlin Judenlager in Serbian Public Memory' at www.semolin.info.
- (2) Christopher Browning, *Fateful Months: Essays on the Emergence of the Final Solution*, (London: Holms & Meier, 1985), p.84.
- (3) Christopher Browning, *The Origins of the Final Solution*, (London: William Heinemann, 2010), p.423
- (4) In this paper the word "Semlin" will be reserved for the Nazi concentration camp, while the Serbian term "Sajmište" or "Staro Sajmište" will be used to refer to the site where the camp used to be located.
- (5) Jovan Byford, *Staro Sajmište: Mesto sećanja, zaborava i sporenja* (Belgrade: Beogradski centar za ljudska prava, 2011).
- (6) Between 1941 and 1945, around 80,000 inmates perished at Jasenovac. Most were Serbs, although among the total number of victims are also up to 17,000 Croatian and Bosnian Jews and around 10,000 Roma. See Ivo Goldstein, *Holokaust u Zagrebu* (Zagreb: Novi Liber, 2001).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

THE SEMLIN JUDENLAGER IN BELGRADE: A Contested Memory

1. What happened in the Semlin Concentration Camp in April and May 1942 and why was this of particular significance in Holocaust history?
2. Why do you think there were and are different opinions about what Semlin symbolizes, taking into consideration the history of the region?
3. Do you agree with Jovan Byford that it is important to transform places like Semlin into a Holocaust memorial site? Why?
4. Do you think a compromise agreement could or should be made for the preservation of the site? Why?
5. How would you approach preserving the site while taking into consideration the value of the land, its location, and historical significance?



Performance of the Kovno ghetto orchestra in 1944.

Among those pictured are: Mordechai Borstein (left),

Korijski (middle), and Maya Gladstein (right). Borstein and Gladstein both survived and moved to Israel, while Korijski perished.

Photo Credit: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of Robert W. Hofmekler

MUSIC AND THE HOLOCAUST



biography/

PROFESSOR SHIRLI GILBERT

Professor Shirli Gilbert is a lecturer at the University of Southampton and the author of *Music in the Holocaust: Confronting Life in the Nazi Ghettos and Camps* (Oxford University Press, 2005) as well as scholarly articles including "Songs Contest the Past: Music in KZ Sachsenhausen" in *Contemporary European History* (vol. 13, no. 3, 2004) and "Music as Historical Source: Social History and Musical Texts" in *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music* (vol. 36, no. 1, 2005). She is the recipient of a number of prestigious awards and fellowships including the Angus Macintyre Prize from Magdalen College, University of Oxford; Dean's Medal from the University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa; and the South African Association of University Women Prize for the top female graduate. Professor Gilbert received a PhD in history and an MA in music from the University of Oxford, and a BA with Distinction in music from the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. She was also the Michigan Society of Fellows Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

Music and the Holocaust

By Professor Shirli Gilbert, Lecturer at the University of Southampton

In the Łódź ghetto, grieving the loss of his daughter Eva, the poet Yeshayahu Shpigl wrote a simple lullaby. He titled his lullaby *Nit Kayn Rozhinkes, Nit Kayn Mandlen* (*No Raisins, No Almonds*), referring clearly to the beloved Yiddish classic *Rozhinkes Mit Mandlen* (*Raisins and Almonds*). “Sleep, my little one, sleep,” sings a mother to her child. “The little goat under your cradle has gone trading. When he returns, he will bring you raisins and almonds.” By contrast, Mr. Shpigl’s version written in the ghetto poignantly laments: “No raisins, no almonds. Father has not gone trading and will never come back home. Where did he go? To the end of the world.”¹

This song is just one of hundreds created during the Holocaust in ghettos and camps across Nazi-occupied Europe. Hundreds of thousands of prisoners — representing diverse religions, political affiliations, ages and nationalities — organized chamber groups and choirs, orchestras and theaters, communal sing-songs and cabarets. They performed a wide range of music, from folk songs and dance hits to film music and classical repertoire. Hundreds of new songs and compositions were also created by professional musicians and by ordinary people in the streets, soup kitchens, youth clubs, and barracks.

Like many other ghetto songs, *No Raisins, No Almonds* expressed the trauma of the victims’ by drawing on familiar pre-war musical traditions. Prisoners often turned to culture to connect with their pre-war lives or to seek solace through communal identity. Songs were a means through which victims tried to make sense of a frightening and continually changing reality. The songs that have survived bear

witness to the victims' shock and grief, to the constant uncertainty and enormous sense of loss. They bear witness to crises of faith and the desire to have their suffering acknowledged. In an alienating environment, songs became a storehouse for victims' shared interpretations of what was happening. Today, they offer hundreds of portraits of lives lived under internment.

The Nazi camps imprisoned not only Jews, but also tens of thousands of political prisoners, Roma and Sinti, homosexuals, Jehovah's Witnesses and countless others. *The Song of the Peatbog Soldiers* was one of the first created by German political prisoners living in a Nazi camp.² First shown in August 1933 as part of a variety show organized by prisoners, it was described by its composer as a "conscious protest song of resistance against our oppressors". Its final verse and refrain defiantly proclaimed:

*But for us there are no complaints
Because it cannot be winter forever.
Someday we will happily say:
Home, you are mine again.
Then the peat bog soldiers
Will no longer travel spade in hand
Into the moor!*

Prisoners in ghettos and camps across Europe similarly used music to express their opposition to the regime, to build morale and camaraderie and to galvanise support for resistance. In the spring of 1943, news of the heroic uprising in the Warsaw ghetto helped spark the creation of some of the most popular and rousing Yiddish songs to survive this period. "The news of the uprising lifted our spirits and made us proud", wrote the Vilna partisan Shmerke Katsherginski, "and although we were in agony at their unequal struggle, we felt relieved... our hearts became winged".



A group photo of the panellists at “Learning about the Holocaust through the Arts” on 28 April 2014. Peter Launsky-Tiefenthal (front row, right), Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information with Holocaust survivor Naomi Warren. From left: Olympia Dukakis, Academy award-winning actress; Nava Semel, renowned Israeli author and second generation Holocaust survivor; David Roet, Deputy Permanent Representative of Israel to the UN; Stephen Mills, Artistic Director of Ballet Austin; Kimberly Mann, Manager of The Holocaust and the United Nations Outreach Programme; Olga Gershenson, Associate Professor, University of Massachusetts, Amherst; Shirli Gilbert, Karten Associate Professor of Jewish/non-Jewish relations, University of Southampton; Clive Marks, philanthropist and administrator of the Lord Ashdown Charitable Trust; and Robert Singer, Chief Executive Officer and Executive Vice President, World Jewish Congress.

Photo Credit: UN Photo/ Paulo Filgueiras



A page of sheet music of a piece entitled ‘Le crucifié’ (The crucified) by Alex Alicouli, a pseudonym for Aleksander Kulisiewicz, and dated II.XI.44, KLS (Sachsenhausen), 2 November 1944.

Photo Credit: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of Aleksander Kulisiewicz

In response to the news of the uprising, the 20-year-old partisan Hirsh Glik wrote *Zog Nit Keynmol az Du Geyst dem Letstn Veg* (Never say that you are walking the final road), better known today as the *Partisans' Song*.³ The Vilna partisans quickly adopted it as their hymn, but as Mr. Katsherginski recalled, “the people did not wait for this decision [...]; the song had already spread like wildfire to the ghettos, the concentration and labour camps and into the woods to other partisan brigades”.

One of the first people to record this song was the psychologist David Boder, a Latvian Jewish émigré to the United States, who travelled to Europe in 1946 to interview witnesses while their memories were fresh. Songs fulfilled an important role in his project and this song was taken from an interview in July 1946 with an 18-year-old Polish-Jewish survivor, Kalman Eisenberg. It is striking to hear the youthful voices of the survivors in these recordings, made immediately after the war rather than decades later.

“Like *Zog Nit Keynmol az Du Geyst dem Letstn Veg*, songs were often a means of connecting with the outside world, or perhaps more precisely, with the future that many victims feared they might not live to see.”

Although the *Partisans' Song* became the anthem of a military organization, it was less a battle cry than a defiant affirmation of Jewish endurance; of a collective, rather than an individual survival. Mr. Glik's faith lay in the overriding fact that although the dawn might be “delayed”, the *nation* would always proudly be able to assert, *Mir zaynen do!* (We are here!).

Like *Zog Nit Keynmol az Du Geyst dem Letstn Veg*, songs were often a means of connecting with the outside world, or perhaps more precisely, with the future that many victims

feared they might not live to see. Cut off emotionally and literally from the world, they felt it crucial that something or someone survive to bear witness to their experience. The explicit expectation – or challenge – was that in the absence of millions of witnesses, the song itself would, in Mr. Glik's words, go “like a watchword from

generation to generation". Today, the songs survive as fragments of voices from the past, a precious glimpse into the lives of those who did not survive to give their testimony.

The final song turns our attention even more explicitly to the post-war world and the question of how, as surviving generations, we make sense of the Holocaust. The composer Steve Reich, in his 1988 work *Different Trains*, mixes his memories of being a Jewish child in the United States in the 1940s with those of child survivors of the Holocaust, who later recorded their testimonies.⁴ This is how Mr. Reich describes the project:

The idea for the piece comes from my childhood. [Due to my parent's divorce], I travelled back and forth by train frequently between New York and Los Angeles from 1939 to 1942. [...] While these trips were exciting and romantic at the time, I now look back and think that, if I had been in Europe during this period, as a Jew, I would have had to ride on very different trains.

Mr. Reich recorded three testimonies from survivors all around his age. He then selected sound clips and arranged them into a semi-coherent narrative. In response to Mr. Reich's work, the critic Richard Taruskin wrote:

Mr. Reich "has composed one of the few adequate artistic responses in any medium to the Holocaust. There are no villains and no heroes. There is just the perception that while this happened here, that happened there, and a stony invitation to reflect."

I have spent much of my own life reflecting on what happened. As I grow older, I struggle increasingly with the question of how best to convey the memory to my own children, to my students and to

"Today, the songs survive as fragments of voices from the past, a precious glimpse into the lives of those who did not survive to give their testimony."

the generations that will succeed us. I grew up immersed in the stories of my maternal grandparents, who experienced more suffering and loss than I can contemplate. Their memory reminds me of the incalculable impact of war and genocide on countless individual human beings. Today we have fewer and fewer survivors among us. Our challenge as educators is how to convey a memory that is not abstract and superficial, but rather urges people to engage with the concrete consequences of hatred and opens their eyes to individual choices in extreme circumstances.

“Our challenge as educators is how to convey a memory that is not abstract and superficial, but rather urges people to engage with the concrete consequences of hatred and opens their eyes to individual choices in extreme circumstances.”

Our website is a modest attempt to confront this challenge. We work from the conviction that music offers a more intimate way into the history of the Holocaust. Music is also an emotionally engaging means through which people can reflect on the Holocaust's legacy for humanity. The website contains dozens of musical recordings, some dating from as early as 1946. It also contains hundreds of articles about musicians and composers, about the ghettos and camps where musical life flourished despite the circumstances, and includes new compositions created in response to what was happening. The website

contains resources for teachers who want to use these materials in their classrooms and includes lesson plans and lists of books, recordings and films. It is available in English, Russian and Spanish and aims to make these rich materials accessible to as wide an audience as possible.

The music that survived the Holocaust helps us to deepen the ways in which we remember its victims and the ways in which we pass on their memory. After all, it is we who are the future generations, confronted with the challenge to remember not only what was done to the victims, but how they responded as human beings to the realities they faced.

The musical compositions that have survived are a unique legacy: fragments of shared ideas and interpretation from communities that otherwise left few traces. The songs reveal to us the thoughts victims had about those who held power over them, the horrific realities about which they sang to their children, how they tried to distract themselves with memories of home or dreams of freedom, and how they imagined they would be remembered. The songs help us to think about the victims as human beings, unsure of what was happening to them and full of conflicting wishes, hopes, fears and expectations.

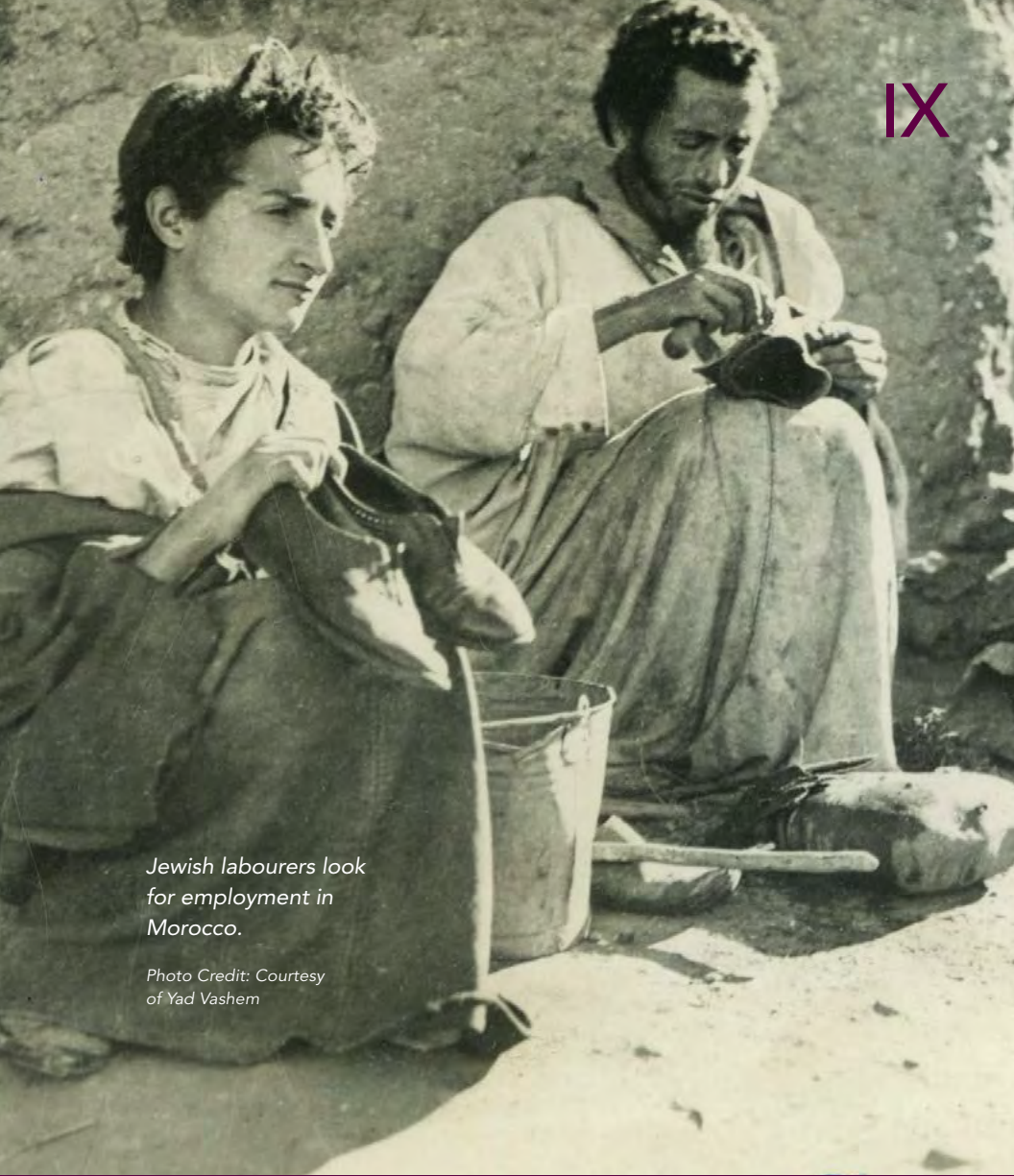
It is my hope that we can begin to revive some of these extraordinary musical works in our own commemoration of the Holocaust – at our ceremonies, in our choirs, in our classrooms – as a way of giving voice to the victims. Let us think of these artefacts as monuments to those who were destroyed: musical monuments that allow each of us to reflect on the legacy of the Holocaust for our present and future world.

- (1) <http://holocaustmusic.ort.org/places/ghettos/lodz/nit-kayn-rozhinkes/>
- (2) <http://holocaustmusic.ort.org/places/camps/music-early-camps/moorsoldatenlied/>
- (3) <http://holocaustmusic.ort.org/places/ghettos/vilna/zog-nit-keynmol/>
- (4) <http://holocaustmusic.ort.org/memory/memorials0/europe-during-war0/>

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Music and the Holocaust

1. In her paper, Shirli Gilbert discusses the role that music played in the lives of people in the ghettos and concentration camps across Nazi-occupied Europe during the Holocaust. How did music provide comfort and hope? How did music offer a way for people in ghettos and concentration camps to express themselves while living in inhuman conditions?
2. What kinds of songs were composed and performed during the Holocaust? Which specific examples are most significant to you?
3. The history of music is filled with examples of songs that tell stories about sadness, loss, love, survival and faith. Can you think of some examples of songs that you have heard that tell an emotional story? How does the music created in the ghettos and camps during the Holocaust help us remember the victims of the Holocaust and pass on their legacy?
4. Shirli Gilbert says that this music is a way of “giving voice to the victims”. (Listen to one of the songs.) How does listening to recordings of the youthful voices of Holocaust survivors made right after the war help you comprehend what these people went through? How might these recordings help address the root causes of intolerance?
5. How can listening to these extraordinary musical works — what Ms. Gilbert calls musical monuments — help us become more tolerant of people different from ourselves? How can this music help us reduce our own prejudices?



*Jewish labourers look
for employment in
Morocco.*

*Photo Credit: Courtesy
of Yad Vashem*

HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE AND EDUCATION IN MOROCCO



biography/

ELMEHDI BOUDRA

Elmehti Boudra holds a MA degree in Coexistence and Conflicts from Brandeis University and a BA degree in International Studies from Al Akhawayn University in Ifrane (AUI). While working towards his graduate degree, he completed an internship at United Nations Headquarters New York with the Holocaust and United Nations Outreach Programme in the Department of Public Information. He also interned with the Moroccan Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation. Mr. Boudra has a special interest in Moroccan Jewish heritage and inter-cultural dialogue. In 2007, he founded the Mimouna Club, now an Association, which is dedicated to this subject, and continues to serve as its President. He also played an active role in student affairs and was elected to serve on the AUI Student Government Association for two consecutive years, the second time as Vice President. He is also active in social work projects and serves as a board member of the High Atlas Foundation.

Holocaust Remembrance and Education in Morocco

by Mr. Elmehdi Boudra

Despite some fluctuations in tension that has marked the relations between Jews and Muslims in North Africa, in Morocco Jews and Muslims have historically enjoyed a relatively peaceful coexistence. At the time of the Holocaust in Europe, Moroccan Jewry constituted the largest Jewish community in the Muslim world and the largest non-Ashkenazi Jewish community.

The roots of this community go back to antiquity and its number grew dramatically after the expulsion of Jews from Spain in 1492. Many of these Jews found refuge in Morocco alongside with Muslim Andalusians who were also expelled from Spain by the Inquisition brought about by the Catholic Church. The local Jewish community was called the Toshavim and the Jews from Spain were called the Megorashim.¹ The Megorashim and the Toshavim managed to merge as unique Sephardic traditional community. The two groups were living in the same neighborhoods (Mellah) around all cities in Morocco and many villages. During the Second World War, the Jewish population in Morocco reached 300,000.²

Between 1948 and 1967 thousands of Jews migrated from Morocco to Israel, France, Canada, United States and South America, which significantly decreased the number of Jews in Morocco. Today, the Moroccan Jewish community living in Morocco does not exceed 4,000 members out of a population of 34 million inhabitants in Morocco. However, this active community remains one of the strongest Jewish

communities in Arab countries and retains strong links with the one million Jews of Moroccan descent around the world.

Morocco during the Holocaust

The unique bond between the Jewish and Muslim communities was highlighted during the Holocaust. During the Second World War Morocco was under occupation by the Vichy Government of France and the Franco regime of Spain. After the German occupation of France, the Vichy Government took power in metropolitan France and in its different colonies, mandates and protectorates. Morocco was under the protectorate of two fascist regimes: Spanish Franco regime in the North and South, and the Vichy regime in the centre of the country. The Sultan Mohammed V was not free to take any decision without the consent of the Vichy Government.

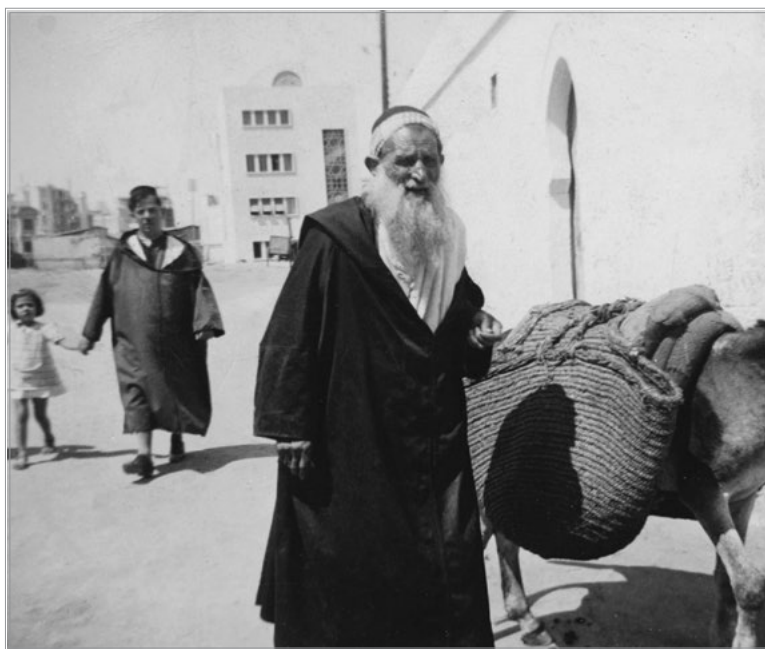
Before Vichy took power in Morocco, the country opened its doors to Jews escaping from the Nazis and their allies. From the moment the Nazis took power in Germany in 1933 and until the end of the Second World War, many European Jews who escaped the Nazis were allowed to enter Morocco and settle primarily in Tangier, which had the status of an international city. For example, the Riechmann Family came from Hungary and settled in Tangier from the late 1930s until the 1950's, after which they immigrated to Canada.

Many children and adults could enter Tangier thanks to a few international diplomats, like the American J. Rives Childs, who helped 500 Jews enter the city from Hungary.³ In other parts of Morocco during the Second World War, the Vichy Government enforced harsh measures on the Jews. For example, Moroccan Jews were not allowed to live in the European part of the city but instead had to return to the old city and live in its overcrowded Jewish neighborhood (Mellah). Furthermore, many students were forced to quit French schools, and quotas were instituted on Jews that limited their numbers to a maximum of 10 per cent in high school and three per cent in universities. Many professions were also forbidden to



Association Mimouna general assembly held at the Moroccan Jewish Museum of Casablanca in 2013.

Photo Courtesy of the Association Mimouna



A Jewish merchant with a donkey and his merchandise in Morocco.

Moshe Tzlozshnuvsky courtesy of Yad Vashem

Jews and their property was identified and included in a special list.⁴

While the Vichy Government clearly and intentionally discriminated against the Jews, the Muslims also suffered discrimination in many ways. Moroccan natives were treated differently than the European ruling elites, which further enhanced their solidarity with the Jews.

“While the Vichy Government was enforcing new discriminatory laws in Morocco, Sultan Mohammed V expressed on many occasions his support for his Moroccan Jewish subjects against the Vichy regime.”

For example, as stated by Simon Levy during the “Mohammed V Righteous among the Nations” conference (2011), Moroccan Jews and Muslims were not allowed to enter to public swimming pools where Europeans were swimming.⁵ Those anti-Jewish laws in Morocco were published in the ‘Bulletin Officiel’ by the Vichy Government and were observed as State law.

While the Vichy Government was enforcing new discriminatory laws in Morocco, Sultan Mohammed V expressed on many occasions his support for his Moroccan Jewish subjects

against the Vichy regime.

One such occasion can be found in a telegram retrieved by Haim Zafrani in 1985, in the archives of the Quai d’Orsay. This official document entitled “Dissidence” was signed on 24 May 1941 by René Touraine, a civil servant in the French Residence of the Vichy Government in Rabat.

In this document, Touraine mentions that the Sultan refused to apply Vichy laws in Morocco, as the Sultan claimed that he did not have Jews or Muslims as subjects but only Moroccan subjects. The telegram said:

Credible sources informed us that the relations between the Sultan of Morocco and the French authorities became much tenser the day the Residence put into application the decree of measures against the Jews despite the strict opposition of the Sultan.

The Sultan refused to differentiate amongst his loyal people and he was offended to see that his authority was overtaken by the French authorities.

The Sultan waited for the anniversary of his coronation to publicly announce that he forbade these measures against the Jews. On this occasion, the Sultan generally offered a banquet attended by the French representatives and eminent Moroccan personalities. For the first time, the Sultan invited to the banquet representatives of the Jewish community who were seated next to the French officials. He declared to the French officials, who were surprised by the presence of Jews at this meeting,

I absolutely do not agree with the new anti-Semitic laws and I refuse to associate myself with a measure I disagree with; I reiterate as I did in the past that the Jews are under my protection and I reject any distinction that should be made amongst my people.⁶

It was only on 8 November 1942, with the landing of the American troops in Morocco and Algeria during “Operation Torch”, that action to end this discrimination could be taken.

Holocaust Education in Morocco

There are people all around the world in every country that claim the Holocaust never took place. While Morocco is one of the countries where there were particularly good relations between Jews and Muslims, Holocaust denial has made its way to the young generation of Moroccans, largely due to the lack of Holocaust education in schools and politics in the Middle East. Holocaust education is not mandatory in the schools in Morocco and it is hard to find Holocaust publications, such as *The Diary of Anne Frank* published in French and nearly impossible to find it in Arabic. This is why

“The Sultan refused to differentiate amongst his loyal people and he was offended to see that his authority was overtaken by the French authorities.”

publications such as this journal, produced in all United Nations official languages by the Holocaust and the United Nations Outreach Programme, and others published by the Aladdin Project, are so important. Some Moroccans have openly denied the Holocaust, but fortunately they were challenged by an active civil society. Discussion about the Holocaust did not take place officially until 2009. While there was no public denial of the Holocaust, there was also no acknowledgment of it.

In denying the Holocaust, we are denying future generations their right to a truthful and full reading of their history. Through such education, we will have a better chance to avoid the same mistakes and atrocities that some of the European leaders committed in the twentieth century.

“Inspired by King Mohammed VI, the Mimouna Club organized the first conference on Holocaust remembrance in the Arab world titled *Mohammed V Righteous among the Nations.*”

It is simply absurd to hear such claims of Holocaust denial in light of the historical evidence the world has today. Therefore in Morocco, while Holocaust denial can be observed, the current monarch King Mohammed VI openly recognized the Holocaust in 2009, in a message addressed to the participants at the launch of the Aladdin Project at UNESCO in Paris. He called upon the world to learn lessons from the past through intercultural and interreligious dialogue. In this way, he set an example and opened the way

for young Moroccans to learn more about the Holocaust. Such a change in official policy was, in my view, a first step towards achieving justice through historical memory.

Taking this into account, I founded the Mimouna Club while still a university student with a group of like-minded colleagues who were interested in discovering the Moroccan Jewish identity, history, culture and heritage. We wanted to explore how this collective memory could be preserved. What should be done in the Arab and Jewish worlds to recognize the horrific history of the Holocaust

and the righteous acts of Arabs who saved the lives of their Jewish fellow countrymen and women at the risk of their own lives?

In Morocco, there are still people who remember the time of the Second World War. Such testimonies, as they would best be described, would not be available for future generations to hear if they were not documented now. In Mimouna Club, we are focused on the broader mission of collecting narratives and primary source stories about Jewish life in Morocco: talking about the role of Mohamed V in protecting his Jewish subjects during the Second World War, whilst the Jews of Europe were being massacred. This history exemplifies Moroccan openness to its diversity, awareness of the need to protect human life, and the Monarchy's long standing commitment to respecting the rights of its non-Muslim citizens.

Inspired by King Mohammed VI, the Mimouna Club organized the first conference on Holocaust remembrance in the Arab world titled "Mohammed V Righteous among the Nations". It was held in September 2011 at Al Akhawayn University in Ifrane, Morocco in partnership with Kivunim, the Casablanca Moroccan Jewish Museum, and with the sponsorship of two Moroccan companies, Nora and Marocapres.

Many university students who attended the conference learned about the Holocaust for the first time from Mr. Michael Berenbaum, Holocaust historian and former Project Director and Head of the Research Institute at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. They also had the chance to hear personal testimony from Mrs. Elisabeth Citrom, a Holocaust survivor. Mrs. Citron was 12 years old when she was deported to the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp. She speaks frequently of her experiences, but this was the first time she had ever spoken to an Arab audience. She travelled



Association Mimouna logo, 2007.

to Morocco with her husband George, also a survivor. Dr. Robert Satloff, Executive Director of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, spoke via video conference on the role that Arabs played in saving Jews across North Africa during the Holocaust.

Mr. Serge Berdugo, the Secretary-General of the Council of Moroccan Jews, gave a presentation on the threats to Jewish life under the Vichy regime and the actions taken by King Mohammed V in response. Mr. Berdugo's father, then President of the Meknes Jewish Community, participated in secret meetings with the Sultan Mohammed V. Mr. Simon Levy, the director of the Casablanca Jewish Museum, shared with us his personal story living in Morocco under the Vichy Government.

Mr. Andre Azoulay, Advisor to the King of Morocco, explained the importance of teaching the Holocaust in Morocco and in other Arab countries and the role of King Mohammed V in saving Moroccan Jews.

During the second day of the conference a facilitated discussion took place between students from Al Akhawayn University, students from Moroccan Universities throughout the country and the group of Kivunim alumni who had come to Morocco from their college campuses in the United States to participate in the event. This conference was welcomed by many Moroccan scholars, intellectuals and students. However it was also widely criticized by Holocaust deniers.

This conference was part of a larger movement of individual initiatives by civil society organizations, media representatives and educators who all wanted to promote Holocaust education in Morocco and to recognize the Arabs who saved Jews in North Africa. There were also reports made by the Moroccan historians and media about forced labour camps that had been established at this time across North Africa.

In addition, Ismaël Ferroukhi, a Moroccan filmmaker, made a movie called *Free Men*, which narrates the story of the Imam of Paris who

saved many Jews during the Nazi occupation of France. Another important development was the visit of a few Moroccan professors to Yad Vashem, the Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Authority in Israel. Aomar Boum, a Moroccan scholar has written several articles and essays on the subject.

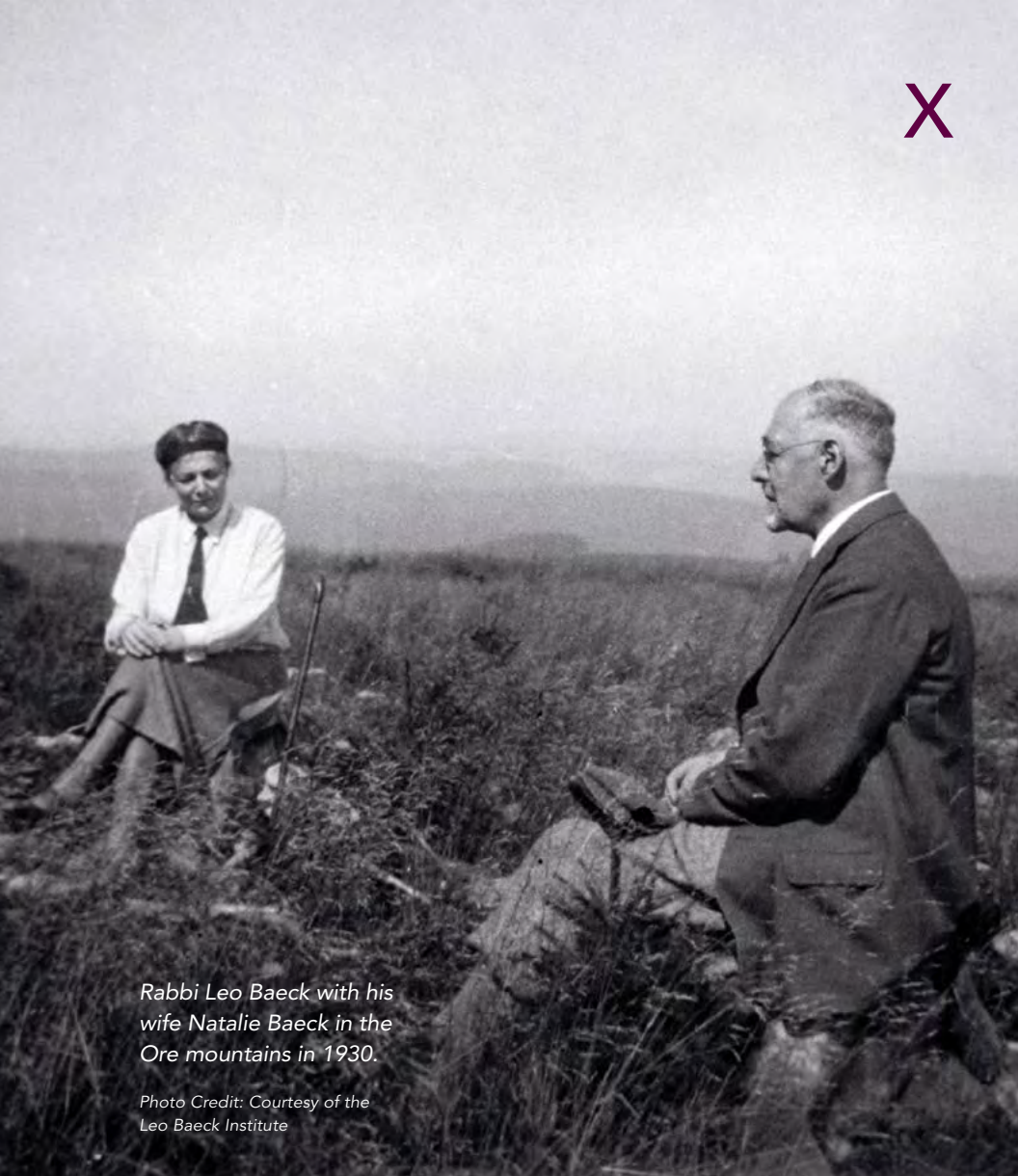
All these individual initiatives have promoted the foundation for Holocaust education in Morocco, although not easy to implement. Mimouna Club is now an association and continues to be active. Recently, it has arranged a number of caravans that have travelled to major cities in Morocco to bring knowledge of this history, and Jewish heritage and culture, to the people. Mimouna also organized a number of presentations by Kimberly Mann, the Manager of the Holocaust and the United Nations Outreach Programme. By strengthening our ties with educational institutions and civil society groups, we hope to engage even more people in Morocco in Holocaust remembrance and education activities.

- (1) Zafrani, H. *Two Thousand Years of Jewish life in Morocco* (New York: Ktav publishing house, 2005)
- (2) Levy, S. *Essais d'histoire et de civilisation Judéo-marocaines* (2001)
- (3) See letter addressed by Renée Reichmann to J. Rives Childs on 13 June 1945
- (4) Serge Berdugo speech at the weeklong Holocaust remembrance observance at the United Nations Headquarters in New York in 2010. This event was organized by the Department of Public Information (DPI)
- (5) Simon Levy statement delivered at the "Mohammed V Righteous among the Nations" conference in Ifrane, 2011
- (6) Translation of René Touraine Telegram

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Holocaust Remembrance and Education in Morocco

1. Describe the Jewish community in Morocco. How did it come about?
2. What happened to the Jews under the Vichy regime in Morocco during the Second World War?
3. What was the position of Sultan Mohammed V towards the Jews in Morocco?
4. Why do you think intercultural and interreligious dialogue is important?
5. What are the objectives of Mimouna Association? Do you know of any other places where students have made a difference in their communities? If so, how?



Rabbi Leo Baeck with his wife Natalie Baeck in the Ore mountains in 1930.

Photo Credit: Courtesy of the Leo Baeck Institute

RABBI LEO BAECK AND THE LEO BAECK INSTITUTE:

A Response to Nazi Persecution and Displacement
and Post — Holocaust Memory



biography/

WILLIAM H. WEITZER, PH.D

William H. Weitzer, PhD, is the Executive Director of the Leo Baeck Institute (LBI). Founded in 1955, LBI has built a world-class research archive and library that has become the most important repository of primary source material on the history of Jewish people in Central Europe over five centuries. Since earning his Ph.D. in environmental psychology, Dr. Weitzer has served as an administrator and a consultant in a variety of areas, including strategic planning, development, institutional research, and assessment. He has over 30 years of experience in university administration spanning academic affairs and student affairs, budget and finance, fundraising, community relations, institutional research and assessment. William has served in positions at three institutions of higher education: as Assistant Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst; as Senior Associate Provost and Dean of Continuing Studies at Wesleyan University; and as Executive Vice President at Fairfield University.

Rabbi Leo Baeck and the Leo Baeck Institute: A Response to Nazi Persecution and Displacement and Post-Holocaust Memory

by William H. Weitzer, Executive Director of the Leo Baeck Institute

In December 1945, Rabbi Leo Baeck, who had survived two years in the concentration camp at Theresienstadt (Terezin), stated that “the history of German Jews has definitely come to an end” after more than half a million Jews in Germany were either forced to flee or had been killed in the Nazi concentration camps.¹ However, despite his harsh judgment following the Holocaust, Rabbi Leo Baeck did not turn his back on the history of German Jews. He was instrumental in founding the Leo Baeck Institute, which for 60 years has kept the German-Jewish historical narrative alive.

The German-Jewish story did not end with the Second World War. A significant number of German-speaking Jews had escaped Europe before the Second World War and smaller numbers had survived the horrors of the camps. Today, Jews with German-speaking backgrounds live all over the world, with large populations in the United States, Israel, the United Kingdom and Australia. After 1945, Jews and many other displaced persons encountered persecution in their former Eastern European home countries and went to Germany. After the fall of the Soviet Union and another significant westward

migration, more than 200,000 Jews live in Germany today. Most came from Russia after 1989.

The Leo Baeck Institute ensures that the achievements of hundreds of years of German-Jewish history are not forgotten. The Institute provides the space and resources to research, remember, and make relevant for the world an important story of assimilation, accomplishment, destruction, and survival.

Introduction to the Leo Baeck Institute

The first evidence of Jews in Central Europe reaches back to the Roman Empire, 300 AD, in Cologne. After the Age of Enlightenment, Jews in Central and Eastern Europe became increasingly

integrated into society and were finally able to participate in political, economic, and intellectual life. This growth and assimilation peaked during the 1920s and 1930s in Germany, Austria, Czechoslovakia, Poland, and in Central and Eastern Central Europe, until the National Socialist Party rose to power in 1933. More than 200,000 German-speaking Jews perished in the Holocaust. More than 250,000 refugees and survivors found new homes in 97 countries around the world. The Nazis also wiped out six generations' worth of German-Jewish achievement — starting with Moses Mendelssohn's generation in the the middle of the 18th century — when they

destroyed not only the culture of Jews in Central Europe, but also much of the cultural achievements of Germany as a whole.

In 1955, just 10 years after the Second World War, a group of émigré intellectuals including Ernst Simon, Robert Weltsch, Martin Buber, and Gershom Scholem met in Jerusalem to establish an institute to preserve German-Jewish history. The Leo Baeck Institute was founded to preserve the history of German-speaking Jews after their

“The Leo Baeck Institute was founded to preserve the history of German-speaking Jews after their expulsion, murder and destruction in their homelands, and to document extraordinary developments in Jewish and German history.”



Rabbi Leo Baeck and Martin Buber in London, following the Second World War.

Photo Credit: Courtesy of the Leo Baeck Institute



Rabbi Leo Baeck as a field chaplain during the First World War.

Photo Credit: Courtesy of the Leo Baeck Institute

expulsion, murder and destruction in their homelands, and to document extraordinary developments in Jewish and German history. Rabbi Leo Baeck agreed to be the first president, and independent centers were established in London, Jerusalem, and New York.

Today, the Leo Baeck Institute maintains an archive with over 3 million documents, 80,000 books, 25,000 photographs, and 8,000 works of art and other artifacts. These collections document in great detail the lives and accomplishments of German-Jews during the modern era. The broad range of papers of individuals and families provide insight into the daily lives of Jews as a part of German society. All aspects of that society — from the rural countryside to the metropolitan centers, from the retail level to the industrial, from daily life to the highest offices of politics and academia — are documented with original papers and publications to show the full picture of the German-Jewish experience.

Rabbi Leo Baeck — Leader of Germany’s Liberal Jewish Community

The life and work of Leo Baeck typifies the culture of German-speaking Jewry in the fertile period between the unification of Germany in 1871 and the rise of the Nazis in 1933. Rabbi Baeck was a prominent advocate of a theology that interpreted Jewish tradition as the expression of universal values, which made full participation in German civic life possible — and even imperative — for the Jewish minority. He became a symbol of an assimilation that still embraced Jewish identity and, after 1933, the leader of the organized Jewish response to Nazi persecution.

Both as theologian and leader, Baeck was subject to vehement criticism. Traditionalists attacked his liberal theology and cultural attitude towards religious observance and cultural identity. After the war, much more serious charges were levied over his response to the collapse of civil society in Germany, most famously formulated by Hannah Arendt in her reporting on the Eichmann Trial in the early

1960s. Yet Arendt's portrayal of Baeck as too passive — at best, naïve about the danger of Auschwitz, and at worst, disingenuous — ignores a decade of courageous advocacy, when Baeck refused opportunities to escape and remained in Germany to help his people.

Much of the historical record on the life of Leo Baeck and the German-Jewish response is preserved in the archives and library of the Leo Baeck Institute. It shows a surprisingly vigorous and rational response by Germany's Jews. Like that of the international community, the response was inadequate, and it failed to prevent destruction of unprecedented magnitude. But rather than identifying a failure to predict the future, it is instructive to examine the decisions and actions of Leo Baeck and the community he led within the context of the possibilities of his time.

Early Life and Major Works of Rabbi Leo Baeck

Leo Baeck was born in Lissa (now Leszno, Poland) in the then German province of Posen on 23 May, 1873. The son of a rabbi, he attended the conservative Jewish Theological Seminary in Breslau (now Wrocław, Poland) and then moved to Berlin to study at the more liberal *Lehranstalt für die Wissenschaft des Judentums* (Academy of Jewish Learning) in Berlin. By 1897, he had secured his first post as rabbi in Oppeln (now Opole, Poland).

In Oppeln, Baeck made his mark as an intellectual and a modern theologian with the publication of *Das Wesen des Judentums* (*The Essence of Judaism*) in 1905. Written in response to Adolf von Harnack's *Das Wesen des Christentums* (*The Essence of Christianity*), the book is a passionate argument for the enduring relevance of Judaism. Harnack saw Judaism as a cult based on outmoded rituals and laws. Baeck responded by locating the essence of Judaism in the intersection between rational ethics and a personal experience of the divine. The commandment to search the scriptures for ethical principles, he argued, made Judaism an evolving, perpetually modern tradition of critical thought.

In 1912, Leo Baeck was called to Berlin, where he worked both as a rabbi at the large synagogue on Fasanenstraße and as a lecturer at the Hochschule für die Wissenschaft des Judentums (University for the Study of Judaism; the Lehranstalt was renamed in 1922).

Second World War Service and Anti-Semitism

Rabbi Leo Baeck served Germany in the First World War as the leading figure in the Association of Field Rabbis. Unlike the field chaplains of the Christian denominations, the rabbis served without pay. During the war, German Jews exhibited their patriotism by fighting in disproportionate numbers. Every fifth Jew in Germany (100,000 in total) served in the German military, and 12,000 Jewish soldiers died in the conflict. Despite their contributions, the patriotism of German Jews was not honored. In 1916, when the German military looked for scapegoats to take the blame for the failing war effort, it conducted a census in the hope of demonstrating that Jews were shirking their duties. Because the survey illustrated that Jews were in fact fighting and dying for Germany, the results were suppressed.

Although many Jews saw loyal war service as a chance to cement their status as full members of German society, the bitter experiences of the Jewish census and the anti-Semitic conspiracy theories that emerged after Germany's capitulation in 1918 left Germany's Jewish community embattled and divided. Smaller Zionist and Socialist camps saw their future in emigration or revolution; while veterans' groups such as the *Reichsbund Jüdischer Frontsoldaten* (Association of Jewish War Veterans) embraced German nationalism in hopes of acceptance.

Leo Baeck, along with the broad mainstream of Jewish society, opted for the pragmatic advocacy of the Jewish *Centralverein deutscher Bürger jüdischen Glaubens* (Association of German Citizens of Jewish Faith), which fought discrimination in the courts and maintained a public relations campaign to portray German Jews as model citizens contributing to Germany's cultural riches. In 1918, Baeck returned

to Berlin and worked at the Prussian Culture Ministry as an expert in Hebrew. In addition to his position as a rabbi and lecturer at the Hochschule, Leo Baeck also became President of the Allgemeiner Deutscher Rabbinerverband (Union of German Rabbis) in 1922. He was elected President of the German B'nai B'rith Order in 1924.

Despite the real and increasing threat to Jewish security and disagreements over how to address it, Jews flourished in the Weimar Republic. During those 15 years, five of Germany's nine Nobel Prize-winners were Jews. Jewish university faculty established Critical Theory, a movement that would resonate through academic discourse for generations. Alfred Döblin transformed literature, making the modern metropolis itself a character in his novel *Berlin Alexanderplatz*. Max Reinhardt brought Berlin's *Deutsches Theater* to the vanguard of international theater. Billy Wilder, Max Ophuls, and Ernst Lubitsch made cinema into the quintessential story-telling medium of the 20th century. Magnus Hirschfeld introduced scientific methods to the study of human sexuality and launched a gay rights movement. Jews became leading doctors, lawyers, and civil servants. Jewish religious thinkers like Leo Baeck, Martin Buber, and Franz Rosenzweig injected new impetus into Jewish religious life.

Nazi Rise to Power

In 1933, with the Nazis in power, doctors, lawyers, and members of the civil service all lost their standing. Jewish and other modern artists were declared “degenerate” and Jewish business-owners were subjected to boycotts and a tidal wave of offensive propaganda. Many believed that the strictures were temporary and bad governments come and go. In an essay written in October 1933, Leo Baeck expressed skepticism about the basic tenets of Jewish existence in Germany. He questioned whether “Jews have ever been subjects of history” rather than “objects of other nations and groups of people.”² During the next five years, Jews suffered increasing oppression in Germany, and many young people emigrated. Still, the Jewish

community continued to organize through groups such as the *Jüdischer Kulturbund* (The Jewish Cultural League), which gave opportunities to Jewish artists who were no longer permitted to perform for non-Jews. Even the most pessimistic could not foresee that the screws would keep on tightening to the point of genocide.

In 1933, Leo Baeck was elected president of the Reichsvertretung der deutschen Juden (National Representation of German Jews), an umbrella organization of German-Jewish groups founded to advance the interests of German Jewry in the face of Nazi persecution. In 1935, the organization was forced to change its name according to the Nazi view that there were no “German Jews” but only “Jews in Germany.” It became the *Reichsverband der Juden in Deutschland* (National Organization of Jews in Germany). As its leader, Baeck worked to alleviate discrimination and persecution and maintain the morale of German Jews. Though he was never a Zionist, Baeck also helped Jews emigrate to destinations including the Palestine. He found himself a reluctant interlocutor with the Nazi administration but firmly believed that his place was in Germany, advocating for whatever measures were possible to protect the Jews. Despite opportunities to emigrate, he remained in Berlin.

In March 1938, due to the German annexation of Austria, 185,000 Austrian Jews, thus far spared the worst persecution, found themselves in the same situation as their German brethren. The Nazi problem became a European crisis. German and Austrian Jews placed their hopes in an international solution.

In July 1938, President Roosevelt initiated the Evian conference — a meeting of 32 major nations — to address the crisis and find countries of refuge for German and Austrian Jews. The meeting stoked hopes, but did not result in specific solutions. European countries expressed a very restrained willingness to accept refugees. Latin American countries offered admission beyond their set quotas. A front-page article in the August 1, 1938 edition of *Aufbau* — the German-language journal published by Jewish refugees in New York

— expressed a degree of optimism and praised the fact that this was the first refugee conference held by governments as opposed to League of Nations committees. “If our pessimism is less this time, even with a certain degree of hope to achieve useful results, we are to thank first of all President Roosevelt and Secretary of State Hull.”³

Soon after the annexation of Austria, Germany invaded Czechoslovakia in early October to occupy the border territories (Sudetenland) and then the entire country the following year. In late October 1938, Poland would not permit “stateless” Polish Jews who had been expelled from Germany to cross the border. On November 1, 1938, *Aufbau* roundly condemned the failure of the international community to pass “the great test” and solve the refugee crisis. “The demon of the Munich Agreement is pounding across the earth,” wrote the editors in a front page article, “after the heads of governments of the so-called democracies threw a brave and humane people into the throat of the insatiable swastika barbarism, ... The Evian conference is all but a faint memory and the arrogant smile on the faces of American Jews is dying ...”⁴

Kristallnacht was just one week later. During this “night of broken glass,” synagogues burned, properties were destroyed and lives were lost across Germany and Nazi-controlled territories. Jewish men were sent to concentration camps and killed in large numbers. The result was another massive wave of emigration from Germany and Nazi-occupied countries.

The Jewish community did not give up. In August 1939, shortly before the start of the war, Leo Baeck addressed German-Jewish refugees across the world with a letter published in *Aufbau*, entitled “A Word of Comfort from Dr. Leo Baeck”. He reported on the difficulties he faced in his work on behalf of the Jews still in Germany.

*The work has to be done. It is comforting to me when I learn about the resources Jewish people have, resources of energy and smarts.... As individuals these people are often depressed and angry, as a group they are highly respectable.*⁵

After six and a half years of repressions and increasingly accelerating deterioration of the position of Jews in Germany, Leo Baeck continued to hold on to whatever hope was left.

The Second World War

On 1 September, 1939, the Nazi armies invaded Poland and started the Second World War. On October 1, 1939, *Aufbau* published the lead article under the headline *Schm'a Yisroel! Under the Hail of Bombs. How Death Ravages the Jews of Poland*, in which “from the multitudes of news and the overabundance of unspeakable details and cruelties”, the mass killings and massive bombardments of synagogues and Jewish schools were reported.⁶ Even with the knowledge of the escalating brutality of the Nazi assault from 1933 onward, the invasion of Poland and the beginning of mass murder surpassed all dire expectations and must have been beyond comprehension. Leo Baeck and his deputy Otto Hirsch took action as the heads of the *Reichsverband*. They led a large group of highly trained professionals — some of whom later formed the founding group of the Leo Baeck Institute — to enable emigration and alleviate persecution under worsening conditions.

Leo Baeck refused to leave Germany or his community even after Jewish businesses and synagogues (including his home congregation at Fasanenstraße) were burned and looted, in November 1938. He is reported to have said that he would leave Germany only when he was the last Jew remaining there. He remained the nominal president of the *Reichsverband* when it was placed under Nazi control. When the organization was finally disbanded in 1943, Leo Baeck, then 70, was sent to the concentration camp at Theresienstadt (Terezin) with family members.

During his time in Theresienstadt, Leo Baeck continued to teach, holding lectures on philosophy and religion. He refused to participate in the administration of the camp as a member of the council of elders and instead had to do heavy labor. He also began a manuscript

that would later become *Dieses Volk – Jüdische Existenz*, (*This People Israel: The Meaning of Jewish Existence*),⁷ an interpretation of Jewish history. The camp was liberated in May 1945 by the Red Army. Rabbi Leo Baeck survived, but his four sisters perished in Theresienstadt.

Preserving the Past after the Holocaust

After the liberation of the camp, Leo Baeck made his way to England where his daughter Ruth resided. He received many citations and honours as a result of his efforts under the Nazis, and spent much of his next years travelling, lecturing, writing, and helping to found several relief organizations for European Jewry.

When the Leo Baeck Institute was founded in the 1950s, it was hardly the result of popular longing to reminisce about the days of German-Jewish symbiosis. Few people were interested in stirring up painful memories of the Holocaust, and even fewer in remembering what some viewed as the failed experiment of German-Jewish assimilation. The German Federal Republic's economic miracle was in full swing, the new state of Israel was a rallying point for the Jewish Diaspora, and the United States was locked in a new and terrifying conflict with the Soviet Union. However, the founders of the Leo Baeck Institute displayed the courage and foresight to look back, when most cared only to look forward. To these veterans of the effort to protect Germany's Jewish community, it was their cherished culture, values, and traditions that had given a beleaguered people the resources to organize and struggle against the bleakest of odds.

- (1) Aufbau, vol. 11, nr. 51, Dec. 21, 1945, p.1.
- (2) Der Morgen, October 1933, p.237.
- (3) Aufbau, vol. 4, nr. 9, August 1, 1938, p.1.
- (4) Aufbau, vol. 4, nr. 12, November 1, 1938, p.1.
- (5) Aufbau, vol. 5, nr. 15, August 15, 1939, p. 11.
- (6) Aufbau, vol. 5, nr. 18, October 1, 1939, p. 1.
- (7) Leo Baeck, *Dieses Volk: jüdische Existenz*. Frankfurt a.M.: Europäische Verlagsanstalt, 1955.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

RABBI LEO BAECK AND THE LEO BAECK INSTITUTE: A Response to Nazi Persecution and Displacement and Post-Holocaust Memory

1. What is the aim of the Leo Baeck Institute? What materials does it have in its archive?
2. Why is it important to learn about the daily lives of German-Jews during the modern era? What were some of the accomplishments of Jews during the Weimar Republic?
3. According to Mr. Weitzer, Leo Baeck was an advocate of full participation in German civic life. Why might this have been a difficult position for him to take?
4. How do you think Leo Baeck's experiences during the First World War impacted the choices he made later in his life? What were some of the activities that Leo Baeck engaged in during the Nazi rise to power?
5. What lessons can we learn from Leo Baeck?



Rwandan children at the Ndosha camp in Goma on 25 July 1994.

Photo Credit: UN Photo/John Isaac

FROM COMMITMENT TO ACTION:

The Enduring Importance of the Responsibility to Protect

biography/

ADAMA DIENG

Adama Dieng is the United Nations Secretary-General's Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide. Mr. Dieng previously served as Registrar of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda. He began his career in Senegal, where he served as Registrar of the Supreme Court for six years. From 1982 to 2001, Mr. Dieng worked for the International Commission of Jurists, for the last ten years as Secretary-General. During this period he was appointed as the United Nations Secretary General's Envoy to Malawi in 1993 and as the United Nations Independent Expert for Haiti from 1995 to 2000. A legal and human rights expert, Mr. Dieng has throughout his career contributed to strengthening the rule of law and fighting impunity. He has also contributed to the establishment of non-governmental organizations in Africa and to strengthening African institutions.

UN Photo



biography/

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UN Photo



From Commitment to Action: The Enduring Importance of the Responsibility to Protect

by Mr. Adama Dieng, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General
on the Prevention of Genocide

and

Dr. Jennifer Welsh Special, Adviser to the Secretary-General
on the Responsibility to Protect

Despite repeated calls to “never again” allow the most terrible forms of persecution and violence to occur, the international community has struggled to systematically prevent and halt genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. The responsibility to protect was created to fill this gap between rhetoric and action. The principle embodies a solemn political commitment, made at the highest level by all Heads of State and Government at the 2005 World Summit, to uphold pre-existing legal obligations, strive for more timely and decisive action and improve the protection provided to vulnerable populations.

Ten years from its formal adoption, the responsibility to protect is now more relevant and important than ever. The principle has helped to generate a political consensus amongst Member States on how to prevent and respond to atrocity crimes.¹ It has inspired a rapidly growing body of academic and policy literature that is improving our understanding of how to anticipate and mitigate the risks associated with atrocity crimes. Most importantly, the principle has led

to the development of new institutional capacity and spurred successful engagement in cases like Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea, Kenya and Kyrgyzstan.

“At the 2005 World Summit, Member States formally recognized the political and moral imperative to prevent and halt atrocity crimes.”

The breadth and depth of the responsibility to protect's impact is also clear in the decisions and deliberations of international institutions. The Security Council has adopted more than thirty resolutions and presidential statements that refer to the principle, including recent resolutions that explicitly welcome the work of our Office.² The General Assembly has held a formal debate and convened seven annual informal interactive

dialogues on the subject. The Human Rights Council has adopted thirteen resolutions that feature the responsibility to protect. At the regional level, the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights has adopted a resolution on strengthening the responsibility to protect in Africa³ and the European Parliament has recommended full implementation of the principle by the European Union.⁴ In short, Member States and regional organizations are reaffirming the principle with increasing frequency and specificity.

As Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has noted, the responsibility to protect “offers an alternative to indifference and fatalism” and represents a “milestone in transforming international concern about people facing mortal danger into meaningful response”.⁵ In this article, we reflect on the elements of the responsibility to protect that have shaped its significant contribution to advancing protection from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. Mindful of current crises and the many people that remain at elevated risk of atrocity crimes, we then highlight the urgent need to accelerate implementation of the principle and outline an ambitious but achievable agenda for the decade ahead.



Adama Dieng, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide (right), met South Sudanese rebel chief negotiator, during his three-day visit to South Sudan, 29 April 2014. The visit came in the wake of mass killings earlier in the month in Bentiu and Bor.

Photo Credit: UN Photo/Isaac Billy



The General Assembly held a debate on the Secretary-General's report, "Responsibility to Protect: State Responsibility and Prevention". Jennifer Welsh, Special Adviser of the Secretary-General on the Responsibility to Protect, was among the participants.

Photo Credit: UN Photo/ Paulo Filgueiras

A Vital Principle

At the 2005 World Summit, Member States formally recognized the political and moral imperative to prevent and halt atrocity crimes. They affirmed their primary responsibility to protect their own populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity and accepted a collective responsibility to assist each other in fulfilling this responsibility.⁶ They also declared their preparedness to take timely and decisive action, in accordance with the United Nations Charter and in cooperation with relevant regional organizations as appropriate, when national authorities manifestly fail to protect their populations.⁷

This formulation of the responsibility to protect has proven far-sighted for four reasons. First, it employs a narrow scope. Limiting the principle to the most serious international crimes has helped to ensure that the responsibility to protect remains squarely focused on closing the distance between specific obligations under international law and the reality faced by populations at risk.

Second, the 2005 World Summit Outcome clarifies who bears the responsibility to protect. It establishes that the primary responsibility to protect falls upon national authorities, and that this responsibility also entails prevention. But it also stipulates that the international community has a collective responsibility to provide assistance and an obligation to take collective action in the most extreme situations when Member States are either unwilling or unable to adequately protect their populations.

Third, while the responsibility to protect directs attention to the plight of individuals suffering from egregious forms of violence and persecution, it does so in a way that respects and strengthens state sovereignty. Indeed, the principle is premised on the conviction that Member States enhance their sovereignty when they protect populations from atrocity crimes. The responsibility to protect and State sovereignty are thus mutually-reinforcing.

Fourth, Member States reached a carefully crafted agreement that limits the potential for the principle to be abused in the pursuit of other political objectives. The responsibility to protect is governed by the collective security provisions in Chapters VI, VII and VIII of the United Nations Charter. It encourages a broad perspective on the types of instruments the international community can use to prevent and respond to atrocity crimes. It also maintains that the use of any coercive measure requires Security Council authorization.

These elements of the responsibility to protect have proven both politically and practically powerful. Politically, they have contributed to the development of a consensus on issues that once divided the international community. Member States now agree that prevention is at the core of the principle, that international action should employ the full range of diplomatic, political and humanitarian measures, that military force should only be considered as a measure of last resort, and that implementation must take place in accordance with the United Nations Charter and other established principles of international law.

Practically, the responsibility to protect's clear articulation of both the means available and the actors responsible for protection has enabled the Secretary-General to develop and elaborate a robust framework for implementation based on three equal and mutually-reinforcing pillars.⁸ Pillar I addresses how States can fulfil their primary responsibility to protect their populations.⁹ Pillar II outlines the collective responsibility of the international community to encourage and help States meet their responsibility to protect.¹⁰ Pillar III elaborates options for timely and decisive response.¹¹ This framework has not only provided a guide for concrete efforts to improve atrocity prevention and response, but also helped to direct attention to areas where more work is needed.

In his most recent report, the Secretary-General assessed the first decade of the responsibility to protect, both lauding the progress made and demanding greater international commitment.¹² While

attention during the first ten years has naturally focused on building a common understanding of the principle, the Secretary-General concluded that time has now come to move from conceptual debates towards more practical consideration of implementation.

A Turn to Implementation

The adoption of the responsibility to protect reflected widespread recognition that the status quo was both inadequate and unacceptable. The principle was not designed to be a comfortable rhetorical restatement of common values, but rather a spur to action. Judged on this basis, it is clear that the principle remains painfully relevant. Acts that may constitute genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity are occurring in the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Democratic Republic of North Korea, Iraq, Libya, Nigeria, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria, and Yemen. These situations have created protection challenges of a staggering scale and produced widespread humanitarian crises, including a global migration and refugee crisis.

In more general terms, too many Member States have yet to become parties to the international conventions that set out the legal framework for the prevention and punishment of atrocity crimes, including the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, the Geneva Conventions and the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. We are currently witnessing an alarming decline in the protection of human rights and respect for international humanitarian law, particularly in situations where national authorities have argued that exceptional security threats or political crises justify temporary abrogation from their legal obligations.

On moral, political and legal grounds, the international community must do better. The imperative to accelerate implementation of the responsibility to protect is clear. Atrocity crimes directly challenge our common humanity. They have deep and lasting effects,

destroying the social, political and economic foundations of societies and causing harm that lingers for generations. They constitute a threat to international peace and security and raise the risk that instability will cross borders, embroiling neighbours and the immediate region in increasingly complex crises. At a time when the international community's capacity to mitigate and end conflict is already overstretched, atrocity crimes create new vulnerabilities and raise the demand for international assistance.

Meeting these challenges will require political determination, not just to uphold the principle itself, but also to devote the resources and undertake the institutional change necessary to improve our capacity to prevent and halt atrocity crimes. These steps will in turn depend on the willingness of a broad range of actors to more systematically assess and respond to atrocity crime risks, including by tailoring the strategies guiding related efforts in conflict prevention, peacekeeping, peacebuilding and development.

There are some encouraging signs in this respect. Fifty-one Member States and the European Union have now joined the Global Network of R2P Focal Points.¹³ Each participant has formally designated a senior official responsible for promoting implementation of the responsibility to protect at the national level and fostering international cooperation on atrocity crime prevention and response. Complementary networks have also emerged to address these challenges at the global and regional levels, such as the Global Action Against Mass Atrocity Crimes and the Latin American Network on Genocide and Mass Atrocity Prevention. Efforts are now underway in every region to translate the political commitment made in 2005 into practice.

“We are currently witnessing an alarming decline in the protection of human rights and respect for international humanitarian law, particularly in situations where national authorities have argued that exceptional security threats or political crises justify temporary abrogation from their legal obligations.”

These growing communities of commitment are part of a broader groundswell of action. In this context, we believe much can be accomplished by directing our energies to the pursuit of several core priorities.

First, the international community must make prevention the rule, not the exception. The Security Council, Human Rights Council, Peacebuilding Commission and regional organizations can all make a greater contribution by engaging in more open discussion of situations of concern. International consideration of emerging signs of risk should become a regular and accepted part of international cooperation. This requires not just a technical shift in working methods and a willingness to seek new information, but also a broader change in political culture and a commitment to early action.

Second, the international community must remain prepared to respond in a timely and decisive manner when confronted by atrocity crimes. The lesson to be learned from the intervention in Libya authorized by Security Council resolution 1973 is not that military means must always be avoided, but rather that any relevant mandates need to be clear in their goals, expected duration, and procedures for reviewing progress. International responses must also be informed at the outset by the need to provide sustained support to societies struggling to recover in the aftermath of atrocity crimes.

At the same time, we must recognize that inaction remains the greatest threat to populations at risk. The Security Council has a special responsibility to employ the full range of non-coercive and coercive tools available to prevent and halt genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. When members of the Security Council fail to agree on an effective and collective response, as they have too often in the case of Syria, the impact can be devastating, including for the reputation and standing of the United Nations.

Third, the international community must pay more attention to preventing the recurrence of atrocity crimes. Incomplete or failed peacebuilding processes can create conditions conducive to the perpetration of atrocity crimes. Societies that have suffered from atrocity

crimes face unique challenges, especially with respect to reconciliation and accountability. Peacebuilding strategies need to be sensitive to these specific needs and designed to provide the longer-term support required.

Fourth, neighbours and regional organizations are often particularly well positioned to help States protect their populations. Not only are they more likely to understand the local context, but they can also bring longstanding political and economic relationships to bear. While the specific tools and mechanisms vary, each region also has existing institutions and practices that can be used to advance atrocity crime prevention and response.

Fifth, the growth of international and regional networks of focal points dedicated to atrocity crime prevention is a promising development. Building on this progress offers great promise. Expanding the networks will encourage a wider sharing of best practices. Empowering focal points with the resources and authority necessary to drive institutional change can contribute to building long-lasting infrastructure for prevention and protection.

While the breadth of this agenda may seem ambitious, steady progress on each of these priorities would significantly enhance the global, regional and national capacity available for atrocity prevention and response. With increased commitment and greater ingenuity, there is no reason why international efforts cannot match the scale of the crises we currently face.

Conclusion

The responsibility to protect is now firmly established as a vital and enduring principle. It provides an invaluable framework that reinforces existing legal obligations, builds political consensus on the way forward and provides practical policy and institutional guidance. While the last decade demonstrates that the responsibility to protect has not managed to translate commitment into action in every case,

there are grounds for optimism. We know from recent experience that the collective weight of the international community can make a difference.

It is within this broader context that the responsibility to protect urges the international community not to retreat into cynicism or paralysis in the face of seemingly intractable crises. We cannot conclude that the means to prevent and halt genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity are beyond our grasp. The challenges of atrocity crimes may be daunting and the human cost staggering, but these are reasons to renew our determination and urgently accelerate implementation of the responsibility to protect.

- (1) We use the term "atrocity crimes" exclusively to refer to the four acts specified in paragraph 138 of the 2005 World Summit Outcome. Genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity are defined in international criminal law; ethnic cleansing, while not established as a distinct crime, includes acts that will regularly amount to one of the crimes, in particular genocide and crimes against humanity.
- (2) See, especially, Security Council resolutions 2150 (2014) and 2171 (2014).
- (3) ACHPR/Res.117 (XXXII) 07: Resolution on Strengthening the Responsibility to Protect in Africa.
- (4) A7-0130/2013, European Parliament recommendation to the Council on the UN principle of the 'Responsibility to Protect' ('R2P').
- (5) Remarks to General Assembly Informal Interactive Dialogue on "A vital and enduring commitment: Implementing the responsibility to protect," 8 September 2015, <http://statements.unmeetings.org/media2/7651075/sg.pdf>.
- (6) A/RES/60/1, paragraph 138.
- (7) Ibid, paragraph 139.
- (8) Report of the Secretary-General on implementing the responsibility to protect (A/63/677).
- (9) Report of the Secretary-General on responsibility to protect: state responsibility and prevention (A/67/929).
- (10) Report of the Secretary-General on fulfilling our collective responsibility: international assistance and the responsibility to protect (A/68/947).
- (11) Report of the Secretary-General on responsibility to protect: timely and decisive response (A/66/874).
- (12) Report of the Secretary-General on a vital and enduring commitment: implementing the responsibility to protect (A/69/981).
- (13) For additional detail, see http://www.globalr2p.org/our_work/r2p_focal_points.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

From Commitment to Action: The Enduring Importance of the Responsibility to Protect

1. What is the responsibility to protect and what led to its adoption?
2. What has the responsibility to protect achieved in its first ten years?
3. How can the United Nations and its Member States do more to prevent and respond to atrocity crimes? What is the Global Network of R2P Focal Points and why is it important?
4. According to the authors, what remains the greatest threat to populations at risk? What role should the Security Council play in addressing these threats?
5. Explain why the authors express their optimism in the face of “seemingly intractable crises” and see the responsibility to protect as being more relevant and important than ever before. Discuss how you see the challenges of atrocity crimes and the potential to better protect vulnerable communities.

The Holocaust

and the United Nations Outreach Programme

Annexes





United Nations

General Assembly

A/RES/60/7

Distr.: General
21 November 2005Sixtieth session
Agenda item 72**Resolution adopted by the General Assembly***[without reference to a Main Committee (A/60/L.12 and Add.1)]***60/7. Holocaust remembrance***The General Assembly,*

Reaffirming the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,¹ which proclaims that everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth therein, without distinction of any kind, such as race, religion or other status,

Recalling article 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states that everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person,

Recalling also article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,² which state that everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion,

Bearing in mind that the founding principle of the Charter of the United Nations, “to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war”, is testimony to the indelible link between the United Nations and the unique tragedy of the Second World War,

Recalling the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide,³ which was adopted in order to avoid repetition of genocides such as those committed by the Nazi regime,

⁽¹⁾ Resolution 217 A (III).

⁽²⁾ See resolution 2200 A (XXI), annex.

⁽³⁾ Resolution 260 A (III), annex.

Recalling also the preamble of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states that disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind,

Taking note of the fact that the sixtieth session of the General Assembly is taking place during the sixtieth year of the defeat of the Nazi regime,

Recalling the twenty-eighth special session of the General Assembly, a unique event, held in commemoration of the sixtieth anniversary of the liberation of the Nazi concentration camps,

Honouring the courage and dedication shown by the soldiers who liberated the concentration camps,

Reaffirming that the Holocaust, which resulted in the murder of one third of the Jewish people, along with countless members of other minorities, will forever be a warning to all people of the dangers of hatred, bigotry, racism and prejudice,

1. *Resolves* that the United Nations will designate 27 January as an annual International Day of Commemoration in memory of the victims of the Holocaust;

2. *Urges* Member States to develop educational programmes that will inculcate future generations with the lessons of the Holocaust in order to help to prevent future acts of genocide, and in this context commends the Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research;

3. *Rejects* any denial of the Holocaust as an historical event, either in full or part;

4. *Commends* those States which have actively engaged in preserving those sites that served as Nazi death camps, concentration camps, forced labour camps and prisons during the Holocaust;

5. *Condemns without reserve* all manifestations of religious intolerance, incitement, harassment or violence against persons or communities based on ethnic origin or religious belief, wherever they occur;

6. *Requests* the Secretary-General to establish a programme of outreach on the subject of the "Holocaust and the United Nations" as well as measures to mobilize civil society for Holocaust remembrance and education, in order to help to prevent future acts of genocide; to report to the General Assembly on the establishment of this programme within six months from the date of the adoption of the present resolution; and to report thereafter on the implementation of the programme at its sixty-third session.



United Nations

A/RES/61/255

General AssemblyDistr.: General
22 March 2007Sixty-first session
Agenda item 44**Resolution adopted by the General Assembly***[without reference to a Main Committee (A/61/L.53 and Add.1)]***61/255. Holocaust denial***The General Assembly,**Reaffirming* its resolution 60/7 of 1 November 2005,*Recalling* that resolution 60/7 observes that remembrance of the Holocaust is critical to prevent further acts of genocide,*Recalling also* that, for this reason, resolution 60/7 rejects efforts to deny the Holocaust which, by ignoring the historical fact of those terrible events, increase the risk they will be repeated,*Noting* that all people and States have a vital stake in a world free of genocide,*Welcoming* the establishment by the Secretary-General of a programme of outreach on the subject of “the Holocaust and the United Nations”, and also welcoming the inclusion by Member States within their educational programmes of measures to confront attempts to deny or minimize the importance of the Holocaust,*Noting* that 27 January has been designated by the United Nations as the annual International Day of Commemoration in memory of the victims of the Holocaust,

1. *Condemns without any reservation* any denial of the Holocaust;
2. *Urges* all Member States unreservedly to reject any denial of the Holocaust as a historical event, either in full or in part, or any activities to this end.

*85th plenary meeting
26 January 2007*



The Holocaust and the United Nations Outreach Programme

The Holocaust and the United Nations Outreach Programme strives to remind the world of the lessons to be learned from the Holocaust so as to help to prevent future acts of genocide. Since its establishment more than 10 years ago, by United Nations General Assembly Resolution 60/7 of November 2005, the Holocaust and the United Nations Outreach Programme has developed an international network of partners and a multi-faceted programme that includes online and print educational products, study guides for students, seminars, professional development programmes, a film series, and a permanent exhibit at United Nations Headquarters in New York. The Programme's work culminates each year with the worldwide observance of the International Day of Commemoration in memory of the victims of the Holocaust on 27 January.

The Holocaust Programme works closely with Holocaust survivors to ensure that their stories are heard and heeded as a warning against the consequences of anti-Semitism and other forms of discrimination. In all of its activities, particularly with students and educators around the world, the Programme draws crucial links between the underlying causes of genocide, the lessons to be learned from the Holocaust, and the promotion of human rights today.

I. International Day of Commemoration in memory of the victims of the Holocaust



Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon addresses the United Nations memorial ceremony to mark the International Day of Commemoration in memory of the victims of the Holocaust on 28 January 2015.

Photo Credit: UN Photo/ Loey Felipe

Each year the Holocaust and the United Nations Outreach Programme takes the lead in organizing events held around the world for the annual International Day of Commemoration in memory of the victims of the Holocaust. On its 10th anniversary, the Programme organized a moving ceremony on 28 January centred on the theme “Liberty, Life and the Legacy of the Holocaust Survivors.” The

2015 observance also coincided with two milestone events: the 70th anniversary of the end of the Second World War and the founding of the United Nations. The Organization’s establishment seven decades ago in 1945 reflects how deeply it was shaped by the experience of the Holocaust. Both the Charter of the United Nations and Universal Declaration of Human Rights enshrine the principles of human rights for all peoples around the world.

The 2015 Holocaust Memorial ceremony included remarks from United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon; H.E. Mr. Reuven Rivlin, President of the State of Israel, H.E. Mr. Denis G. Antoine, Vice-President of the sixty-ninth session of the United Nations General Assembly, delivered on behalf of H.E. Mr. Sam Kahamba Kutesa, the President of the General Assembly; H.E. Mr. David Pressman, Alternative Representative for Special Political Affairs of the United States to the United Nations, Holocaust survivor Mrs. Jona Laks, and Soviet Army veteran Mr. Boris Feldman. Keynote speaker Avner Shalev, Chairman of the Yad Vashem Directorate, delivered the keynote address via video message. Violinist Miri Ben-Ari performed and Cantor Shimmy Miller, from the Ahavath



In Tanzania, students from nine secondary schools and three universities attended an event organized by UNIC Dar es Salaam to mark the International Day of Commemoration in memory of the victims of the Holocaust in 2015.

Photo Credit: UNIC Dar es Salaam

Torah Congregation in Englewood, New Jersey, accompanied by keyboardist Mr. Daniel Gildar, recited the memorial prayers.

The 2014 observance of the International Day of Commemoration in memory of the victims of the Holocaust was centred on the theme “Journeys through the Holocaust”, and the keynote speaker was Director Steven Spielberg. This

theme recalled the various journeys taken during this dark period, from deportation to incarceration to freedom, and how this experience transformed the lives of those who endured it. The 2013 observance of the International Day of Commemoration in memory of the victims of the Holocaust was built around the theme “Rescue during the Holocaust: The Courage to Care” with keynote speaker Professor Mordecai Paldiel. Through exhibits, film screenings, educational products and activities and the annual memorial ceremony, the Holocaust and the United Nations Outreach Programme and the global network of United Nations Information Centres honoured those who risked their own lives to save Jews, Roma and Sinti and others from near certain death under the Nazi regime during the Second World War in Europe.

II. International Partnerships

The Holocaust Programme has developed partnerships with civil society, governments and Holocaust institutions around the world. These partnerships help the Programme create influential educational materials, organize effective professional development workshops and extend the work of the Holocaust Programme to a global

audience. A series of multimedia exhibitions at New York Headquarters are visible achievements of these partnerships. In January 2015, in cooperation with the Auschwitz Birkenau State Memorial Museum and the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Poland to the United Nations, the Programme exhibited *Forbidden Art* that featured the story of twenty works of arts made illegally and at great risk by prisoners in the German Nazi concentration camp.

The Holocaust Programme also partnered with Yad Vashem, the Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Authority, the American Society for Yad Vashem, and the Permanent Mission of Israel to the United Nations to display *Shoah — How Was it Humanly Possible?* The exhibition recounted the comprehensive story of the Holocaust or Shoah, in Hebrew. It dealt with major historical aspects of the Holocaust, beginning with Jewish life in pre-Holocaust Europe and ending with the 1945 liberation of Nazi concentration and death camps across the continent. In addition, the Programme provided support to the Permanent Mission of Slovakia to the United Nations to mount the *Last Folio* exhibition at United Nations Headquarters. The exhibit featured pictures by internationally renowned photographer Yuri Dojc of a Jewish school in eastern Slovakia that was abandoned in 1942 when its students were taken away to the camps.



H.E. Mr. Reuven Rivlin, President of Israel, speaking at the opening of the exhibit entitled, "Shoah — How Was It Humanly Possible?" at United Nations Headquarters on 28 January 2015.

Photo Credit: UN Photo/ Evan Schneider



Veterans from the Second World War take part in the "When You Listen to a Witness, You Become a Witness" exhibit opening on 29 January 2014.

Photo Credit: UN/ Photo Paulo Filgueiras

In January 2014, the Holocaust Programme organized the opening of the exhibition titled *A Remembrance of the Holocaust in Hungary: 70th Anniversary Exhibition*, in partnership with the Permanent Mission of Hungary to the United Nations, the Lantos Foundation for Human Rights and Justice, the Hungarian American Coalition, the Hungary Initiatives Foundation and the Carl Lutz Foundation. This exhibition presented an historical account of the Holocaust in Hungary in observance of the 70th anniversary of the deportation and extermination of the Hungarian Jews. In addition, in January 2014, veterans from the Second World War took part in the opening of *When You Listen to a Witness, You become a Witness* exhibit at United Nations Headquarters in New York. The Holocaust Programme provided support to the March of the Living International, the curator of the exhibition. It documented the experiences of students who visited the former Nazi concentration camps established in German-occupied Poland during the Second World War.

In 2013, the Holocaust Programme provided support for two exhibitions that honoured rescuers of the Jews during the Holocaust. The first was titled as *The World Knew, Jan Kar-ski's Mission for Humanity* was produced by the Polish History Museum in partnership with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the



The Holocaust and the United Nations Outreach Programme in partnership with the Permanent Mission of the Czech Republic to the United Nations organized a special performance of the play "The Good and the True" in August 2014.

Photo Credit: UN Photo/Devra Berkowitz



Kimberly Mann, Manager, of the Holocaust and the United Nations Outreach Programme, visited Morocco to speak with students about the Holocaust in 2014 in partnership with the Mimouna Association.

Republic of Poland. This exhibit laid out the captivating background of Polish diplomat Jan Kozielewski, who under the assumed name of Jan Karski served as a courier for the Polish Underground Resistance and informed Allied leaders about Nazi Germany's ongoing murder of the Jews in Europe. Jan Karski was a Roman Catholic who later attained citizenship of the United States and was named an honorary citizen of Israel and a Righteous among the Nations. A second exhibit, produced by the Holocaust Programme's partner The Jewish Foundation for the Righteous provided an overview of the people who bravely risked their lives to save Jewish people during the Holocaust.

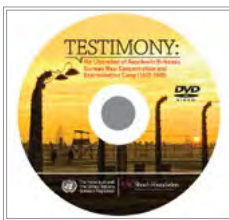
Holocaust Educational Materials



The Holocaust and the United Nations 10th Anniversary Film

The Holocaust Programme has developed a wide variety of educational tools in partnership with leading institutions in Holocaust and genocide education. In 2015, the Programme, in cooperation with the News and Media Division, produced *The Holocaust and the United Nations 10th Anniversary Film* that demonstrates how the Programme has been implementing its mandate for Holocaust education and remembrance to help prevent genocide over the past decade. The film includes a special message from United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and footage from the many Holocaust memorial ceremonies, panel discussions and educational events that have been held at New York Headquarters, as well as in the field in cooperation with the global network of United Nations Information Centres. The film, which was recorded in all United Nations official languages by United Nations staff members, also outlines the various educational products that the Programme has produced.

In observance of the 70th anniversary of the United Nations and the end of the Second World War, the Holocaust Programme also

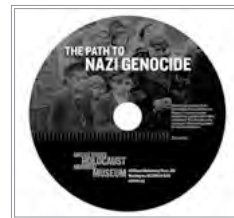


Testimony: the Liberation of Auschwitz Birkenau German Nazi Concentration Camp (1940-1945) produced by the Holocaust and the United Nations Outreach Programme and USC Shoah Foundation — The Institute for Visual History and Education.

Photo Credit: UN Photo/ Evan Schneider

produced an exhibition and a short film that was subtitled in all United Nations official languages on *Testimony: the Liberation of Auschwitz Birkenau German Nazi Concentration Camp (1940-1945)*. The exhibition provided background on the camp along with testimony from the archive of the USC Shoah Foundation – The Institute for Visual History and Education. The film tells the story of six individuals who were either imprisoned in the camp or were soldiers in the Red Army that liberated the camp on 27 January 1945. The exhibit also featured the visit of Ban Ki-moon and his wife to Auschwitz-Birkenau, in November 2013.

The Holocaust Programme also worked closely with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum to produce the museum’s film *The Path to Nazi Genocide* in all United Nations official languages in 2014. The film examines the Nazis’ rise and consolidation of power in Germany and explores their racist



The Path to Nazi Genocide DVD. Produced by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, and subtitled by the Holocaust and the United Nations Outreach Programme.

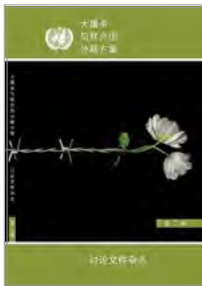
Photo Credit: Yad Vashem

ideology, propaganda and persecution of Jews and other victims. The Programme made the film and background materials on the Holocaust available to the United Nations Information Centres for use with students.

In June 2014, the Holocaust Programme developed the first Model UN simulation on the Holocaust and Genocide Prevention together with the MUN team and the Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide. *The Path to Nazi Genocide* served as a teaching aid for the students who participated in the Model UN, which was held at the Bronx High School for Science in New York City.



Bronx High School for Science students participating in the Model UN on the Holocaust and Genocide prevention organized by the Holocaust and the United Nations Outreach Programme in cooperation with the Model United Nations Team in New York City, in June 2014.



Discussion Papers Journal Volume II produced by the Holocaust and the United Nations Outreach Programme.

In 2013, the Holocaust Programme published the *Discussion Papers Journal Volume II* which included ten articles written by leading Holocaust and genocide studies scholars from Argentina, Canada, China, France, Germany, South Africa, the United Kingdom and the United States. Author Pan Guang (China) delivers a gripping account of how Jews made their way to Shanghai during the Second World War, while writer Andrzej Mirga (Poland) details the Nazi persecution of Roma and Sinti during the same period. Professor Juan E. Méndez (Argentina) brings the reader to the 21st century with a discussion of the 2011 arrest and pending trial of accused Serbian war criminal Ratko Mladic. And the timeless value of Holocaust education is explored as Tali Nates (South Africa) shows how education is helping to heal

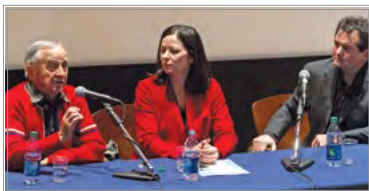
the divisions wrought by apartheid in South Africa and scholar Ilya Altman (Russia) explores Holocaust remembrance and education in contemporary Russia. Other contributors are Edward Mortimer and Kaja Shonick Glahn (UK/Germany), David Matas (Canada), Lenore Weitzman (USA), and Robert Krell (Canada). The series aims to engage the minds of students and spark lively discussions to expand awareness of these crucial issues by students at the university level. The Journal is available to educators and students in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish and it can be downloaded from the Holocaust Programme website.

The Holocaust Programme website offers a number of innovative products and educational resources about the Holocaust, as well as materials for teachers and students at the middle school, high school and university level. For more information, please visit: www.un.org/holocaustremembrance.

Holocaust Remembrance and Educational Events

To remind the world about the lessons of the Holocaust and the dangers of hatred and prejudice, the Holocaust Programme holds numerous events throughout the year. These include film screenings, NGO briefings and frequent roundtable discussions featuring the world's leading experts in Holocaust and genocide studies. Each film screening is usually followed by an interactive discussion with film producers, historians and United Nations officials.

In January 2015, the Holocaust Programme partnered with the Permanent Mission of Germany to the United Nations to screen *Kinderblock 66: Return to Buchenwald* documentary. Rob Cohen directed



Film screening of Kinderblock 66: Return to Buchenwald. From left Alex Moskovic, Holocaust survivor, Kimberly Mann, Manager of the Holocaust and the United Nations Outreach Programme and Rob Cohen, director and film producer.

Photo Credit: UN Photo/Loey Felipe

this film focusing on the lives of four men who were imprisoned as boys in the Buchenwald concentration camp near Weimar, Germany, and return to commemorate the sixty-fifth anniversary of their liberation in April 1945. The film tells the story of the creation of the children's block – block 66 – by the camp's Communist-led underground. They worked to help protect the Jewish teenage boys who were arriving to the camp in large numbers in 1944 at the end of the Second World War. Alex Moskovic, father of Executive Producer Steve Mokovic, was one of these boys and participated in the discussion. Opening remarks were made by H.E. Mr. Heiko Thoms, Deputy Permanent Representative of the Federal Republic of Germany to the United Nations.



Blinky & Me documentary screened at the United Nations Headquarters in partnership with the Permanent Mission of Australia to the United Nations.

Photo Credit: Courtesy of Tomasz Magierski, film director

In January 2014, the Programme screened the documentary film *Blinky & Me* in partnership with the Permanent Mission of Australia to the United Nations. The film recounted the life of Yoram Gross, from his childhood in Poland, where his family lived under Nazi occupation, to Israel and Australia, where he started a new life as an animator. Opening remarks were made by H.E. Ms. Philippa Jane King, Deputy Permanent Representative of Australia to the United Nations and film director Tomasz Magierski participated in the discussion following the screening.

In November 2013, the Holocaust Programme partnered with the Permanent Mission of the Philippines to the United Nations and filmmaker Barbara Sasser to screen the documentary film *Rescue in the Philippines: Refuge from the Holocaust*. The film tells the story of how President Manuel Quezon, Colonel Dwight Eisenhower and the Frieder Brothers, cigar manufactures living in the Philippines during the Second World War, coordinated the rescue of 1,300 Jews from



In 2013, the Holocaust and United Nations Outreach Programme and the Jewish Foundation for the Righteous created an eight part poster series on the subject "Rescue". The posters were made available to the global network of United Nations Information Centres for their educational activities.

Europe. H.E. Mr. Libran N. Cabactulan, Permanent Representative of the Philippines to the United Nations, Historian Bonnie Gurewitsch, Museum of Jewish Heritage – A living Memorial to the Holocaust, and Russell C.Hodge, Executive Producer, 3 Roads Communications, participated in the discussion following the screening.

The Rescuers, a documentary by Emmy award-winning filmmaker Michael King was screened at New York Headquarters in January 2013. It chronicles the heroic efforts of a dozen diplomats who used the powers and privileges tied to their postings throughout Europe to save the lives of tens of thousands of Jews during the Second World War. The screening was organized in partnership with the United States Mission to the United Nations and the Sousa Menes Foundation. H.E. Ms. Rosemary A. Dicarolo, Deputy Permanent Representative of the United States Mission to the United Nations delivered opening remarks.

In April 2015, the Holocaust Programme in partnership with B'nai B'rith International and the Permanent Mission of Italy to the United Nations organized *Toscanini: A Conductor Stands Up for Justice*. The Italian conductor Arturo Toscanini was nearly 90 years old when he died in January 1957 in New York City. During this event, conductor and author



Students perform scenes from the film "The Boy in Striped Pyjamas" at the annual Holocaust Educators Conference held in Sao Paulo, Brazil in June 2013. It was organized in partnership with B'nai B'rith Brazil.



Students discuss the discrimination encountered by the gay and homosexual community under the Nazi regime at a briefing organized by the UN Holocaust Programme on 29 January 2015.

Photo Credit: UN Photo/ Evan Schneider

Cesare Civetta used a multimedia presentation to discuss Toscanini's musical style and philosophy, including his opposition to Hitler, defiance of Mussolini and his role in developing the orchestra now known as the Israel Philharmonic. Civetta is the author of "The Real Toscanini: Musicians Reveal the Maestro".

In January 2015, the Holocaust Programme organized a briefing for the NGO community on *The Holocaust, Homosexuals, and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Rights Today*. Held in partnership with the Department's NGO Relations Section, speakers included academics and experts in the subject, including Erik Jensen, Associate Professor of history at Miami University in Ohio, and Charles Radcliff, Chief of Global Issues in the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in New York. The 2015 NGO briefing was about *The 70th Anniversary of the Deportation of the Hungarian Jews during the Holocaust* in May of 1944. Most of them were sent to the Auschwitz-Birkenau, German Nazi Concentration and Extermination Camp (1940-1945), but some were sent to the Hungarian border with Austria where they were forced to build fortification trenches. Speakers in this event included Dr. Carol Rittner RSM, Distinguished Professor of Holocaust and Genocide Studies, The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey; Mrs. Agnes Vertes, a Hungarian Holocaust Survivor; and H.E. Mr. Csaba Kőrösi, Permanent Representative of Hungary to the United Nations. The 2013 NGO briefing was *The Story of the Danish Jews* on the theme "Rescue during the Holocaust: The Courage to Care." This briefing examined the situation of Jews in Denmark during the Second World War and highlighted the heroic individuals who facilitated the safe passage of Danish Jews to Sweden.



H.E. Mr. Danny Danon, the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations, presents a remnant from the ruins of a synagogue in Manheim, Germany, that was set on fire during Kristallnacht in 1938. The event on "Faith, Identity and the Promotion of Peace in the Aftermath of Genocide" was organised by the Holocaust and the United Nations Outreach Programme on 18 November 2015.

Photo Credit: Evan Schneider

In November 2015, the Programme held a panel discussion on the theme *Faith, Identity and the Promotion of Peace in the Aftermath of Genocide*. The opening remarks were delivered by H.E. Mr. Danny Danon, Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations. The discussion explored how faith and circumstances help shape an individual's identity, influence one's actions and attitudes, and can encourage the promotion of peace. The panellists included

Adama Dieng, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide; Rabbi Eliot J. Cosgrove, Park Avenue Synagogue; Menachem Z. Rosensaft, son of two survivors of Auschwitz and Bergen-Belsen and editor of *God, Faith & Identity from the Ashes: Reflections of Children and Grandchildren of Holocaust Survivors*; Adisada Dudic, attorney and survivor of the 1995 Srebrenica genocide; and Consolée Nishimwe, author and survivor of the 1994 Rwandan genocide. The discussion was moderated by Ramu Damodaran, Chief of the United Nations Academic Impact and Deputy Director of the Outreach Division.

In November 2014, the Holocaust Programme organized a roundtable discussion titled *United Nations War Crimes Records: Past, Present and Future*. The United Nations War Crimes Commission (UNWCC) was operational between 1943 and 1948 and played a vital role in preparing the ground for the war crimes trials that followed the Second World War. The panellists



United Nations War Crimes Commission Records (1943-1949) Past, Present and Future panel discussion poster.

included Under-Secretary-General Adama Dieng, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide; Bridget Sisk, Chief of the United Nations Archives and Records Management Section; Patrick J. Treanor, former member of the Office of Special Investigations, United States Department of Justice; Dan Plesch, Director, Centre for International Studies and Diplomacy, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London; and Henry Mayer, senior adviser on archives, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. They discussed the content of these archival documents, their impact on the development of international law and the International Criminal Court, as well as their use by and value to students and academics.

In April 2014, Holocaust survivor Mrs. Naomi Warren, H.E. Mr. David Roet, Deputy Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations, and Mr. Robert Singer, Chief Executive Officer and Executive Vice President, World Jewish Congress, joined artists and academics in a panel discussion which explored Holocaust education through dance, literature, music and film. Developed in the context of a new educational approach with the goal of reaching out to a broader audience, the event brought together students of various art forms from more than 30 schools and universities at United Nations Headquarters in New York. Mr. Stephen Mills, Artistic Director of Ballet Austin; Ms. Nava Semel, renowned Israeli author; Ms. Olympia Dukakis, Academy Award-winning actress; Dr. Olga Gershenson, Associate Professor of Judaic and Near Eastern Studies at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst; Mr. Clive Marks, Administrator of the Lord Ashdown Charitable Trust (sic.ort.org website) and Dr. Shirli Gilbert, Professor of Jewish and non-Jewish relations at the University of Southampton and author of the book *Music in the Holocaust: Confronting Life in the Nazi Ghettos and Camps* were among the panellists. Kimberly Mann, Manager of the Holocaust and Outreach Programme, moderated the discussion.

In December 2013, in observance of the 65th anniversary of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, the first ever human rights action taken by the United Nations, the Holocaust Programme organized a panel discussion to assess

progress that had been made in the prevention and prosecution of genocide. United Nations Deputy Secretary-General Jan Eliasson and Under-Secretary-General Adama Dieng, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide, both took part in the panel. Speakers discussed options that are available to States to avoid future violence against civilian populations. In November 2013, the Holocaust Programme helped organize the visit and accompanied United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to Auschwitz Birkenau, German Nazi Concentration and Extermination Camp (1940-1945), to pay tribute to the victims of the Holocaust and to stress the importance of the United Nations work for genocide prevention, tolerance and peace. Holocaust survivors Marian Turski and Rabbi Ysrael Meir Lau shared their stories of survival with the Secretary-General as he and Mrs. Ban walked through the camp. The Secretary-General and Mrs. Ban also visited the Oswięcim Synagogue.



Jan Eliasson, Deputy Secretary-General receiving flowers from Raphael Lemkin's descendants, Lara Lemkin, Danielle Mimeless and Olivia Mimeless.

Photo Credit: UN Photo/ Evan Schneider



Holocaust survivor Naomi Warren participates in a special panel discussion on "Learning about the Holocaust through the Arts," at the United Nations Headquarters in April 2014.

Photo Credit: UN Photo/Paulo Filgueiras



UNICEF Lagos, in partnership with Femi Arts Warehouse, unveiled a world map detailing the prevention of genocide and Holocaust remembrance in January 2015.

Photo Credit: UNICEF Lagos



Students from Antananarivo, Madagascar participate in events marking the International Day of Commemoration in memory of the victims of the Holocaust, organized by UNICEF Antananarivo in 2015.

Photo Credit: UNICEF Antananarivo



UNIC Bogota, along with the Jewish community, organized an exhibit to mark the International Day of Commemoration in memory of the victims of the Holocaust in 2015. Holocaust survivors light the traditional candles in memory of the victims

Photo Credit: UNIC Bogota

The Holocaust Programme also holds professional development workshops for educators. In 2013, more than 80 educators from Connecticut to Washington, D.C. came together at United Nations Headquarters in a day-long professional development workshop titled *Holocaust Education: Tools and Techniques*. With the participation of expert educators from the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, the workshop shared effective methods and technology for teaching the Holocaust, and examining the role of teachers in encouraging students to respect diversity in the classroom and beyond.

United Nation Information Centres Activities

The Holocaust Programme and the global network of 63 United Nations Information Centres (UNICs) work closely together to engage people around the world in Holocaust education and remembrance. Each year, UNICs organize events to honour the victims of the Holocaust which range from solemn ceremonies, to film screenings, to text message campaigns, exhibitions and tree plantings. The

Holocaust Programme provides UNICs with educational materials used to reach people everywhere with the universal lessons of the Holocaust.



UNIC Jakarta, with the US Embassy in Indonesia, organized the United Nations first public Holocaust remembrance event in Indonesia to mark the International Day of Commemoration in memory of the victims of the Holocaust in 2015.

Photo Credit: UNIC Jakarta



To mark the International Day of Commemoration in memory of the victims of the Holocaust, UNIC Lima and the Embassy of Israel, organized the screening of the Holocaust Programme's Tenth Anniversary Film in a public park in Lima, Peru.

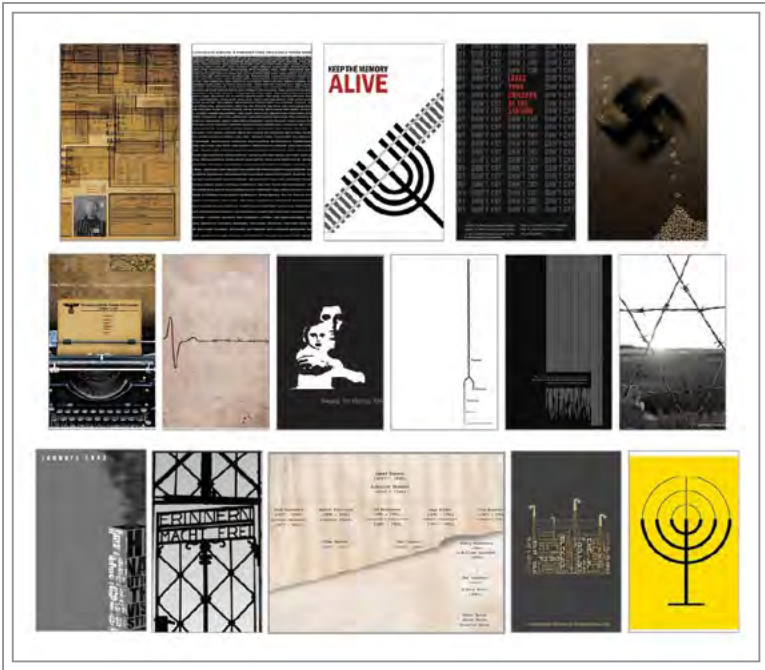
Photo Credit: UNIC Lima



UNIC Rio de Janeiro organized a public event at the Itamaraty Palace in Brazil, on 27 January 2015 to mark International Day of Commemoration in memory of the victims of the Holocaust.

Photo Credit: UNIC Rio de Janeiro

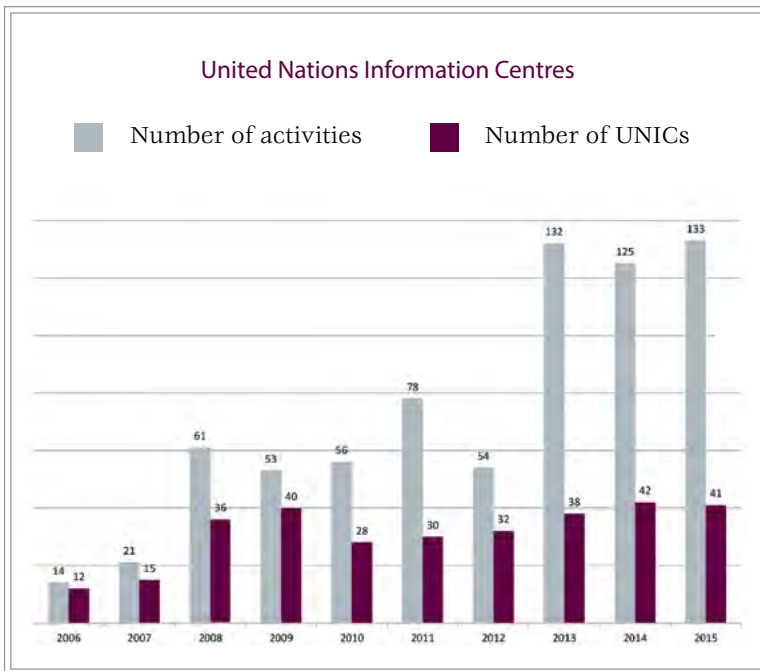
In 2015 alone, a total of 133 remembrance and educational activities were held in 41 countries. The Holocaust Programme provided these field offices with its Tenth Anniversary Film and an exhibition titled *Testimony: the Liberation of Auschwitz Birkenau German Nazi Concentration Camp (1940-1945)* produced in partnership with the USC Shoah Foundation Institute. The exhibition was comprised of three informative panels that included an introduction to the camp and biographies. The United Nations Information Centre in Rio de Janeiro translated the exhibit into Portuguese and the United Nations Information Centre in Dar es Salaam produced it in Kiswahili. The United Nations Regional Centre in Brussels subtitled the companion film of testimony and translated the panels into Dutch which were displayed at the Kazerne Dossin, Memorial, Museum and Documentation Centre on the Holocaust and Human Rights in Mechelen, Belgium. UNIC activities this year included a total of 20 Holocaust Memorial Day ceremonies and 12 screenings of the Holocaust Programme's Tenth Anniversary film, 22 exhibits and 35 briefings on the Holocaust for students and the general public.



The "Keeping The Memory Alive" poster design competition was a joint project supported by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance in 2014.

In 2014, the Holocaust Programme partnered with the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, Yad Vashem, the Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Authority in Israel, the London Jewish Cultural Centre in the United Kingdom, and the European Shoah Legacy Institute in the Czech Republic, to organize the *Keeping the Memory Alive* poster competition. UNICs encouraged students from around the world to participate in the contest, and organized exhibitions of the top 16 entries to mark the 27 January International Day of Commemoration in memory of the victims of the Holocaust.

In January 2013, the Holocaust Programme provided UNICs with an educational package on rescue, which included a film, posters, a teacher's guide and student handouts. Armed with the English text and the artwork, the United Nations Information Centres in Buenos



Number of Holocaust remembrance and education activities held per year by UNICs.

Aires and Moscow produced and made available to the global network of UN Information Centres posters in Spanish and Russian, while UNIS Geneva produced them in French. UNICs in Buenos Aires, Geneva and Moscow also translated and printed the eight-part poster series on rescue created by the Jewish Foundation for the Righteous. The colourful posters highlighted eight values embodied by those that rescued others during the Holocaust: courage, compassion, ingenuity, cooperation, integrity, social responsibility, self-sacrifice and moral leadership.

With support from the global network of the United Nations Information Centres, which participated in four regional training seminars on the Holocaust and human rights, the Holocaust and the Outreach Programme has achieved a global impact.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

on the Holocaust and the United Nations Outreach Programme,
please visit www.un.org/holocaustremembrance
or email holocaustremembrance@un.org



“For the past decade, the Holocaust and the United Nations Outreach Programme has mobilized students and educators around the world to help us achieve these goals. We are grateful to our many partners — including Holocaust survivors — who have contributed to this work, which spanned 42 countries in the past year alone.

The violence and bias we see every day are stark reminders of the distance still to travel in upholding human rights, preventing genocide and defending our common humanity. We must redouble our efforts to eradicate the deep roots of hatred and intolerance. People everywhere must unite to stop the cycles of discord and build a world of inclusion and mutual respect.”

United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon

*International Day of Commemoration in memory of the victims
of the Holocaust, 27 January 2015*



un.org/holocaustremembrance