

PastForward

The Newsletter of the Shoah Foundation™
SPRING / SUMMER 2001





images from left to right:

Wojtech Jasny

Janos Szasz

Stanislaw Jonas, a survivor featured in *I Remember*

László Kiss, a survivor featured in *Eyes of the Holocaust*

Eugenia Unger, a survivor featured in *Some Who Lived*

two images from *Eyes of the Holocaust*

archival images from *Broken Silence*

Five Documentaries. Five Countries. Five Directors.

The *Broken Silence* documentaries will be broadcast on television in their home countries during 2001. However, broadcast dates have not yet been finalized for all the films.

Argentina
Algunos que Vivieron (Some Who Lived)
Broadcast date unavailable at press time
Station: TELEFE

Czech Republic
Peklo Na Zemi (Hell on Earth)
Tentative broadcast date: 11.29.01 at 8 p.m.
Station: CT2 network

Hungary
A Holocaust Szemei (Eyes of the Holocaust)
Tentative broadcast date: 7.2.01 at 8 p.m.
Station: TV2

Poland
Pamiętam (I Remember)
Broadcast date: 4.30.01
Station: Channel 1

Russia
Deti iz besdny (Children from the Abyss)
Broadcast information unavailable at press time

In addition, the Shoah Foundation hopes to show the *Broken Silence* documentaries in other countries; currently, plans call for airing the subtitled documentaries in the US on the Cinemax cable network, as part of their *Reel Life* series.

Please check the Foundation's website at www.vhf.org for updates on broadcast dates and stations.

Broken Silence: The Shoah Foundation's International Documentary Series Speaks to New Audiences around the Globe

There is a moment in Luis Puenzo's *Some Who Lived* when Liza Zajak-Novera, one of the many Holocaust survivors who sought safe haven in Argentina after the war, describes her discovery that an infamous Nazi lived across the street from the beach where she played with her children.

In countries around the world, the ghosts of a violent past continue to visit the present, in a woman's fear for her family's safety, in a child's ignorance of history, in a man's apathy toward an act of intolerance. Holocaust revisionists and others who encourage hate prey on the uneducated and apathetic. In response to educators and community leaders who confront the rise in Holocaust denial, racial hatred, and wars of "ethnic cleansing," the Shoah Foundation has produced five foreign-language documentaries based on testimonies in its archive for international television broadcast.

Initiated by Foundation Chairman Steven Spielberg, these five films, known collectively as *Broken Silence*, represent an important step in the Shoah Foundation's global mission to increase awareness of the Holocaust to counter the devastating impact of intolerance. James Moll, director of the Oscar-winning *The Last Days* and a founding executive director of the Foundation, produced these documentaries, which focus on Argentina, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, and Russia. These countries were selected because of their dire need for Holocaust education, their enduring legacy of antisemitism (as in many parts of the world), and their direct involvement in the events and/or the aftermath of the Holocaust.

Built around excerpts from survivor testimonies in each country's native language, these documentaries will be broadcast on television in their country of origin. Five world-class directors worked with researchers and historians to make these documentaries as gifts to their home nations and the world. Moll notes that the directors, faced with the task of building a film that would resonate in their own countries, constructed five very different films, "yet all succeeded in presenting a personal, affecting vision of the Holocaust and its lessons for the future."

1 A Holocaust Szemei (Eyes of the Holocaust)

a Hungarian-language documentary directed by Janos Szasz

Janos Szasz believes that children are the most important audience for his documentary, *Eyes of the Holocaust*. After viewing about 60 Shoah Foundation testimonies in Hungarian, Szasz decided to show "everything." He realized this goal by creating a Holocaust dictionary for children over

the age of 12. The film shows a young girl, about 13 years old, finding an old book about the Holocaust. She opens the book and begins to learn about the past. Szasz sees this girl as a "shelter for this book," someone who will protect it from the ravages of time.

In the film, this encyclopedic book defines concepts such as antisemitism and deportation. The definitions introduce sections of the film that deal with these topics. Szasz then weaves together survivor interviews and archival footage to clearly illustrate each concept in the most personal of terms.

Szasz, an accomplished theatre and film director (best known for his 1994 film *Woyzeck*), says he knew that the day would come when he would make a film about the Holocaust. His parents, both survivors themselves, never spoke about their experiences and Szasz felt the heaviness of their unspoken memories throughout his childhood. Today Szasz is a father himself and is proud to have made this very personal film. Though it was a painful process "to hear the knocking on the door of [the survivors], to open it, and to listen," Szasz says, "I'm very happy that I made this film for my child and for other children."

2 Pamiętam (I Remember)

a Polish-language documentary directed by Andrzej Wajda

Polish survivor Stanislaw Jonas remembers that when hiding as a child during the war, he had to be careful which songs he hummed. "Sometimes I would hum 'bad songs' [Jewish songs] and we would get found out as Jews."

Jonas is one of four survivors featured in Andrzej Wajda's *I Remember*. Wajda says he used a small number of testimonies because he wanted to tell "the emotional story of a few people whose experiences describe the facts, as well as the atmosphere and spirit of what happened."

The son of a Polish cavalry officer killed early in World War II, Wajda also wished to focus on the "dramatic and specific relations between Jews and Poles in Nazi-occupied Poland." The film presents both Jews who survived with the help of their Polish neighbors and those who were betrayed by Poles.

I Remember does not include any historic archival footage or narration. Instead, the film intercuts footage of the "March of the Living" (an annual journey made by thousands of teenagers to Holocaust-related sites in Poland and Israel) with the survivor testimonies. This juxtaposition provides a symbol of hope and improved dialogue between young Jews, Poles, and Germans.

Regarded as one of the most prolific and significant directors in postwar Europe, Wajda has made films (such as *Man of Iron* and, most recently, *Pan Tadeusz*) that have been acclaimed as both artistically brilliant and politically outspoken. Wajda received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences in 1999.

3 Algunos que Vivieron (Some Who Lived)

a Spanish-language documentary directed by Luis Puenzo

Each director faced a challenging objective: to raise awareness of the Holocaust and its relevance to current acts of hatred and intolerance in countries where the Holocaust does not have the same public significance as in the United States or Israel. Argentine director Luis Puenzo chose to pursue this goal by relating the events of the Holocaust to darker moments in his own country's history.

First, Puenzo addresses the irony of the Argentine nationalist regime of the 1940s that gave refuge to Jews who survived the Holocaust as well as to the Nazis who persecuted them. Then he draws a parallel between the Nazi regime and the infamous military *junta* that governed Argentina from 1976 to 1983, which murdered more than 30,000 people. As survivor Pedro Boschán states, "When the dictatorship took place in Argentina, it was much like it was in Europe. This proved that ... this is something we are all subject to, permanently, no matter where we live and no matter who we are." Finally, Puenzo included survivors' references to the antisemitic bombings in Buenos Aires (of the Israeli Embassy in 1992 and the Argentine Jewish Federation Building in 1994). The bombings, which remain unresolved, badly shook some survivors who have looked to their adopted country for a sense of safety and belonging.

Graciela Nabel de Jinich, the Shoah Foundation liaison for Argentina, Chile, Peru, and Uruguay, notes that this documentary shows "part of the story of the Jewish community in Argentina." She was proud to assist Puenzo who, she says, "knew what to tell."

An internationally acclaimed filmmaker, Puenzo is best known for his 1985 Academy Award-winning political drama *The Official Story*. Puenzo hopes that *Some Who Lived* will help its audience "realize that the Holocaust could happen again anywhere."

4 Deti iz besdny (Children from the Abyss)

a Russian-language documentary directed by Pavel Chukhraj

"In a country that has endured so much, it's difficult to empathize with another's suffering. Many people say 'they were not the only ones! Look at how many we lost, how much we suffered in that war.'... It's difficult to get through to those who won't care about a child or an old man's suffering just because they are of a different blood." This narra-

tion from *Children from the Abyss* may help explain why this documentary explores such horrifying events.

Children from the Abyss tells the stories of people who survived mass executions during the Holocaust, when they were children and teenagers in the former Soviet Union.

Producer James Moll believes that Russia's bloody history, especially its tragic losses during World War II, meant that this documentary's audience might be more challenging to reach. "The graphic details of what these survivors endured are often difficult to listen to, yet these stories might more effectively communicate to an audience who has strong memories of their own suffering." Many people in these regions are not aware of the mass executions of Jews during the war.

The film is divided into three sections: childhood (before the war), the war (in particular mass executions), and life in the ghettos. *Children from the Abyss* investigates the motivations of those who collaborated with the Nazis, as well as the rescuers who remained humane despite their own suffering. The film also examines the survivors' memories of witnessing their parents' deaths and their desire for revenge during and after the war.

Writer and director Pavel Chukhraj, best known for his award-winning drama *The Thief*, used narration, archival footage, and original music to underscore the deeply affecting survivor testimonies in this film.

5 Peklo Na Zemi (Hell on Earth)

a Czech-language documentary directed by Wojtech Jasny

"I opened my heart and did the best I could." This is how director Wojtech Jasny describes his experience making the documentary *Hell on Earth*.

Jasny's film gives an overview of the events of the Holocaust, specifically how the Czech population was affected. Beginning with the Nazi invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1939, *Hell on Earth* goes on to examine Theresienstadt (Terezin), the "model ghetto" the Nazis built near Prague to prove to the international community how humanely they treated Jews. In reality, about 33,000 people died in Theresienstadt, mainly from hunger and disease. The film follows the path of many survivors who were deported from Theresienstadt to Auschwitz.

Jasny's own father, a Czech patriot, was killed in Auschwitz when Jasny was 15. It was then that Jasny decided "I could survive only if I fight back." During World War II, Jasny did some work for British Intelligence. After the war, Stalin's government sent him to China to make documentaries with the Chinese army. Despite this "adventurous life," the horrors he witnessed in Siberia and in Soviet-ruled Czechoslovakia convinced him to resist. He became a leading figure in the Czech "New Wave" cinema of the late 1960s with such films as his antitotalitarian *To All My Good Countrymen*. After refusing to publicly recant the political criticism

One of first tasks for each filmmaker was to choose which testimonies to include in his documentary. Because the Shoah Foundation has catalogued only English-language testimonies and developed only English-language educational materials, the testimonies in other languages (about 52% of the archive) have, until now, been largely unexplored.

To narrow down the number of interviews that would be sent to each director, the Foundation worked with bilingual researchers who watched hundreds of testimonies. One of these researchers, Cataloguer Zsuzsanna Aradi, originally from Budapest, describes the experience of watching interviews in Hungarian for the first time:

I have been listening to English-language testimonies as a cataloguer for nearly four years. Listening to interviews in Hungarian made the whole process of watching and analyzing testimonies effortless. I was immersed in my language, which was very pleasurable. At the same time, listening to these stories was much more painful; I knew the places survivors talked about, and in my mind my own images were mixed with the images created by their experiences.

Hungarian survivors in testimonies recorded in Hungary are more specific when it comes to naming perpetrators and less often use general terms like "the Hungarians." These survivors are still part of Hungarian society, and generalizations like this would be too painful or impossible to live with.

on the cover: poster for *Broken Silence*

continued on page 15...

Erinnern für Gegenwart und Zukunft (Remembering for the Present and the Future) The Shoah GmbH Unveils a New CD-ROM in Germany

by Ahavia Scheindlin, Vice President, European Affairs

"I was shattered after watching the CD-ROM, and then, strangely, I was also hopeful." This is how Jasmin Tabatabai, a German musician and actress, described her response to *Erinnern für Gegenwart und Zukunft* (Remembering for the Present and the Future), the Shoah GmbH's CD-ROM for high school students, recently released in Germany.

Tabatabai is one of the role models helping to promote the CD-ROM. Her response illustrates that viewers will make connections from history to the present and future.

Developed with student focus groups across Germany, this user-friendly CD-ROM focuses on testimony segments from German survivors, witnesses, rescuers, and resistance fighters and provides access to 700 pages of historical text and 400 archival photographs. Students can also explore political and cultural timelines that provide context for the testimonies. An extensive glossary allows students to search for information about specific topics, and a link to the CD-ROM's website (www.erinnern-online.de) provides moderated chats and information on-line.

Many German teens continue to feel shame or guilt for what happened during the Holocaust. This CD-ROM's message to them is that the Holocaust is not their fault. The Shoah GmbH hopes that by learning more about the Holocaust, young Germans will discover that this knowledge can help shape their present and future, and feel empowered to build a more tolerant society.

Germany's largest schoolbook publisher, Cornelsen Verlag, wants to help this CD-ROM reach every high school in Germany. In addition to producing a teacher's guide, Cornelsen is providing teacher training on the CD-ROM's classroom use. To help students further explore the CD-ROM's themes, the Shoah GmbH and Cornelsen announced a nationwide contest called *A Dialogue about Tolerance*. The contest urges students to open a dialogue about tolerance with an individual or institution, then report on their experience in the creative medium of their choice. German President Johannes Rau and Steven Spielberg will honor the winner in a special ceremony in Berlin.

Since its launch at the Frankfurt Book Fair, the CD-ROM has received extraordinary reviews, including an honor for best educational CD-ROM. For Project Manager Jessica Mehler; Pixelpark, the production team; Cornelsen Verlag; senior Partners Bertelsmann AG, Hubert Burda Media, and Axel Springer Verlag AG; the Shoah GmbH and the entire Shoah Foundation, this CD-ROM is an achievement to share.



The Shoah GmbH is a non-profit foundation established by the Shoah Foundation in Germany to promote tolerance.

For information about how to purchase the CD-ROM *Erinnern für Gegenwart und Zukunft*,

please contact:

Cornelsen Verlag
Mecklenburgische Strasse 53
14197 Berlin Germany
tel 0049-180-121 20 20
fax 0049-180-121 20 12
www.erinnern-online.de

After leading the Shoah GmbH's Berlin office for three years, Ahavia Scheindlin is moving back to her home in the United States. The Foundation thanks Havi for her years of dedication and leadership.

Testimony Exhibit Opens at the Museo Storico della Liberazione di Roma, a Former Gestapo Prison in Italy

"I thought I was ready to hear anything. Interviewing camp survivors did not frighten me ... morally, technically, or historically. ... Yet, watching my interview with Settimia Spizzichino again last night affected me deeply ... and enlightened me on the real value of these testimonies."

Interviewer Elio Limentani, the grandson of Holocaust survivors, who conducted two of the seven Shoah Foundation interviews included in the Museo Storico della Liberazione di Roma exhibit.

On January 27, 2001, the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz, some European countries observed their first official Holocaust Memorial Day. Italy commemorated *il Giorno della Memoria* (the Day of Memory) with ceremonies around the country, including the opening of a unique exhibit in Rome.

Located in a building that once housed a Gestapo prison, the Museo Storico della Liberazione di Roma (Historical Museum of the Liberation of Rome, also known as *via Tasso*, after the street where it is located) unveiled a permanent exhibit documenting the persecution of Roman Jews during the Holocaust. The centerpiece of the exhibit is a 45-minute videotape composed entirely of Shoah Foundation testimonies conducted in Italy. The reel includes excerpts from five survivors' and two rescuers' interviews. This is the first time Italian testimonies from the Foundation's archive have been made available to the Italian public.

This exhibit, "The Jews of Rome: 1938-1944," opens a new section of the museum devoted to oral history, audiovisual tools, and the recollection of the Shoah of Italy. Designed for both students and the general public, the exhibit focuses on seven themes: prewar Jewish life in Rome; the Racial Laws; the Nazis in Rome; October 16, 1943 (when more than 2,000 Roman Jews were captured and deported); the Massacre at Fosse Ardeatine; concentration camps; and liberation.

Financed by Italy's Ministry for Arts and Culture, the exhibit was initiated by Giovanna Melandri, Minister of Culture. Professor Paola Carucci (with the Archivio Centrale dello Stato) and one of the curators, Micaela Procaccia, also worked tirelessly with museum staff and the Shoah Foundation to prepare this exhibition.

After Minister Melandri officially opened the exhibit, the videotape reel was played twice for a large audience. Doris Felsen Escojido, Foundation Liaison in Italy, read a letter from CEO Douglas Greenberg, urging that "We must resist letting our past fall into oblivion. The more we understand [our history], the more likely our future will be as we dream it for our children." When Doris finished reading, Tullia

continued on page 15...



A Letter from Douglas Greenberg
President and Chief Executive Officer

Dear Friends,
Over the past few months, I have had the pleasure of representing the Shoah Foundation at various events, including our successful *Humanity through Technology* fundraiser held in New York this past January (please see page 7 for a full report). The highlight of the evening was the presentation of leadership awards to Severin Wunderman and Rena Rowan-Damone, both longtime ardent supporters of the Foundation's work. These two stellar honorees and the event's three co-chairs, Development Board Member Robert Katz, EMC CEO Michael C. Ruettgers, and Foundation Chairman Steven Spielberg, offer a model of leadership – leadership with heart and compassion – that all of us seek to emulate.

The Shoah Foundation enjoyed another New York success last November, when the Friends of the United Nations named the Foundation as one of the winners of its *Global Tolerance Award*, honoring our international commitment to Holocaust remembrance and education. Friends of the United Nations honors three groups every year as part of its International Day for Tolerance.

I had the opportunity to promote the Foundation's international goals when I traveled to Israel recently. There, I spoke to 1,000 customers, employees, and partners of EMC to discuss that company's continuing dedication to the Foundation's work through its generous donations of technology and resources. The most moving part of the evening was a concert by the International Symphony Orchestra, an organization of young, talented musicians from 20 different nations. How fitting to have an event where the technological community could connect with those who will put our technology into motion – the young leaders of tomorrow, who will carry the Foundation's message of hope and tolerance to future generations. Our busy Israel office was instrumental in coordinating this special event, and this edition features an article about that office and its unique experiences.

As we continue our plans to disseminate our archive through educational materials and research institutions worldwide, we also hope to reach a broader audience through our five new foreign-language documentary films to be aired this year on international television (see cover story). In Germany, we are premiering the Foundation's second CD-ROM, designed specifically for use in German-speaking classrooms. And, as the information superhighway continues to connect people worldwide, the Foundation will soon be premiering a new and improved website to keep up with our many online visitors.

Of course, this edition of the newsletter has many other interesting articles and updates on the progress of the Shoah Foundation, like the recent opening of an exhibit in the Historical Museum of the Liberation of Rome which features Foundation testimonies. We invite you to read on! With best wishes,
Douglas Greenberg

Volunteer Profile: Ruth BenAmy

A vital part of the Shoah Foundation, volunteers play an essential role in helping the Foundation achieve both its long-term goals and its daily tasks. Over the past seven years, thousands of people around the world have generously donated their time and energy to this work. In the Los Angeles office, forty volunteers are active – answering phones, leading tours, translating letters, photocopying documents, data processing, and dozens of other jobs for every department from Cataloguing to Development. Ten of these Los Angeles volunteers are themselves survivors; Ruth BenAmy is one of them.

Every Monday and Wednesday, Ruth BenAmy answers the Shoah Foundation's hotline. Ruth's fluency in multiple languages and her keen ability to differentiate accents immediately put survivors at ease. Her comforting voice even made her the confidante of a woman who was contemplating disowning her father after finding his old Nazi uniform hidden in the attic.

Ruth, a semi-retired travel consultant, Hebrew teacher, and lifelong volunteer, found herself drawn to the Foundation after giving her own testimony five years ago. One of the reasons survivors, witnesses, and their relatives feel comfortable talking freely about their experiences and feelings with Ruth is that they share a common bond: Ruth was forced to leave her homeland as a child because she was a Jew.

For almost 400 years, Ruth's family lived in Germany. Her great-great-grandparents were court Jews, Jews who served as bankers for royal houses and suppliers for armies. Ruth was born into a comfortable household in Uslar, where her father, a notable furniture designer, ran a factory that employed many of the town's inhabitants. Heeding the signs of an imminent Nazi takeover, Ruth's father shepherded the family to safety in Antwerp, Belgium. "A factory I can replace, a life I cannot." After Hitler's invasion of Poland, the family fled to Palestine, and, in 1947, came to the United States.

Sixty years after her flight from Germany, Ruth received a letter from her old hometown. An Uslar church congregation was asking her to forgive the church and its members for idly standing by as the Nazi regime took over their country. She wonders why her countrymen waited this long and where they were 50 years ago. Ruth is poised to write back to this church to acknowledge their letter, but is not certain that she can grant forgiveness. She says that "for my own experiences, perhaps I could forgive, but when I hear what other survivors went through, I'm not so sure." In the meantime, Ruth continues to come to the Shoah Foundation every Monday and Wednesday, working to ensure that her grandchildren will not have to face such decisions.



Ruth BenAmy
Photograph by Yosi A. R-Pozeilov

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Students in a pilot classroom in Sarasota, FL, expressed themselves in a portraiture assignment after using the Shoah Foundation CD-ROM.



Bonnie Samotin, with Dr. Leon Hendricks (Dir. Of Character Education, Chicago Public Schools), Bernadette Glaze (Advanced Academic Prog. Specialist, Fairfax Co. Public Schools), and Cathy French (P.A.R. Consulting Teacher, Long Beach U.S.D.)

Shoah Foundation Presents Tolerance Education Initiative at Conference

by Bonnie Samotin,
Project Manager, Educational Resources department

On February 17, 2001, Shoah Foundation staff and key personnel from five U.S. school districts led a tolerance education presentation at the American Association of School Administrators (AASA) National Conference on Education in Orlando, Florida. A culmination of the first year of a three-year pilot education initiative, the presentation illustrated how each district has integrated the Shoah Foundation's educational materials into its tolerance education programs.

The goal of the initiative is to partner with pilot school districts in order to evaluate current strategies and identify curriculum gaps in the teaching of the Holocaust; develop strategies to assess the effectiveness of the programs; develop and implement lesson units based on Shoah Foundation materials; and facilitate a dialogue in which participating districts share ideas and resources with one another.

"This initiative is one of the most important projects we've undertaken in the past several years," said Dr. Leon Hendricks, Director of Character Education for Chicago Public Schools. "This will help move us from an academically performing school system to one that is ethical and moral, as related to tolerance and diversity." Dr. Hendricks spoke about how the pilot program fits into the Chicago Public Schools' curriculum for character education. In addition, Chicago has assembled an advisory board of community and religious leaders, to involve the community on an ongoing basis. Chicago hopes to expand the program throughout its 600 schools.

Each of the school districts reported on its progress and highlighted a unique aspect of the initiative. Professional development strategies were shared by Long Beach Unified School District (CA), while Sarasota Public School District (FL) focused on the development of curriculum to satisfy state mandates in Holocaust, Character, and Multicultural Education. Fairfax County Public Schools (VA) discussed the progression of Holocaust studies from grades seven to eleven. Teachers from Portland Public Schools (OR) shared how their district teaches this material through literary and visual arts. Portland teacher Michele Lackaden made the following personal observation, "I see important changes in the classroom, and in the way kids treat each other. After completing the unit, students did journal writing that reflected their feelings about prejudice. [The unit's] interactive activities brought the kids closer together, the level of respect increased, the classroom became more of a community."

Former Florida regional coordinators Linda Holtz and Judith Lowenthal assisted the Educational Resources department staff at the conference.

The Leo Rosner Foundation has underwritten costs of the Pilot Education Initiative in Florida.

Just Point and Click: Foundation Launches New Website

To meet the demands of an ever-growing online community, the Shoah Foundation is building a new website (www.vhf.org) to replace the website it originally created in 1995. Impossible, Inc., a California-based interactive development company, will create a new online look for the Foundation and add many new features. The site will include an efficient, user-based navigational structure to allow for interactive video demonstrations, support online donations, and provide information about the Foundation's educational initiatives and materials. The website's design combines pertinent historic images with a modern, technological, and journalistic feel.

Scott Mildren, CEO of Impossible, Inc., remarked, "We are honored to be associated with the Shoah Foundation and to have been selected to work on this project. This is an excellent opportunity to use today's technology to preserve history, increase awareness, and expand the Foundation's global presence."

The new site will premiere later this year and will provide expanded material about the Foundation, including:

- Testimony collection procedures and cataloguing procedures;
- Up-to-date information on how the Foundation is creating access to the archive;
- Information about the testimonies and the archive;
- Expanded links to our newsletter and outside resources;
- Sites for each of our educational products, including the Foundation's foreign-language documentaries, along with purchasing information.

In addition, the new website will include sample portions of a testimony from a survivor who participated in the Shoah Foundation CD-ROM to demonstrate what the testimonies are like.

Of course, visitors will find plenty of information on how to support the Foundation through donations, planned giving, and other specific funding opportunities, such as underwriting the Foundation's planned translation of portions of the website into languages other than English. In the meantime, online donations are now possible on the current website (www.vhf.org). The Foundation looks forward to your cyber-visit, and welcomes your comments and suggestions.

Department Activities Report

Shoah Foundation Honors Exceptional Donors at EMC-Sponsored New York Event

by Andrea Kemp, Grants Associate, Development department

On January 10, 2001, nearly 500 guests assembled at the American Museum of Natural History in New York City for the Shoah Foundation's second annual *Humanity through Technology* dinner. Academy Award-winning actress Helen Hunt presided as Master of Ceremonies for the event, which featured the presentation of the Shoah Foundation's first *Humanity through Technology* Leadership Awards to philanthropists Rena Rowan-Damone and Severin Wunderman. Information storage leader EMC Corporation presented this landmark fundraising dinner, which raised approximately \$2,000,000 for the Foundation.

The Shoah Foundation established the Leadership Awards to honor those who have tirelessly supported the Foundation's mission of furthering cultural tolerance and understanding. Rena Rowan-Damone, founder of Jones Apparel Group, and, as a philanthropist, founder of Rena Rowan Foundation for the Homeless and the Rena Rowan Breast Center at the University of Pennsylvania Medical Center, was one of the Shoah Foundation's first Founding Partners. Rena is also a Polish refugee who was exiled to Siberia during World War II.

Severin Wunderman, a successful watch distributor (Gucci and Corum), art collector, and philanthropist, has been a passionate supporter of the Shoah Foundation. Through his generosity, the Foundation has achieved many goals, including the videotaping and cataloguing of 1,500 child survivor testimonies. *The Severin Wunderman Collection of Child Survivor Testimonies from the Holocaust* includes Severin's own testimony, which details his childhood experiences of being hidden from the Nazis in a Belgian school for the blind.

During a pre-dinner reception in the museum's majestic rotunda, guests had an opportunity to tour a comprehensive presentation of the Foundation's technology, including demonstrations of the Foundation's CD-ROM, *Survivors: Testimonies of the Holocaust*, and the cataloguing and digital library systems. Guests conversed with students, educators,

and Foundation staff members, and learned more about the Foundation's educational goals. Several survivors featured on the CD-ROM and in *The Last Days* documentary were in attendance. Other notable guests included Development Board Members Robert Katz (who generously served as a co-chair of the event), David Strassler, Cynthia Stroum, and Stephen Cozen. More than 50 representatives of print and broadcast media, including several members of the international press, added to the excitement.

Following welcoming remarks by Robert Katz (General Counsel/Managing Director of Goldman, Sachs & Co.) and Helen Hunt, survivor Henry Rosmarin recited the blessing over the bread. Shoah Foundation President and CEO Douglas Greenberg discussed the Foundation's goals and presented a compelling video highlighting the Foundation's recent accomplishments.

To illustrate the impact of the Foundation's work, guests from New York's Satellite Academy spoke about their experiences using the Foundation's educational materials. Teacher Alice Braziller noted that eyewitness testimonies show students that "history has a human face and that face looks remarkably like their own." Students Brandon Hull and Xiomara Ruiz read poems they had written about survivors featured on the CD-ROM. Survivor Silvia Grohs-Martin then joined them onstage to deliver a heartfelt call for effective Holocaust education.

Michael Ruettgers, Chairman of EMC, then spoke of his company's continuing commitment to the Shoah Foundation. After a stirring performance of the *Schindler's List* theme by world-renowned violinist Itzhak Perlman, Shoah Foundation Founder Steven Spielberg addressed the audience and presented the Leadership Awards to Severin Wunderman and Rena Rowan-Damone.

As Ruettgers said in his speech, the Foundation's unprecedented archive will "ensure that the testimonies of Holocaust survivors and witnesses will live on for generations to come." The Shoah Foundation is indebted to the night's honorees for helping to realize that goal.

Rena Rowan-Damone and Steven Spielberg



Douglas Greenberg and Severin Wunderman



Michael Ruettgers and Robert Katz



Vic Damone, Michael Ruettgers, Rena Rowan-Damone, Helen Hunt, Steven Spielberg, Severin and Colleen Wunderman, Robert Katz, and Douglas Greenberg

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Steven Spielberg and Severin Wunderman



Cynthia Stroum and Leah Adler (Steven Spielberg's mother)



Henry and Janet Rosmarin, Steven Spielberg, and students from the New York Satellite Academy

Foundation representatives exchange ideas at conferences around the world, including:

february

Confronting the Past: Memory, Identity, and Society
University of California at Los Angeles, February 4 & 5
Jessica Wiederhorn (Manager of Academic Affairs), Alejandro Baer (Translations Assistant), Kirsten Anderson (Cataloguer), and other staff members attend this symposium examining how nations confront the violence of the 20th century.

Building and Sustaining Digital Collections: Models for Libraries and Museums CLIR/NINCH (Council on Library and Information Resources/National Initiative for a Networked Cultural Heritage)
Washington, D.C., February 14-16
Sam Gustman (Director of Technology) speaks about the Shoah Foundation's digital library.

Holocaust and Citizenship Education Forum
Budapest, Hungary, February 18-21
This conference for Hungarian educators focused on practical and theoretical issues involved with Holocaust education. Luca Illy (Regional Coordinator, Hungary) speaks about the educational potential of the Foundation's work.

Images of the Shoah
Udine, Italy, February 28
At this month-long event consisting of symposia, films, and videos about the Shoah, Doris Felsen Escojido (Liaison, Italy) introduces a screening of *The Last Days* and leads a symposium about the Foundation's work in Italy.

continued on page 11 . . .

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interviewing

Regional Coordinator Shoshana Mandel Heads the Foundation's Busy Jerusalem Office

At one time, the Shoah Foundation videotaped 300 testimonies every week; today, the weekly average is 15. Since reaching its initial goal of interviewing 50,000 survivors and witnesses in December 1998, the Foundation has reduced the number of interviews videotaped weekly to allow for the cataloguing and dissemination of the testimonies. Production Manager Bill Steinberg explains, "Interviewing wasn't stopped altogether, because we realize that there are still people out there who want to give testimony."

The Shoah Foundation will conduct about 750 interviews a year for the next few years, mostly with witnesses and survivors already in the Foundation's database. The majority of the interviews will be coordinated through the Foundation's regional offices in Hungary and Israel. The Los Angeles office organizes all interviews not conducted in those two countries. Working closely with the L.A. office and local volunteers, Shoshana Mandel oversees the Foundation's Jerusalem office.

When it opened in early 1995, the Jerusalem office was housed in Yad Vashem, the Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Authority. Dulcy Leibler, the first coordinator, assembled a multilingual staff to launch the project. In 1996, as interviewing pace and staff size increased, the office moved to a downtown Jerusalem location. From 1996 to 1998, Michelle Kleinert, former Los Angeles regional coordinator, ran the Jerusalem office. Michelle, an American, was impressed by her Israeli colleagues' dedication to the project, even in the face of conditions most would consider extraordinary. Michelle recalls that a volunteer manning the phone calmly continued taking down a survivor's information even as a bomb exploded across the street from the office.

Since 1998, Shoshana Mandel has served as Regional Coordinator in Jerusalem. She first joined the Foundation as an interviewer after her husband saw an advertisement in the paper. Shoshana recalls, "When I read it, I knew I wanted to take part." Soon, she began to work part time in the Foundation office, scheduling interviews and contributing her Russian/Hebrew/English translation skills. In 1996, Shoshana traveled to Moscow and Kiev to help lead interviewer training sessions in those regions.

It was a homecoming for Shoshana; she was born in Moscow to Polish parents. Her parents lost their entire families in the Holocaust, but they survived because each had gone to the Soviet Union before the war. Her mother went to study drama with Solomon Michaels at the Yiddish State Theatre in Moscow. Her father had been out of town when the war started and became stranded in the Soviet Union. Her parents met and married after the war, and when the opportunity arose, they and their daughter immigrated to Israel.

In Israel, Shoshana spent time on a kibbutz and went to school, eventually earning a degree in Russian Studies from Hebrew University. After several years working as a teacher



Kim Simon (Director, Archival Access & Community Relations), Shoshana Mandel, and Marilyn Koelik (Director, Steven Spielberg Jewish Film Archive) in Jerusalem

Shoshana Mandel (far left) and Executive Director Ari Zev (far right) visit the Ginzach Kiddush Hashem Archives with Tova Yoskovich (liaison between the Archives and the Foundation), Esther Farbstein (a professor of Holocaust Studies and a Foundation interviewer), and Miriam Stern (researcher at Kiddush Hashem)

Conferences, continued from page 6 . . .

april

Lost but Not Forgotten: Our Town- Artistic Retrievals of Holocaust Communities
East Tennessee Holocaust Conference, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Tennessee, April 1-3
Lisa Plante (Research Manager, Cataloguing) heads this conference which features lectures, exhibits, and performances that explore the nature of prejudice taken to extremes.

Computerworld Honors Program
San Francisco, California, April 8-9
Sam Gusman attends this Smithsonian-sponsored event where the Foundation is included in the Computerworld Honors Collection.

Organization of American Historians
Los Angeles, California, April, 26-29
President and CEO Douglas Greenberg chairs a session entitled *Approaching the Holocaust*.

may

International Task Force on the Holocaust
Amsterdam, Netherlands, May 2-5
Denise Citroen (Liaison, Netherlands) and Executive Director and COO Ari Zev will attend this important event in the yearlong Netherlands presidency of the Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance, and Research.

Southwest Oral History Association Annual Meeting
Tempe, Arizona, May 3-6
Jessica Wiederhorn will lead a workshop on interviewing individuals about traumatic memories.

june

16th Annual Conference of the Association of Holocaust Organizations (AHO)
Atlanta, Georgia, June 2-5
Michael Nutkiewicz (Senior Historian/Educational Programs and Grants Associate) will chair a panel about the relevance of the Holocaust to tolerance education. Community Relations Manager Sherry Bard will also attend.

The Association of Genocide Scholars
Minneapolis, Minnesota, June 9-12
Jessica Wiederhorn (Manager of Academic Affairs) will present segments of testimony from the Foundation's archive in a session entitled *Holocaust Witnesses: The Historical Significance of the Survivor's Voice*.

continued on page 15 . . .

Spotlight on Partners in History and the Future: New Gifts since November 2000

In December 2000, longtime Foundation supporters **Tom Hanks & Rita Wilson** made a \$10,000 donation in honor of Steven Spielberg.

Breslauer & Rutman LLC gave \$25,000; **Gang, Tyre, Ramer & Brown** gave \$25,000; and the **Skirball Foundation** gave \$10,000 to the Shoah Foundation in generous end-of-year donations for the year 2000.

Meyer and Doreen Luskin donated \$10,500 to the Shoah Foundation last December. Meyer Luskin is President of Scope Industries in Los Angeles.

Head of New York City's Baron Capital **Ronald Baron** and his wife **Judy** donated \$20,000 to the Shoah Foundation.

After learning about the Shoah Foundation at an event last May, **Dan & Stacey Levitan** of Seattle donated \$25,000.

Richard Gelb, Chairman of Bristol Myers-Squibb Company, gave a \$10,000 gift to the Shoah Foundation.

Max Palevsky recently made a \$250,000 pledge to support the work of the Educational Resources department and underwrite the marketing and distribution of the *Broken Silence* international documentary series.

Essential Dental Systems of Hackensack, NJ, gave a corporate gift of \$10,000 in May 2000.

From Chicago, **Roger & Julie Baskes** and the **Pritzker Family Foundation** both gave generous gifts of \$25,000.

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The Shoah Foundation is a 501(c)(3) public charity in the U.S. and has non-profit status in several other countries.

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If you wish to honor or memorialize someone with your gift, the Foundation will mail a Tribute Card.

Event Calendar

April 1-15
The *Last Days* screens as part of film series at *Silent Voices Speak: An Art Exhibit & Lecture Series*. San Francisco, CA

April 10
International Media Day. Foundation headquarters. Hosted by the Shoah Foundation and EMC; 20 journalists from various countries tour Foundation's main office and interview EMC and Foundation representatives.

April 17
Center for Holocaust Studies, Clark University. Worcester, MA. Douglas Greenberg (President and CEO), speaker.

April 19
The *Last Days* screens at high schools in Israel in honor of Yom Hashoah (Holocaust Remembrance Day).

April 19 and 21
Schindler's List airs on American PBS stations in honor of Yom Hashoah. PBS generously donated 10 minutes of airtime for the Shoah Foundation to promote its work to a national audience.

April 20
In conjunction with *Schindler's List* broadcast, Yahoo.Com hosts an online webchat with guests Douglas Greenberg and Renee Firestone (survivor featured in *The Last Days*).

June 14
Screening of *The Last Days*. Museum of Jewish Heritage, NY.

June 27-29
Online Inquiry Working Group. Foundation headquarters. Hosted by Ella Thompson (Project Manager, Technology) in collaboration with California Writing Project, and the Gevirtz Graduate School of Education at University of California at Santa Barbara. In this collaborative conference, leaders in technology and education exchange ideas.

Joining Forces:

As Part of the Allied Armies, These Survivors Helped Liberate Europe

In the spring of 1945, much of the area occupied by the Nazis during World War II was liberated. To commemorate that anniversary and pay tribute to those who were members of, or affiliated with, the Allied Forces that freed occupied Europe, *Past Forward* is honored to share these stories from the Shoah Foundation's archive.

Every testimony in the Foundation's collection provides a unique and valuable insight into the events surrounding liberation. Interviewees speak about liberation from every angle: camp survivors who waited for the Allies' arrival; U.S. soldiers who walked into camps; British airmen who flew missions over German lines; refugees who waited anxiously for news of relatives they left behind. Some interviewees were liberated, or escaped Nazi territory, then assisted efforts to liberate others.

The liberators featured here knew the suffering that was endured under Nazi occupation, because they lived through it themselves. Fueled by their own experiences, each went on to contribute to the Allied victory in a different way.

From Kindertransport to Canadian Army: Erich Cahn

It was November 1938 in the fields outside of Hamburg, Germany, and 16-year-old Erich Cahn was on a *hachshara* – a Zionist-sponsored agricultural training course – in preparation for his intended immigration to Palestine. When he saw armed German men go by, he assumed they were on routine army maneuvers. In fact, it was *Kristallnacht*, the violent pogrom that compelled thousands of Jews to flee Germany.

Erich's mother and sister fled to his mother's native Netherlands, while Erich accepted a spot on a Kindertransport to the United Kingdom on December 14, 1938. (Since his parents' divorce, Erich had lived in Hamburg with his father, a popular cantor, while his sister Hannelore had stayed with their mother.) In less than two years, Erich went from being a German schoolboy, to an enemy alien held in a British internment camp, to a British army volunteer.

Along with many other foreign nationals, Erich was sent to the Pioneer Corps, whose units helped supply the British army. While stationed in Northern England, Erich met his future wife Olga in nearby Darlington, and they married in 1943. Their first son arrived while Erich was waiting to be sent to France.

After several months on the continent, Erich was

chosen to become an interpreter for the Canadian army in summer 1944. On April 13, 1945, he was sent to the Netherlands, to the Westerbork concentration camp, liberated the day before by Canadian tanks. His job was to question the camp population to determine if the Germans had left any spies or saboteurs behind.

Dressed in motorcycle gear, Erich and his fellow interpreters waited for permission to enter Westerbork. On the other side of the gate, a group of prisoners had gathered. No one spoke until a prisoner pointed to Erich and said, "He looks Jewish." Erich said he was; then, knowing that his mother and sister were somewhere in the Netherlands, asked the prisoners if they had heard of his family. "What is your sister's name?" "Hannelore Cahn." "She's here, in Westerbork."

The entire group of prisoners led Erich to his sister's barrack. There, Hannelore, whom he had not seen in seven years, ran out and flung her arms around him. The next day, at the request of a prisoner who had known their father in Hamburg, Erich led Shabbat services for the camp.

Two months later, Erich went to Germany, where he interrogated suspects for the Nuremberg Trials. He discovered that his father had perished in the Theresienstadt ghetto in Czechoslovakia, but that his mother had been rescued from a deportation train by the Swedish Red Cross.

After his discharge, Erich rejoined his family in the United Kingdom, where he became a rabbi. In 1963, he, Olga, and their two sons immigrated to Melbourne, Australia. Today, Erich continues to be active in interfaith work and conducts weddings (including that of one of his two granddaughters). He also leads services in a Jewish old-age home every Shabbat. After all, says Erich, "The Almighty has been very good to me."

From False Identity to French Intelligence: Marthe Hoffnung Cohn

As a young girl, Marthe Hoffnung was buying eggs for her family when another girl called her a "dirty Jew." Marthe broke the eggs over the girl's head and ran home to her mother, who applauded Marthe's response. The fifth child of eight in an open-minded Jewish family, Marthe grew up in Metz, France, near the German border, later moving to Poitiers, southwest of Paris. Marthe was 20 when the Germans invaded France in 1940, and several members of her family became actively involved in resistance movements.

The Hoffnungs fled to unoccupied France in 1942 with the help of many non-Jews. A Poitiers City Hall employee freely gave the entire family false identity cards without the German-mandated Jewish stamp. A classmate of Marthe's warned

them of a roundup the night before their departure, insisting the entire family come to her home. Other townsfolk watched Marthe and her mother push Marthe's grandmother across the border on a bicycle, without denouncing them. Once her family was safely settled in a remote mountain town, Marthe went to Marseilles to continue her nursing studies.

After graduation, Marthe moved to Paris. Confident in her Germanic appearance and false papers, she worked as a private nurse and avoided roundups for the rest of the war. In August 1944, Paris was liberated, and "every window opened and everyone sang *La Marseillaise*." Except for her sister Stephanie, who was deported to Auschwitz for resistance activities, Marthe's entire family had survived.

Soon after France's liberation, Marthe joined the French army, where her fluent German earned her an intelligence position. After 13 attempts to cross German lines, Marthe successfully entered the country to gather information about the remaining German forces. Marthe played a "good German girl" fleeing the Allies' advance. A group of ambulance drivers told her not to worry, citing the exact location of a large German army contingent nearby. Marthe smuggled much information back to the French and in so doing saved many lives.

A year after World War II ended, Marthe volunteered to enter another war zone – this time in Vietnam. Accustomed to danger, she spent three years there, working as a head nurse in mobile medical units. She later went to Switzerland, where she studied for her Swiss nursing degree. Having met her American husband in Geneva, Marthe moved to the United States in 1956, where she became a nurse anesthetist. Since 1979, Marthe has lived in California with her husband, Dr. Major L. Cohn. They have two sons and one granddaughter. Marthe was awarded the French Medal of Honor in 2000 and is currently writing a book about her experiences.

From Polish Refugee to Private First Class: Fred Wahl

Born Rafael Blumenberg in mostly Catholic Przmesyl, Poland, Fred Wahl spent most of his childhood trying to fit in. After enduring years of beatings in school and being made to sit in the back of the class by his antisemitic teachers, Fred looked for other places to belong. He joined the Zionist group Gordonia and dreamt of emigration.

One of his five older siblings, Edek (Eddie), had immigrated to Cuba in 1927. When Fred was eighteen, Eddie sent tickets for Fred and their brother Henek to join him. As Fred's train pulled away, his parents told Fred not to forget them.

In Cuba, Fred sold neckties on the streets of Havana. To him, Cuba was full of "beautiful cars, beautiful girls ... like heaven coming out of Poland." He was content there until September 1939, when the letters from home suddenly stopped coming. That May, Fred had witnessed the ship S.S. St. Louis, carrying 900 Jewish refugees, being turned away from Havana and sent back to Europe. Afraid for his family, Fred approached the Polish embassy where he was told that if he wanted to help, he should go to the United States and volunteer.

cataloguing

Boris Brauer, a Survivor of Soviet Labor Camps and a Liberator, Is a Valuable Asset to the Cataloguing Department

On Tuesdays at 12:30, a small group gathers in a Shoah Foundation trailer to listen to a bright-eyed, white-mustached man speak Hebrew. This is not a typical lunch hour, but Boris Brauer isn't a typical senior citizen. Three days a week, Boris works as a research assistant in the Foundation's Cataloguing department. A staff of cataloguers, many young enough to be his grandchildren, relies on Boris' fluency in seven languages to help them catalogue interviews with multilingual survivors. However, it is his knowledge of the "language" of prewar Europe – its places, traditions, and idioms – that is his most indispensable contribution.

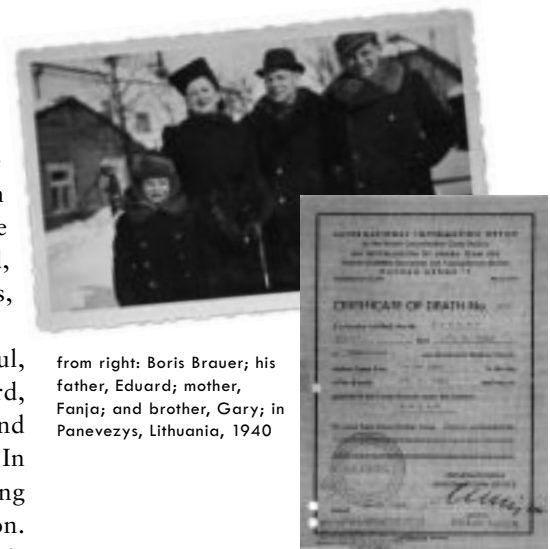
Whether pinpointing a Lithuanian town, or interpreting a Yiddish proverb, Boris often answers questions that could take hours to research. Cataloguer Kirsten Anderson explains that "... [as cataloguers] we can get so bogged down in the details, it's good to have Boris there to help us navigate the labyrinth. He is indispensable when it comes to helping us with languages and geography, because most Americans, even if well-educated and well-traveled, just don't have the exposure to the variety of languages, cultures, and geographies we contend with every day."

Boris was born in Panevezys, Lithuania, a peaceful, provincial town of about 20,000 people. His father, Eduard, a successful merchant, and mother, Fanja, raised Boris and his brother Gary in a small estate area near an orchard. In the late 1930s, Lithuania became unstable, with increasing antisemitism, and in 1940 was occupied by the Soviet Union. Feeling that his family was beginning to "stick out" in their small town, Boris' father went to nearby Kaunas (Kovno) in 1941, intending to send for his family soon. The arrival of the Soviets in Panevezys changed those plans. At three o'clock in the morning on June 14, 1941, 16-year-old Boris, his mother, and his eight-year-old brother were taken with other "Zionist bourgeoisie" to a train bound for Siberia.

At the first labor camp, Boris worked as a carpenter's assistant for a few months. Then, transferred to another camp near Barnaul, Boris cut lumber in the Siberian forest, while his mother and brother worked in the barracks with other Lithuanian Jews. Boris stayed there from October 1941 until December 1943. He says the experience "would have been the best kind of university for a young man" if not for the endless hunger that caused hallucinations, accidents, loss of teeth, and disease.

In late 1943, Boris was summoned by a secret police officer. This man plied Boris with butter, sausages, and vodka, then proceeded to question him about the political and cultural particulars of Lithuania. Impressed by Boris' intelligence and immaculate Russian, he proposed a plan: He would insure that Boris' family received sufficient rations if Boris would join the Soviet army, which was in desperate

Boris Brauer's parents' wedding in Panevezys, Lithuania, 1924. From left to right: Boris Brauer's grandmother Shayna; mother, Fanja; father, Eduard; and grandfather, Menashe



from right: Boris Brauer; his father, Eduard; mother, Fanja; and brother, Gary; in Panevezys, Lithuania, 1940

Eduard Brauer's death certificate issued in 1946 from the International Information Office for the former concentration camp Dachau



Boris Brauer and his wife, Eugenia (center), on the occasion of their wedding in Tel Aviv, Israel, 1951



1939, Erich Cahn's father, Sigmund Cahn, who was the Chief Cantor of the last prewar synagogue in Hamburg



Rabbi Erich Cahn

Erich Cahn with sister, Hannelore, outside of Westerbork concentration camp



Marthe Hoffnung Cohn



continued on page 14...

continued on page 14...

cataloguing

archive

Cataloguing, continued from page 9 . . .

need of men. Boris agreed, and after three weeks' training, was sent to the Belorussian front. (His mother and brother survived the war, staying at the same camp until 1950.)

As part of the Fifth Army Division of the 433rd Regiment, Boris escaped antisemitism by looking and sounding Russian, and by not volunteering the information that he was a Jew. His unit suffered an extremely high number of casualties as they moved toward Germany. The Soviets thought that the concentration camps held prisoners of war and were not prepared for what they experienced when they liberated a Bromberg subcamp of Stutthof in early 1945.

"Dante's hell," is how Boris describes what he saw when he walked into the camp. As freezing rain fell, camp prisoners, many of them "walking dead," asked for food and medical help. Having no orders on how to help the prisoners, the soldiers handed out their rations and talked to these survivors. Boris met a woman from Kaunas who had known Boris' father in the Kaunas ghetto, where he worked as a baker and spoke about his family often. A year later, Boris discovered that his father had been deported to Dachau and died there in 1945.

Boris' unit followed the fighting until sudden silence and white flags heralded V-E Day. "The joy was terrific," Boris remembers. Unfortunately, the casualties continued, as their unit pursued pockets of German snipers in the forests of Poland and Germany. Later in 1945, Boris left the army and began to "live like a human being again, doing something I believed in."

For three years, Boris lived in Munich, where he handled DP camp correspondence for the Central Committee for Liberated Jews. His American bosses didn't know that he was also a committed member of Berihah, an underground organization that helped smuggle Jewish refugees into then-British Palestine. After one of the Berihah transports was captured, Boris decided to leave for Palestine himself.

On the day the British left, May 10, 1948, Boris arrived in Israel on a "miserable fishing boat." Working first in the Israeli army, then for the Ministry of Agriculture, Boris stayed there until 1953. Then, he, his wife Eugenia, and son Edward came to Los Angeles, where their son Andrew was born in 1958. Boris worked as a store manager, salesman, and business consultant for 30 years. After retirement, he cared for his wife until her passing in 1993. A few years later, he gave his testimony to the Shoah Foundation.

When he saw a newspaper announcement that the Foundation was looking for cataloguers and researchers, he decided to apply. Since then, he has supported the researchers in the Cataloguing department and launched two lunchtime classes: colloquial Hebrew and Yiddish proverbs. His co-workers appreciate his wealth of knowledge, his quick wit, and his habit of bringing candy to share with everyone. Boris says that his work at the Shoah Foundation is a perfect match for him. "As a witness of those times, those events, I feel like I belong here."

Joining Forces, continued from page 9 . . .

After stowing away on a United Fruit Company ship bound for Miami, Fred and Henek found work in New York. In 1942, Fred joined the U.S. army and, as part of the 850th Aviation Engineers, built airstrips for Allied bombers in the United Kingdom. In a local synagogue, he met lovely Rosi Rindsberg, who had left Germany on a Kindertransport in 1939. Smitten, they corresponded throughout Fred's tour of duty.

On June 16, 1944, Fred's unit waded ashore in France. The Allies needed troop replacements, so Fred was sent to the 12th Armored Division, where he became a radio operator and an interpreter. In March 1945, his company liberated Hurlach, a prisoner-of-war work camp located in Kaufering, Germany. There, Fred interviewed a Polish prisoner who boasted of killing Jews in Fred's hometown.

Soon after Hurlach, Fred was relieved and overjoyed to receive a telegram from the Red Cross, informing him that his sister Zonka had survived Auschwitz. Fred's company moved into Austria, where they liberated Mauthausen concentration camp in May 1945, but Fred rushed to Paris to see Zonka. She told him how the Nazis took their parents away after Polish neighbors revealed their hiding place; how after her husband and child were killed, Zonka lived as a Polish Catholic; and later, when taken as a Polish laborer, how she worked as a nurse in Auschwitz, caring for Jewish prisoners. Fred stayed with Zonka for two weeks and arranged for her departure to Cuba. She later came to the United States, where she still lives in Los Angeles.

By the time Fred rejoined his unit in Mauthausen, the war was ending. Shortly before his discharge, Fred became a U.S. citizen and brought his sweetheart Rosi to America. Reunited at last, the couple married and lived in New York, then Los Angeles, where Fred ran a driving school. Today, they live in Colorado and enjoy their two children and three grandchildren.

Rosi and Fred Wahl



Fred Wahl sits on top of a Nazi airplane that his unit gunned down in December 1944, France



feature continued

Broken Silence, continued from page 3 . . .

in his films, Jasny fled into exile in 1970 and has taught film directing in the United States since 1984.

Jasny says the challenge of making a film about a topic like the Holocaust is to "show the human touch, the divine spark of humanity in this hell." Thus, his film begins with a poem written by a boy who was killed in Auschwitz at age 14. The film also features paintings and artwork produced by the prisoners of Theresienstadt during their incarceration.

Jasny has a huge respect for those who survived. He describes how he discovered the concept of the film through watching Shoah Foundation interviews: "You love [the survivors]; you go into hell with them; [I thought] I will follow these people; they will show me what I shall do."

The result is a film that incorporates interviews with 19 different survivors, music, narration, and contemporary and archival footage. He made this film out of a strong sense of responsibility. "If I don't do it – who will? It is up to us, those who lived it, to do this work." He hopes his film will inspire young Czechs to understand the past and to act compassionately.

Jasny explains why he is so passionate about educating and motivating his audience: "When people say they cannot believe in God because he let such things happen, I say, 'Why did *people* let it happen?' The great mistake of humanity is too much ignorance and indifference."

To fight ignorance and indifference, it is necessary to reach out to those who might not otherwise seek out information. By broadcasting these films on national television in various countries, the Shoah Foundation aspires to reach large and diverse audiences.

Made in five different countries, by directors, editors, and musicians from those five countries, these documentaries address the Holocaust in a way their audiences can best understand. The survivors featured in the films speak the language of their fellow countrymen, both literally and culturally. The Shoah Foundation hopes that audiences will feel the impact of these survivors' stories more strongly because of common roots of language and culture, and will realize just how relevant this history is to their own time and place.

Translations Assistant Alejandro Baer contributed to this article.

international views continued

Jerusalem Office, continued from page 11 . . .

vivors. To Shoshana, this is proof that although "Israeli society can be extremely divided, this project has connected people."

In conversation, Shoshana emphasizes that the Foundation's work in Israel, and elsewhere, has been a team effort – between generations, between cultures, and between nations. When asked how working with the Foundation has impacted her life, Shoshana replies, "I became more sensitive, more understanding ... everything has gained a different perspective. I am so fortunate to have this experience."

Although the Foundation is no longer actively doing outreach to Holocaust survivors and other witnesses, potential interviewees are still welcome to call the Foundation if they are interested in being interviewed (toll-free number 800 661 2092 in the US and Canada; in Israel 180 021 2177; in Hungary 413 6012; from the rest of the world, please call 818 777 4673). Although we cannot promise to interview everyone, every effort will be made to interview those wishing to give testimony. Because the number of testimonies collected is limited, the Foundation is not looking for any new interviewers or videographers.

Museo Storico, continued from page 4 . . .

Zevi (former president of Unione delle Comunità Ebraiche Italiane) called out "Brava!" Several survivors, interviewers, and videographers who worked with the Shoah Foundation in Italy also attended the opening.

After the event, Ms. Procaccia commented that "The survivors, their families, and people who remembered those years were very moved. The teenagers who saw [the videotape] ... said they were shocked, and that they are ready to fight against racism. This is the real success."

Giovanna Boursier, a Foundation interviewer who attended, saw "ex-deportees, partisans, antifascists, young people, politicians, historians, and important intellectuals, all reunited in that little room that was once a place of torture. It was as if voices and faces of yesterday could meet today through the [video] screen, [through] memories that the Shoah Foundation has so tenaciously gathered."

The Shoah Foundation would like to acknowledge the survivors and witnesses whose testimonies are included in this exhibit: Piero Terracina, Giulia Spizzichino, Vittorio Foá, Mirella Anticoli, Settimia Spizzichino, Marcella Girelli, and Giuliana Limiti. In addition, the Foundation thanks interviewers Manuela Consonni, Elio Limentani, Noemi Procaccia, Sara Piperno, Federica Barozzi, and videographers Giorgio Heller, Angelo Piperno, and Amihai Grinberg.

Foundation Liaison Doris Felsen Escojido, interviewers Giovanna Boursier and Elio Limentani, and Community Relations Manager Sherry Bard contributed to this article.



Museo Storico della Liberazione di Roma

The Shoah Foundation in Italy
419 interviews to date
42 interviewers
16 videographers



Boris (at left) with friend Dan Danieli, a Holocaust survivor from Hungary
Photograph by Yosi A. R-Pozeilov

Oral history provides fascinating, personal glimpses into the past. Owing to the violent chaos of war, most survivors remember their experiences vividly, but not always the specific dates and places. Every day, researchers in the Shoah Foundation's Cataloguing department search for information that will unravel tangled threads of history and memory, trying to pinpoint which towns a liberator freed, in which forest a partisan fought, or in which camp a survivor was imprisoned.

Researcher Dan Danieli, himself a Holocaust survivor from Hungary, researched a question about Boris Brauer's testimony for *Past Forward*. In his testimony, Boris speaks about liberating a subcamp of the Stutthof concentration camp in January or February 1945. Below, Dan explains how he concluded that the camp Boris' unit liberated was most likely one of the Bromberg subcamps.

Boris' unit probably liberated a Stutthof subcamp called Bromberg-Braunau (Bydgoszcz) or Bromberg-Ost, both camps for women and children (Boris mentions the liberated camp was for women). According to Red Cross documentation, these camps were liberated on January 27/28, 1945 exactly within Boris' time frame. The horrible conditions in the camp Boris described could have been aggravated by the fact that three women's camps in Thorn (Torun) were evacuated by the Germans to Bromberg just before the liberation.

Boris mentions that a few days after liberating the camp, he continued to move with his unit to Pilau (Pila). Pilau is 60 kilometers west of Bromberg, confirming (or at least pointing toward) the location where the camp liberation took place.

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testimonies recorded		as of May 5, 2001		total: 51,428	
COUNTRIES				LANGUAGES	
Argentina	737	Lithuania	133	Bulgarian	622
Australia	2,481	Macedonia	9	Croatian	394
Austria	184	Mexico	112	Czech	573
Belarus	253	Moldova	283	Danish	72
Belgium	207	Netherlands	1,051	Dutch	1,080
Bolivia	22	New Zealand	55	English	24,919
Bosnia & Herzegovina	43	Norway	34	Flemish	5
Brazil	567	Peru	2	French	1,886
Bulgaria	636	Poland	1,429	German	929
Canada	2,844	Portugal	2	Greek	303
Chile	65	Romania	147	Hebrew	6,317
Colombia	14	Russia	712	Hungarian	1,211
Costa Rica	19	Slovakia	665	Italian	432
Croatia	330	Slovenia	12	Japanese	1
Czech Republic	567	South Africa	254	Ladino	10
Denmark	95	Spain	6	Latvian	6
Dominican Republic	1	Sweden	330	Lithuanian	45
Ecuador	9	Switzerland	68	Macedonian	9
Estonia	9	Ukraine	3,434	Norwegian	34
Finland	1	United Kingdom	873	Polish	1,571
France	1,675	United States	19,812	Portuguese	562
Georgia	6	Uruguay	126	Romani	28
Germany	676	Uzbekistan	25	Romanian	123
Greece	303	Venezuela	227	Russian	7,010
Hungary	681	Yugoslavia	361	Serbian	374
Ireland	5	Zimbabwe	6	Sign	4
Israel	8,447			Slovak	574
Italy	419			Slovenian	6
Japan	1			Spanish	1,350
Kazakhstan	6			Swedish	269
Latvia	77			Ukrainian	317
				Yiddish	512

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