



EUROPEAN
JEWISH
FUND



ACTIVITY SUMMARY
2011–2012



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2011-2012

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Viatcheslav Moshe Kantor,
Chairman of the European Jewish Fund

About the Fund

The European Jewish Fund was founded in February 2006 on the initiative of Viatcheslav Moshe Kantor. The Fund was established with the specific goal of reinforcing Jewish life in Europe.

To achieve this goal, the Fund focuses on young people's connection to Judaism and their communities by supporting programs aimed at building Jewish identity and Jewish pride, especially by reconnecting young people with their rich Jewish past. Consequently, the Fund supports programs to educate young people about Jewish achievements in all aspects of life, including culture, science and medicine, presenting these achievements as a source of pride and self-respect. One such initiative is the Jewish Positioning System, or JPS, a program focused on researching and publicizing the achievements and contributions of Jews around Europe in all the above-mentioned fields.

The Fund is also committed to addressing assimilation, anti-Semitism and racism as serious threats to Jewish life in Europe.

Without a doubt, assimilation is a growing existential threat to European Jewry. The threat must be addressed in a serious manner with programs aimed at reconnecting people with Jewish life.

Anti-Semitism is once again a critical problem for Jews in Europe. In several countries the mounting danger of anti-Semitism is causing fear that that Europe's future may repeat its tragic past. The Fund is especially committed to counteracting this threat by strengthening Holocaust remembrance and education. The educational programmes supported by the Fund go beyond teaching historical facts to emphasize the lessons that must be learned from the darkest time in European history. A major program supported by the Fund in this regard is the "Let My People Live" international forum. These forums are used as a key tool for addressing anti-Semitism and the loss of historical memory.

The Fund also seeks to address contemporary challenges to European Jewry such as the Iranian nuclear programme. Because Jews are aware that the Iranian threat poses a danger to the entire world, the Fund has initiated an expert conference to present world leaders with a practical roadmap on handling the dangerous situation.

The Fund is a unique platform that enables sponsors and community leaders to come together and analyze the needs, problems and threats facing European Jewry, and to suggest programs to address those issues.

The Fund is divided into two chambers, the Chamber of Community Leaders, or Executive Council, and the Chamber of Sponsors, or Board of Governors.

Openness is a fundamental principle of the Fund's operations, and its roundtable is a place where all members can speak openly and participate as equals.

The Fund supports communal projects, regional and pan-European programs, and also initiates programs of its own in an effort to address its priorities or other subjects concerning a specific community or European Jewry as a whole.

Muslim Jewish Relations in Europe: The European Gathering of Muslim and Jewish Leaders in Paris

The Foundation for Ethnic Understanding (FFEU)

This project brings key Muslim and Jewish leaders into a Europe-wide network and is based on the principle of the two minority communities standing together when either is under attack. Dialogue and cooperative projects between Muslims and Jews in Europe are necessary to achieve communication and reconciliation between both communities.

Reality dictates that the European Jewish community must continue to align itself with the moderate majority of Muslims. It is estimated that European Muslims are responsible for half of the hate crimes committed against European Jews every year. Polls have shown that many European Muslims not only demonize Israel, but some also believe that Jews control the media and financial institutions.

The successful strategy developed by the FFEU and the EJV in the European effort to ameliorate the Middle East conflict in programming by “agreeing to disagree” has enhanced communication between the two communities and enabled them to work together, side by side. It has also increased the “fighting for each other” with Jews speaking out against islamophobia and Muslims standing up against anti-Semitism.

In 2011, leaders of Muslim and Jewish communities from across Europe gathered in Brussels for the First Gathering of European Muslim and Jewish leaders to discuss initiatives for better relations between the two communities. The Second Gathering of European Jewish and Muslim leaders in Paris on September 4-5, 2012, was an inspiring and profoundly hopeful event. The fact that such gathering was attended by 70 Muslim and Jewish leaders from 18 countries across Europe, during a period characterized by violent and sometimes murderous attacks on Jews by Muslim extremists in countries like France, Belgium and Sweden and by the alarming rise of anti-Muslim and sometimes anti-Jewish far-right political groups across the continent, showed that despite the perceived rift between the two communities, there is nevertheless a network in place of moderate European Muslim and Jewish leaders ready and eager to work together to fight anti-Semitism and anti-Muslim bigotry, including within their own communities.

At the culmination of the two-day event, the participants issued a pledge to show “zero tolerance” to clerics of any faith, including their own, who preach hatred against adherents of other religions. In addition, the imams, rabbis and community leaders vowed to “join hands in opposing all manifestations of anti-Semitism, anti-Muslim bigotry and xenophobia” and to combat legal threats to common religious practices such as circumcision of boys and the kosher and halal ritual slaughter of animals.



Rabbi Marc Schneier, president of the Foundation for Ethnic Understanding greets Dr. Mustafa Ceric, Grand Mufti of Bosnia and Herzegovina, at the opening session of the Gathering at Paris City Hall on Sept 4.



EUJS Interfaith Seminar in Morocco

European Union of Jewish Students (EUJS)

EUJS is an integral part of the European Youth Forum interfaith Group, together with Muslim and Christian student groups, co-organizing four interfaith seminars per year.

EUJS strongly believes that interfaith dialogue, aside from its vital contribution to peace and understanding, has a powerful and meaningful impact on an individual's identity and worldview. Cognizant of the many international organizations already devoted to dialogue, intercultural understanding and interfaith affairs, EUJS sees tremendous potential and strength in connecting these very organizations with each other. The program was built by young activists representing student and youth organizations invested in dialogue and interfaith projects, and gathered individuals and organizations from around the world.

The project gathered international leadership and key players within interfaith affairs in a four-day conference that took place in Morocco. Building on a Jewish-Muslim interfaith seminar held last year in Morocco, EUJS decided to create a space for established interfaith activists to share their work, exchange best and worst practices, discuss the challenges and to dive in and become inspired by Morocco's rich history of Muslim Jewish coexistence and friendship.

The participants actively involved themselves in the program, volunteering to lead sessions on a specific aspect of their religion, or sharing personal stories of successful interfaith initiatives. The environment encouraged creative and visionary discussions and

fostered the will to work together, in the present and in the future. In addition, EUJS plans to issue a follow-up press release and to build social network platforms for anyone interested in the work of interfaith and interreligious organizations. Besides strengthening their networks, the participants will establish joint campaigns, projects and initiatives which will be realized after the summit.



Centropa Summer Academy 2012

Germany

The Centropa Summer academies bring together teachers from public schools in Europe and the United States to work alongside teachers from the Jewish and Israeli school system. The main aim of this program is to create a network of history and English teachers in Jewish schools from across Europe.

Centropa Summer academies act as a professional development course for its participating teachers. These Summer academies are meant to provide teachers with a platform to share best practices and learn from one another about the use of new technologies, digital storytelling and English and Holocaust education—all in a single course. The goal is to then connect their students with students in Jewish schools in the United States and in Israel.

Centropa's 2012 Summer academy took place in Berlin and lasted over nine days. This was Centropa's sixth summer program for 75 teachers from 14 countries interested in 20th century Jewish history, Holocaust education and new technologies. The participating teachers learned to utilize Centropa educational materials such as multimedia films, databases and websites, and shared ideas and best practices with their fellow teachers on their usage.

During the Summer academy the project's participants:

- Worked in groups with teachers from similar regions (EU Jewish schools)
- Held sessions with teachers from similar disciplines
- Watched Centropa multimedia films and designed lesson plans in small groups in order to have programs to use when they return to their classrooms

- Listened to presentations by other teachers who use Centropa facilities and films to better understand how to use historical and new media programs in their classes
- Attended a minimum of six lectures by internationally-recognized historians specializing in Jewish history
- Formed networks with teachers in other countries and arranged programs together





Barcelona event, 2012

The Beit Project

Spain

The Beit Project proposes to transform Jewish Heritage sites in European cities into a relevant, contemporary and meaningful educational tool. Jewish Heritage sites, as part of a wider European Heritage, are present in thousands of European large, medium or small cities. These sites have become, especially in large cities, important tourist venues, attracting enormous quantities of visitors arriving from abroad.

The Beit Project's strategic objective is to transform Jewish Heritage sites into living and meaningful places for local communities, by using the most central activity in Jewish culture and education. The project sees an extraordinary opportunity in these sites to build a local social capital, and provides Jewish Heritage sites value in the past, present and future for all inhabitants of the city. Jewish Heritage sites as part of the fabric of the city have a specific role to play in its social and urban cohesion.

The aim of the Beit project is to connect local communities to their local heritage and reposition Jewish culture as part of urban identity; to increase local social value for Jewish Heritage sites and to develop a European Jewish approach toward the preservation and use of heritage sites.

The selected participants, a group of 16 pupils (12-13 years old), participated in 3 workshops in selected Jewish Heritage sites: in Paris, Barcelona, and Rome. The aim of each group was to learn about each location and to propose a new contemporary meaning for these historical sites. Educational activities took place in a selected urban heritage site in which the pupils constructed their own "house of study". This



Barcelona event, 2012

construction physically transformed the site for the ten weeks the participants spend there, and externalized the new use of it.

During the workshops, pupils were taught about the site, its history and contemporary meaning, teaching how to see and observe the site and how to film it. The pupils created a two-minute film on one of the topics related to the site and its history. The final stage of the project brought all the participants, teachers and local communities' representatives to evaluate the pupils' work.

The Beit project is designed to work with Jewish day schools from across Europe. A further stage of the project will introduce a level of dialog between the participants and pupils from a non-Jewish school situated in the Jewish Heritage site's direct proximity.

The Museum of the History of the Polish Jews

Poland

The Museum of the History of Polish Jews located in the site of former Warsaw Ghetto is the first and only museum to focus on the history of Polish Jews. It is a global center for education and culture dedicated to preserving the lasting legacy of Jewish life in Poland.

Through museum's cutting edge multimedia narrative exhibition, lively public programs, a resource center and diverse educational programs, visitors discover the history of Polish Jewry. It creates evocative environments, engrossing narratives and interactive installations that encourage visitors to explore these subjects using a wide variety of primary sources media .

The unique learning environment of the "History Theatre" creatively engages the minds

of diverse visitors of all ages. They discover the civilization of what was once the largest Jewish community in the world and the center of the Jewish Diaspora.

Museum of the History of Polish Jews' Core Exhibition will be composed of the following galleries: First Encounters, Paradisus Judeorum, Into the Country, Encounters with Modernity, The Street, Holocaust and Post War Years.

More than 20 historical experts from Poland, United States, Israel and United Kingdom had been invited to review the core exhibition as a whole and also particular galleries in depth. They were provided with full material and in several cases dedicated several days in Warsaw to meeting the team evaluating the work and offering advice.

The exhibition was also presented to museum experts, among those consulted are: Prof. Israel Bartal (Hebrew University), Prof. Daniel Blatman (Hebrew University), Prof. Israel Gutman, former director of Yad Vashem Research Center, Laurence Sigal, Director of Musee d'art et d'histoire du Judaisme, Paris. The construction of the building commenced on June 30th, 2009 scheduled to be completed in April, 2013.



Visualization: Nizio Design International. Paradisus Iudaeorum gallery

Jewish Shtetl Revival Alumni Summit

Belarus

The International children Art Forum 'Jewish Shtetl Revival- Alumni Summit' in Belarus took place in 2012 for the sixth time with the support of the European Jewish Fund.

Creative Jewish youth from the European Jewish communities, participants of the 2007-2011 Art Forums and those who continued the education in the field of art and culture, gathered again to discuss the history of Jewish art and culture. Visiting and being inspired by places of Jewish historical significance, the participants created works in various artistic disciplines: painting, drawing, arts and crafts, photography, fashion, texts and others.

The project is aimed to support the younger generation in European Jewish communities to make the first step towards the study of Jewish art, as well as to develop and improve their abilities. The goal of the project is to establish connections and develop creative

Chaim Sutin Museum in Smilovichi



National Art Museum

contacts between the participants who will show a keen interest in Jewish art and the development of their creative thinking.

The project provides a strong impetus for each of the participant's personal development and makes it possible, using unique training through the prism of Jewish culture and art in Belarus, to develop and to create modern art in those Jewish communities where they live.

The program included a children's artistic plainer, an exhibition of works by the participants, and publishing of a booklet with works of art by the participants. During the children's Art Forum the participants visited several towns in Belarus, among others, such as, Minsk, Gorodeia and Vitebsk, which are renowned for their Jewish history and culture. The Art Forum participants were acquainted with Shtetl history and inspired by the Jewish life and history. In addition, the Art Forum participants exchanged knowledge and experience about Jewish culture and arts from their countries, and participated in workshops and master classes of famous Belarusian Jewish artists.

Limmud in Germany



Limmud Learning Festival 2012

Limmud in Germany is a completely volunteer-based, nation-wide Jewish learning festival, modeled on the successful Limmud in the UK, in which participants create the event.

The concept is revolutionary in post-war Germany: at Limmud, Jews who might not meet in every-day life, because of political, religious, cultural or ethnic differences come together in a spirit of openness and

solidarity. One can keep his individual Jewish identity while seeing himself as part of a family.

Usually, organizers hold their multi-day festivals at former youth retreat in Werbellinsee, outside Berlin. But in 2012, there was a change of venue. In 17-20 May, more than 500 participants gathered in the historic Jewish High School on Grosse Hamburgerstrasse in Berlin. Virtually all the classrooms were filled with learning and teaching. In all, there were about 170 sessions on themes related to Jewish history, Israel, current events, Jewish learning, Jewish culture, art and philosophy and much more. The Festival had a simultaneous program for children and teens, and many walking tours and other programs that made use of “Jewish Berlin” as a laboratory. The event attracted people who had never been to a Limmud before, and who found the convenience of Berlin irresistible.

The vast majority of sessions were offered by the participants themselves. Many sources of Jewish learning are “right around the corner.” Anyone among the participants was able to present a workshop, performance, lecture or other presentation. In addition, participants organized Sabbath and other prayer services; there were orthodox, conservative and progressive services for those interested in taking part.

In 2013, the Limmud Festival will return to Werbellinsee to a weekend of Jewish learning in the countryside. The dates for Festival are May 9-12, 2013

College Hadracha

Turkey

The goals of the Turkish Jewish community and college Hadracha are to create a program whereby the community’s youth will have an opportunity to explore and develop their identity, while learning about Judaism and the Jewish people from the point of view of history, religion, culture, literature, poetry and philosophy. The objective is for the participants to become volunteers in the community and the program provides the necessary skills in marketing, fund-raising and strategic communications.

In order to realize this vision, Hadracha Seminars organized twice a year with up to 120 participants, from which the college Hadracha group was selected. Lecturers from different fields such as journalism, the Middle East conflict, Israel-Arab relations, human rights, communication skills and public relations as well as leaders from various associations within the Turkish community all participated in the seminars. Another goal of this project is to engender a Jewish identity which encompasses an understanding of religious education, music, literature, history and philosophy.

Since the time of its inception, graduate students from the College Hadracha successfully began working inside the community infrastructure where they created a database of ideas which they would like to implement more professionally. The students also invited well-known professionals in their field and organized roundtable discussions. The lecturers were chosen from a broad perspective and background.

In addition to the project’s major goal of contributing to the Turkish Jewish Community, it is also planning to add personal improvement programs which will improve the leadership qualities of the participants. The creators of the Hadracha Seminars hope to fill a lack of knowledge in the field of Jewish Education, and to advance another step towards greater understanding in these fields.



College Hadracha 2012

CHIBUR Project

The Mosaiske Trossamfund (Mosaic Community), Norway

There are two active Jewish communities in Norway, located in Oslo and Trondheim, but only 40% percent of the country's Jewish population are members of these communities. The figures are attributed to assimilation, a diverse and hard-to-travel landscape and a small population scattered over a large territory with dispersed community centres in small towns. All of these factors complicate strong community building and maintaining traditions and cultural life.

The Chibur project was established to help Jews in Norway to have greater knowledge of and becoming more associated with the Jewish community, connect them to each other and fulfil their cultural and traditional needs. With support of the European Jewish Fund the project has successfully run for three years.

The projects makes it easier to connect with Jews who live far from Jewish community centres, inform them about Jewish communal activities, coordinate the needs of people concerning their Jewish life, and create various programs that will be appropriate for as many community members as possible. The Chibur project also holds gatherings and celebrations around the country outside of the established community centres, organizing seminars, Bnei Akiva meetings and Summer Camps. There are also options for the sponsorship of the high cost of travel and hotels or hostels for those who wish to join Jewish activities in other cities, and special programs for Israeli members of the community, such as Israeli cultural events and gatherings are also offered.

A new and independent community has been established in the city of Bergen. Around 70 Jewish families living in Bergen never had the opportunity to live a Jewish life and give their children access to the Jewish tradition. With the help of the Chibur project, those families now celebrate holidays and share Shabbats together.



Jewish Education and Youth

The Jewish Community of Lisboa, Portugal

The Jewish Community of Lisbon (CIL) is the heir to one of Europe's oldest and most symbolical Sephardic Jewish Communities. It was founded during the Middle Ages and was abolished by the Inquisition in the 15th century. The community was re-established in the early 1800s.

Since then, it has remained a small, struggling community, only enlarged during World War II due to the influx of European Jews on their way to emigration throughout the world. During the second half of the 20th century the Jewish Community of Lisbon suffered serious attrition due to progressive assimilation, aging, and emigration.

The main goal of the Jewish Education and Youth project, is to create a dynamic Jewish educational program with an emphasis on young people in the community in order to build and develop their Jewish identity and prevent further assimilation.

The informal education provided by Organized Youth Movement (Dor Chadash) is based on the classical model of educational self-governance used in many countries. This principle involves education through peers (madrichim) and personal example, thus guaranteeing continuity and stimulating new generations through systematic informal educational activities.

Activity content is focused on subjects such as Judaism and Jewish identity, contemporary Judaism, Jewish religion and culture, Zionism, socializing in community life, general culture, recreation and entertainment. These activities also have the cooperation, support and guidance of the Formal Education department (Moré) and the Rabbi.



Machane 2012

The European Jewish Fund Leadership Program at Paideia

Paideia - the European Institute for Jewish Studies in Stockholm

The European Jewish Fund Leadership Program at Paideia educates social innovators, activists and professionals for the renewal of Jewish life and culture in Europe, a vision that underpins the aims of the European Jewish Fund and Paideia alike.

Since the inauguration of the program in 2008, 150 professionals and social entrepreneurs from 30 different countries have been trained through the EJF-Paideia cooperation. An overwhelming majority of former participants are deeply engaged in European Jewish life - as heads of communities, educational directors, fundraisers, museum curators, artists, government advisors, Limmud organizers, Moishe House founders, Hillel directors and heads of Jewish studies departments, among many other areas of involvement. The projects the participants have initiated reach hundreds of thousands of Europeans.

The European Jewish Fund Leadership Program at Paideia combines an in-depth and comprehensive education in the texts that constitute the bedrock of Jewish civilisation, traditional study methodology (Hevruta), an academic approach to interpretation and applied project development, making it a unique program in Jewish studies.

The program provides the participants with the knowledge and the tools they need to become driving forces in strengthening Jewish community life throughout Europe.

The program typically brings together participants from 12-15 different European countries, who work for civil society institutions, in the educational sphere, in the arts or who themselves direct projects of social innovation.



The program is divided into two parts:

Jewish Professional Track (One-Year Program)

The Paideia Jewish Professional Track is a one-year program designed for fellows pursuing Jewish community work as educators and organizational leaders. The program prepares fellows for a service career in Jewish life by providing them with Jewish substance, administrative skills training and applied management experience, helping them to hone the skills they will need to succeed as Jewish community professionals after they return to their home countries.

The Paideia Project-Incubator (Summer Program)

The Project Incubator is a ten-day interactive summer workshop where activists from all over Europe gather to develop and concretize projects for Jewish culture in Europe. Innovative artistic, cultural, educational and community-centred projects are created, developed and implemented as new initiatives. Program participants range from artists to journalists, Jewish educators to academicians. The program has the following goals:

- Enabling the development and success of projects for Jewish culture in Europe.
- Empowering project leaders through learning processes and networking.
- Equipping activists with professional tools, language and networks, which will enable them to further develop their projects, as well as undertake future ventures.
- Creating and sustaining a network of social innovators for Jewish Europe.

The program includes four hours of individual mentoring per participant, group work, networking sessions, Hevruta, individualized work and workshops, as well as social activities for creating a close-knit group.

A 2010 survey by The Pears Foundation, ROI Community and Jumpstart shows that the number of new initiatives has grown by 20 % per year over the past ten years. Currently in Europe, there are between 220 and 260 new initiatives (younger than ten years), reaching around 250,000 people.

Over 1/3 of all responding initiatives have gone through the Paideia Project-Incubator, part of the EJF Leadership Program.

Future Leaders Program

UK World ORT

World ORT is a non-profit, non-political organization that meets the educational and training needs of contemporary society with more than 3 million graduates worldwide since its inception ORT is the largest Jewish education and training organization in the world with activities in more than 100 countries past and present with current operations in Israel, the CIS and Baltic States, Latin America, Western Europe, Eastern Europe, North America, Africa, Asia and the Pacific.

The aim of ORT's educational programs, throughout the world, is to provide its students with the best possible preparation for their future. This preparation includes education to help them become citizens who make a positive contribution to their society and focused training to enable them to undertake worthwhile and fulfilling careers.

This project aims to develop future leaders for Diaspora communities. In particular, the program addresses the needs of smaller Jewish communities in European and countries from the Former Soviet Union. The program appeals to young Jewish individuals who have a desire to take an active part in the improvement of their communities. It provides opportunities for personal development as well as imparting the skills necessary to enable participants to influence their peers and fulfill communal roles.

An essential component of the training program is the development of participants' understanding of the modern State of Israel and its connection with Diaspora communities. The participants are 30 to 40 students (15-16 years old) that are recruited to the Future Leaders Program from countries across Europe and the FSU.

In general selection criteria includes: demonstrated leadership ability, an interest in Israel and the Hebrew language, an interest in local community affairs, a reasonable level of English and are able to travel internationally.



Future Leaders Program, Orientation Seminar, London, 2012

Project's Program

Orientation Seminar, London:

The seminar program contains activities that help participants to develop practical skills to equip them for local communal leadership. The participants also expand and develop their knowledge of Israel, the Hebrew language and the dynamics of Jewish communities. Participants have the opportunity to see a range of organizations and leaders in the London Jewish community, including many young leaders, innovative start-ups and projects. The seminar has a powerful impact of building a stronger Jewish identity amongst a diverse group of participants who all feel connected and motivated to become more involved in their own community.

Distance Learning and Community-based Activities:

Following their return to their home communities, participants are expected to become actively involved in practical activities that enable them to put into practice the skills and knowledge that they gained in London and to develop and apply lessons from the distance learning course. These activities are selected by the participants and include either Jewish youth club work, Israel advocacy, informal education or any other relevant community activities.

Israel Summer School:

The program culminated in an intensive three-week summer school in Israel. By bringing the group together for a shared experience and with a carefully crafted program, the participants, in addition to enriching their knowledge of the Hebrew language, intensify their interest in their heritage and culture, develop their attachment to Israel and its people and increase their understanding of the broader Jewish world.

During this summer school, participants attend a personalized course that provided intensive Hebrew language study, together with other educational and cultural activities. These activities designed to enhance participants' knowledge and appreciation of Israeli and Jewish themes and include an 'immersive' language environment so that participants can develop familiarity and fluency with the Hebrew language.

The project organizers plan to continue the program and make full use of their experience, the feedback and evaluations received to improve the program further. Each group of Future leaders will guide and assist the new recruited group, this will encourage them to take ownership of the program while providing continuity as well as expanding the support network of Future leaders in Jewish communities across the continent.

The Kantor Center for the Study of Contemporary European Jewry

The Kantor Center for the Study of Contemporary European Jewry, inaugurated in May 2010 at the Tel Aviv University, provides an academic framework for the inter-disciplinary research of European Jewry a dynamic and fascinating phenomenon - from the end of the Second World War until the present day.

The Center includes the Moshe Kantor Program for the Study of Contemporary anti-Semitism and Racism and cooperates with the Ze'ev Vered Unit for the Study of Tolerance and Intolerance in the Middle East.

The Center offers a platform for the diverse needs of researchers, students, governmental and civil service personnel, professionals, activists and the public at large, both in Israel and abroad, and cooperates with European Jewish communities and their leaders.

The Center initiates, encourages and coordinates research projects, conferences, seminars, publications and public events in the following areas: demographic processes and their ramifications; legislation against racism, hate crimes and hate speech, and anti-Semitism (particularly Holocaust Denial); mutual contacts between Jewish communities and their leaders and the local societies and other minorities; preserving the national memory and communal legacy, and its implications on the present-day; monitoring, analysis and study of contemporary anti-Semitism and racism worldwide.

The Center's staff has participated in local and international conferences (EU, ICCA, UNESCO), organized study sessions on Jewish communities (Hungary, Holland), an 8 meetings research seminar on Jewish identities in Europe, presented the annual anti-Semitism worldwide report together with Dr. Kantor at a press conference, and appeared in radio, TV and press representing the Kantor Center.

The annual press conference on Anti-Semitism Worldwide was held at Tel Aviv University on 18 April 2012. Dr. Moshe Kantor opened the event. Dr. Roni Stauber and Dr. Haim Fireberg presented the latest statistics and figures, noting that the year 2011 was marked by a worldwide continuation and even escalation in acts of harassment and incitement, including verbal threats, insults and abusive language and behavior. As specified in the General Analysis for 2011: "Such acts have increased dramatically in recent years in various parts of the world, yet the most troubling phenomenon is in-your-face harassment, a daily occurrence, especially in western Europe, as well as in Australia and Canada, directed mainly against visible Jews, in the street, in public places and in the vicinity of Jewish sites, as well as against children and youth in schools. Such acts are not fully reported due to the lack of proper monitoring in some countries, and cannot be counted."



Moshe Kantor, Dina Porat, Roni Stauber, Haim Fireberg, Rapahel Vago and Esti Webman

Strengthening Jewish Identity through the History of the Holocaust in the Former Soviet Union

Goals and Objectives:

During the many years of the Soviet regime, the history of the Holocaust was absolutely ignored and therefore, was virtually unknown to those who emigrated from the Soviet Union and is still relatively unfamiliar to those currently residing in the FSU.

Since April 2010, the Yad Vashem project has been supported by the European Jewish Fund and focuses on strengthening Jewish identity among Russian-speaking Jewish communities through learning the lessons of the Holocaust and the heroism of the era.

The Yad Vashem project aims at the extensive dissemination of knowledge about the Holocaust in the Russian language within the framework of formal and informal educational as well as cultural programs and activities. The Yad Vashem archive, its Research Institute and publications division, the unique International School for Holocaust Studies, the Museum and the Righteous Among the Nations department all play an integral role in this project.

Major Activities in 2011–2012:

Within the framework of the Center for the Research Center on the Holocaust in the FSU the following activities were implemented:



International Workshop: The Holocaust and the War in the USSR as reflected in War-time Letters and Diaries

- A special Holocaust section in the framework of Sefer Conference took place in Moscow in February 2012. A digest of papers from this conference was edited and prepared for publication.
- Work is continuing on a paper to be presented at a conference entitled: “World War II , Nazi Crimes, and the Holocaust in the Soviet Union” in Moscow on December 7-9 2012.
- International Workshop: “The Holocaust and the War in the USSR as reflected in War-time Letters and Diaries” took place in Yad Vashem, 19-20 November 2012. 11 outstanding lecturers from Israel, Germany, USA and Austria have presented their research works.
- The Center continued its work on the implementation of an online bibliography of books and articles on the history of Soviet Jews during the Second World War, and on the impact of the war on postwar Soviet Jewry.
- During this period, approximately 800 additional titles in Yiddish were uploaded to Yad Vashem’s website. The bibliographic entries are based on information received from various electronic databases and numerous research publications. As a result, the user can access a complete set of information about research on any given topic and reference the primary printed sources for further research.

Education Programs:

On July 30th 2012, a day of study was held for 120 educational staff members from the IDF’s Nativ course. This program lasted 8 hours and included a lecture on the topic of “The Holocaust in the FSU”, a workshop on “The Dilemma of Jewish Identity during the Holocaust”, a guided viewing of the film “Witness and Education” and the accompanying educational manual on the film. There was also a tour along the theme of Jewish fighters during the Second World War and a concluding ceremony in the Yizkor Hall.

Travelling Exhibitions:

Two sets of the new developed exhibition “War has a Tearful Taste” were passed over to Nativ for exhibit in centers in the Ukraine and Russia. The first exhibition was on show during the opening of the “Tkuma” center in Dnepropetrovsk.

Guided Tours:

Every Friday specialize tours are being arranged in the Yad Vashem campus in accordance with key Holocaust historical dates. Between April and October 2012 more than 300 people have participated in these tours.

“The Olive Tree in The Forest”

Documentary on Contemporary Anti-Semitism in Europe



“The Olive Tree in the Forest” is the name of a documentary on current anti-Semitism in Europe. The documentary was written and presented by Leah Zinder, filmed by Dennis Zinn, and sponsored by the European Jewish Fund. It will be broadcast on Israel Broadcasting Authority (IBA) News and on Israel Television’s Channel One. The film documents seven countries in Western, Central and Eastern Europe to explore the virulently anti-Israeli and anti-Zionist campaign being waged there, and its effect on Europe’s Jewish communities.

The Jews of Europe have become the target of physical and verbal attack in their home countries, particularly in times of crisis in the Middle East. The documentary presents how the anti-Israel campaign builds on centuries of anti-Semitic stereotypes to demonize and attempt to delegitimize the State of Israel, and has in fact become the 21st century incarnation of anti-Semitism.

In interviews with Jewish leaders, as well as leading politicians, the film examines the profound effect the campaign of hate, as well as the far-reaching demographic changes sweeping Europe, are having on the Jewish communities. The documentary also shows how some are withdrawing into more secluded Jewish lives, or even planning to leave the countries of their birth. The onslaught on Israel’s policies is also affecting the way Jews feel about the Jewish homeland and is sparking controversy within their own communities.

The film’s title alludes to a rabbinical saying comparing the Jews to the olive tree, which is the first to burn when a forest is on fire. The latest wave of anti-Semitic hatred, directed at Israel but often targeting Diaspora Jewry, is a symptom of the profound demographic and economic upheavals Europe is facing.

These upheavals have sparked a revival of extreme right-wing forces across Europe. The film includes on-camera interviews with Filip Dewinter of the Belgian Vlaams Belang party, Marton Gyongosi of the Hungarian Jobbik party and with the openly anti-Semitic Greek author Kostas Plevis.

“The Olive Tree in the Forest” is a thought-provoking depiction of the new anti-Semitism that is not only a Jewish problem – it is a symptom of the profound economic, social and political crisis that is shaking Europe to its very foundations.



Israel Up Close Reporting on European Jewry

Israel television’s National Public Broadcasting Authority (IBA)

The ongoing partnership between the Israel Broadcasting authority news (IBA) and the European Jewish Fund continues to showcase events affecting Jews in Europe, and help strengthen the communities and their ties to Israel.

This year, “Israel Up Close Reporting on European Jewry” focused on two major projects sponsored by the EJF, the Interfaith Conference and the Centropa Summer Academy.

The Interfaith Conference organized by the European Jewish Congress, the Grand Mosque de Paris, and the New York-based Foundation for Ethnic Understanding – brought around 100 religious leaders from 20 European countries, including Morocco, Israel, and the United States together, to discuss common burning issues facing the Jewish and Muslim communities on the continent. Seventy teachers and educators from around the world came to Germany to take part in the Centropa course to augment their Jewish History teaching skills. Centropa uses advanced technologies to research and preserve Jewish memory, and then uses these technologies to disseminate its material in creative and innovative ways. During this year “Israel Up Close Reporting on European Jewry” produced an item on the International Luxembourg Forum on Preventing Nuclear Catastrophe which brought together leading international experts on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

Another news item was made about the awarding of the European Medal of Tolerance to Croatian president, Ivo Josipovic, and former Serbian president, Boris Tadić, who received the 2012 presentation from the European Council for Tolerance and Reconciliation (ECTR), a Paris based NGO dedicated to promoting peace and reconciliation in Europe.

A report was also produced on the granting of the Medal of Chevalier de la Legion d'honneur to Dr. Moshe Kantor, President of the European Jewish Congress (EJC). Dr. Kantor was awarded the medal by French President, Mr. Nicolas Sarkozy for working towards the rights of minorities, promoting interfaith relations, leading the fight against racism and anti-Semitism and pushing for a more tolerant Europe

IBA news and the EJF produced a film called "The Olive Tree in the Forest", focused on issues of anti-Semitism in Europe. The film will have its premiere in January 2013 on Israel's Channel 1 during the renowned "Mabat Sheni" program, to coincide with International Holocaust Remembrance day.

IBA English News on Israel's national public television channel has over a hundred thousand viewers in Israel and is seen by millions worldwide via various networks, cable companies and commercial television stations, satellite networks and on the internet. The biggest distributor by far is the Lesea Broadcasting Network which delivers IBA News twice a day to twenty-two million homes in the United States. The Lesea network also makes IBA News available to millions of viewers in Asia and the Middle East.

The European Medal of Tolerance European Parliament

European Council on Tolerance and Reconciliation (ECTR)

On the 16th of October 2012 Croatian President Ivo Josipovic and former Serbian President Boris Tadic received the ECTR European Medal of Tolerance for their "contributions to tolerance, honesty, moral courage and reconciliation" in Europe. Ceremony located in the European Parliament was attended by over 200 participants including many ambassadors, MEPs and journalists.

President of the European Parliament Martin Schulz and Co-Chairmen of the European Council on Tolerance and Reconciliation Aleksander Kwasniewski and Moshe Kantor stressed Tadic's and Josipovic's role in promoting reconciliation in the Western Balkans and opening possibilities for the region's progress on the way to EU membership.

Voicing his gratitude for the award both, Josopovic and Tadic said that the medal was a recognition of tolerance and dialog not just in Serbia and Croatia, but in the rest of the Western Balkans, especially Bosnia and Herzegovina, where Bosniaks, Serbs and Croats live alongside each other.



Receiving the Medal of Tolerance (photo: Mathieu Paternoster)

The International Luxembourg Forum on Preventing Nuclear Catastrophe

The Forum was established pursuant to a decision of the International Conference on Preventing Nuclear Catastrophe held in Luxembourg on May 24-25, 2007. The Forum is one of the largest non-governmental organisations uniting leading, world-renowned experts on non-proliferation of nuclear arms and arms reduction and limitation.

The Forum's priorities are:

- To facilitate the process of arms limitation and reduction, counteract growing threats to the nuclear non-proliferation regime and erosion of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), including the escalating danger of nuclear terrorism and attempts by separate states to gain access to nuclear materials and technologies;
- To promote international peace and security through new approaches, and propose to decision-makers practical solutions to non-proliferation and arms control critical issues.

The principal guiding bodies of the Forum are the International Advisory Council (IAC) and the Supervisory Council (SC).



Joint Conference of Luxembourg Forum and Geneva Centre for Security Policy. Geneva, September, 11-12, 2012

The International Advisory Council consists of more than 40 leading experts from many countries. IAC members make proposals on the Forum's agenda, arrange events and participate in drafting the Forum's final documents (declarations, memoranda, statements etc.) to be circulated to top-tier politicians, heads of international organisations and public figures around the world.

The Supervisory Council is a team of prominent politicians, public figures and world-renowned scientists, including Hans Blix, former Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA); William Perry, former Secretary of the U.S. Department of Defense; Gareth Evans, Co-Chair of the International Commission on Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament, former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Australia; Rolf Ekeus, former OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities; Sam Nunn, prominent U.S. politician and Co-Chair of the Nuclear Threat Initiative; Roald Sagdeev, RAS Fellow and Director of the East-West Centre at the University of Maryland (USA); Nikolay Laverov, Fellow and Vice President of the Russian Academy of Sciences; Igor Ivanov, MGIMO Professor, former Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs and Secretary of the RF Security Council. Members of the Supervisory Council advise on the activities of the Forum, a high-profile public entity aimed at strengthening international peace and security.

The Forum is headed by its President, Viatcheslav Kantor, PhD., a prominent international public figure, philanthropist, entrepreneur and investor. Mr. Kantor leads many international public institutions. He chaired the Organising Committee of the Luxembourg Conference and has greatly contributed to the activities of the International Luxembourg Forum.

Since its inception 5 years ago, the Luxembourg Forum has held 14 conferences, seminars and workshops in Moscow, Washington, Luxembourg, Rome, Vienna, Geneva and Stockholm.



EUROPEAN JEWISH FUND Fund's Activists



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Chairman of the Fund
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Adv. Arie Zuckerman
Secretary General



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Organization of Belarusian Jewish Organizations
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Leonid Levin
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The Jewish Community of Luxembourg

François Moyse
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Finn Schwarz
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of Belgian Jewish Organizations

Maurice Sosnowski
President



Macedonia

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President



Riga Jewish Community, Latvia

Arkady Suharenko
President



Federation of Jewish Communities of Romania

Aurel Vainer
President



Jewish Community of Estonia

Alla Yakobson
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Cyprus Jewish Community

Ami Yeshurun
President



The Jewish Community of United Kingdom

Vivian Wineman
President



Swiss Federation of Jewish Communities

Herbert Winter
President



The Teenagers World Ort is teaching to lead... the British way

By Jennifer Lipman, December 20, 2012



The group of European teenagers World Ort has brought to the UK to learn how Jewish life is organized here.

For Cenk Bonfil, training to become a better leader is not merely something to do to pass the time. Coming from the tiny Jewish community of Istanbul, he knows that if he does not act, there will be few others to do the job for him.

“My community needs leaders, so why not me?” he asks. The soft-spoken teenager is explaining why he wants to hone his leadership skills during a visit to the Houses of Parliament. “There are challenges coming from a small community like in Istanbul.”

He is one of 25 participants, aged between 16 and 18, on The Future Leaders programme run by World Ort, the largest Jewish education training organization in the world, and supported by the Israeli government and the **European Jewish Fund**. Over the next nine months, the teenagers will work with mentors, take part in a series of seminars, blog about what they have learnt, and run a project to benefit their local communities.

Their week in London, includes a fun-filled Shabbat, visits to tourist sites and tickets to a West End show. More importantly, it is a chance for them to glimpse how Jewish life is organized over here.

The programme, now in its second year, is the latest stage in Ort’s 132-year mission to “work for the advancement of Jewish and other people through training and

education”. Ort started life in Tsarist Russia and it has come full circle. Although some of the participants come from Western Europe, most are from countries such as the Czech Republic, Ukraine, Moldova, Bulgaria, Serbia and Slovakia.

The attraction of the programme is not merely educational. When I meet them at the House of Lords, for a panel discussion on Jewish identity and values chaired by Lord Sterling, with Baroness Deech and Conservative MPs Michael Ellis and Zac Goldsmith, they have been in London for a few days. Already, friendships are forming.

In Britain, we can take for granted our network of Jewish youth movements. They are hungry for ideas they can apply to their communities.

The hour-long session brings in everything from the separation of church and state to the nature of British political culture and how Jews have built a successful life in Britain. They listen eagerly as the panellists offer their thoughts, with Goldsmith discussing how his environmentalism fits with the Jewish idea of tikkun olam (repairing the world) and Baroness Deech explaining the importance of giving women the same opportunities as men. Lord Sterling urges them to look outward as Jewish leaders, to study other religions and communities.

Several ask advice on how to motivate people and how to convince them to fight for change. Goldsmith offers: “You have to, if necessary, be the only one in the room to hold a view. You have to be prepared to stand up and be counted. I’m an agitator behind the scenes We can all do things.”

“Doing things,” of course, is why these teenagers are on the programme. Some have signed up to learn how to engage their peers in Jewish life. “We want more young people to join our community,” explain Eden Alexandrova and Simon Leviev, both from Sofia.

“My home, Duisburg in Germany, is not a big Jewish community — there are just 2,000 people,” adds Amanda, who said she relished seeing first-hand how programmes like Mitzvah Day are run.

Perhaps Misha Ilchenko, a teenager from Cherkassy, in Ukraine, sums it up best. Occupied by the Nazis, then under Soviet rule for decades, Jewish life in Cherkassy is gradually being restored.

“I want to be able to lead the next generation,” he says. Cherkassy, and so many other towns and cities in Europe, need more young Jews like Misha.

Painting their own Jerusalem

Jewish News Agency

By Olga Zagadskaya, October 25, 2012

Minsk, 25 October, 2012 (AJN) - The Sixth International Children Art Forum ‘Revival of the Jewish Shtetl’, organized by the Union of the Belarusian Jewish Public Associations and Communities with the support of **the European Jewish Fund**, took place. The International Children Art Forum ‘Revival of the Jewish Shtetl’ is organized for the study of Belarusian Jewish culture and art in the context of world culture and for the development of modern Jewish art.

Annually an Art Forum unites young artists from Jewish communities of Belarus, Bulgaria, Israel, Lithuania, Moldova and Serbia. This year the meeting was unusual as the graduates of the previous five Art Forums between the years 2007-2011 participated. Currently, these participants are teenagers continuing their study in creative schools and higher educational institutions.

Even those who have chosen another profession look back fondly on their time at the Art Forums and say that this event was an important formative moment in their life.



Galina Levina welcomes the participants of the project (photo by Olga Zagadskaya, AJN)

This year the organizers were especially careful in choosing the educational element of the program in the Art Forum as they wished to expand the outlook of those who are no longer children, but young adults. Participants visited towns in Belarus known for their interesting Jewish history and culture. These are towns and villages where Jewish communities have been revived. However, there were also places where people come “to listen to the silence”. These are the places where Jewish life was completely destroyed during and after the Holocaust.

The participants took part in a creative workshop and master classes given by the famous Belarusian architect, Leonid Levin, the head of the Union of the Belarusian Jewish Public Associations and Communities. They also visited a master class given by Lina Tsivina, an artist who works with ceramics painting and chamotte. The participants also learnt the painting technique at Svetlana Katkova’s master class as well as the sculpture technique from sculptor Maxim Petrul, and learnt the study of monuments with architect, Galina Levina.

Galina Levina, the initiator and the head of the project, told the Jewish News Agency, special attention was given to the comprehension of the Holocaust subject through art. A lot of attention has been given in Belarus to the perpetuation of the memory of eight hundred thousand Jews annihilated during World War II. One of the moments which moved many to tears was the presentation of the film “Small Shoe” which highlights the depth of the tragedy of the Holocaust (the production was sponsored jointly by the Republic of Belarus, the Russian Federation and the Czech Republic; the director is Konstantin Nguen (Malkin-Fam), the producers are Konstantin Nguen (Malkin-Fam) and Jury Igrusha).

The dialogue with the pupils of the Children’s Home of Creativity and Secondary School №2 in Smilovichi, the homeland of the famous Jewish artist Haim Soutine, was also important. The final exhibition of the works made by the participants of the Art Forum on the basis of what they experienced during the trip through Belarus took place in the Museum of History of Minsk.

According to the employees of the museum, the young artists work was outstanding.

“Today, we cannot yet completely understand and realize the depth of everything that we have seen and heard during the Art Forums. But each of you draws ‘your own Jerusalem,’” were Galina Levina’s parting words and wishes to the participants. The result of the project will be the publication of an album with the participants’ work created during the visits to the Jewish shtetls of Belarus.

All the photos of the Sixth International Children Art Forum ‘Revival of the Jewish Shtetl’ can be seen in the photo gallery of in the Jewish News Agency



New Life from Old Archives

An agreement with Ukraine gives Yad Vashem access to long-forgotten files that are expected to reveal information about hundreds of thousands of unidentified Jews murdered during the Holocaust.

By Ofer Aderet | Mar.18, 2011

In a modest ceremony, with no media presence, a trailblazing agreement was signed last month between Jerusalem’s Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial Authority and the archives of the Ukrainian KGB. The agreement is expected to upgrade historical research on the fate of hundreds of thousands of Jews who were persecuted and murdered during the Holocaust in the Soviet Union. The Ukrainian security services will supply Yad Vashem with invaluable World War II documents, including lists of deported and murdered Jews, the minutes of meetings held by officials of the Ukrainian



A German soldier being received by Soviet Ukrainian women, 1941. Photo by German Federal Archive

security forces following the liberation of the concentration and death camps, and information on the trials of those involved in killing Jews.

“This is a real breakthrough; it is a major event of outstanding importance,” Avner Shalev, chairman of the Yad Vashem directorate, told Haaretz.

In the next few months, the institution’s researchers will visit the archives in Kiev to begin photocopying documents. Afterward, back in Jerusalem, they will catalog and process them, in an attempt to identify as many names as possible of Jewish Holocaust victims. These names will be added to Yad Vashem’s database, which still lacks the names of some two million Jewish victims, most of them from Eastern Europe. Additionally, Yad Vashem is hopeful that the new documents will enable Holocaust researchers to retell the personal histories of other victims who up until now were identified only by a name.

“The new agreement,” explained Shalev, “is part of our efforts to dramatically increase our knowledge of the annihilation of the Jews of the Soviet Union during the Holocaust.”

The unique, sophisticated computer software to be used by researchers will enable them to categorize complex data at the level of first names, to cross-check that data with other information received from additional sources, and to thereby receive a comprehensive, general picture. The cost of the archival research is estimated at several hundred thousand dollars for each archive to be visited by Yad Vashem staffers, the bulk of that going to photocopying.

“We are not looking for the historical narrative or for depictions of battles,” noted Dr. Haim Gertner, Yad Vashem’s director of archives. “What we are looking for, first and foremost, is information about individuals, about the victims and about their respective fates.”

In recent years, Yad Vashem’s activities in the archives of the former Soviet Union have expanded, thanks to generous financial support from the Genesis Philanthropy Group and the **European Jewish Fund**. In addition to financing the archival research, this money will enable Yad Vashem to intensify research on the annihilation of the Jews of the Soviet Union during the Holocaust, and to expand activities in the field of teaching the Holocaust to new immigrants from the former Soviet Union.

Reconstructed trees

The opening of the archives in the former Soviet Union and the use of advanced software are enabling Yad Vashem to reconstruct family trees and to tell the stories of families whose existence was unknown up until now.

One example of such genealogical restoration is the story of the Begun family, all of whose members perished in the Holocaust. The location of this family and reconstruction of their lives was made possible following the discovery of tax declarations and population registry forms that sat unseen for decades in archives in Eastern Europe. According to Gertner, the genealogical restoration of the Begun family is a fine example of the immense power of bureaucratic forms, “which can, at first glance, appear to be moldy and uninteresting.”

His colleague Masha Yonin related how she felt goosebumps after the archival research on the Beguns had been completed: “We succeeded in bringing back an entire family from the grave, after it had been erased from history. Now the Kaddish [memorial prayer] can be said over its members.”

Dr. Arie Begun, who was born in 1890, was a physician in the city of Brest-Litovsk (known in Yiddish as Brisk), which is today called Brest, in Belarus. Up until the 17th century, Brest-Litovsk was the central metropolis of spiritual life and Torah study for Lithuania’s Jews. Its onetime inhabitants included Menachem Begin and the father of Ariel Sharon. On the eve of World War II, 40 percent of Brest’s population was Jewish.

Begun, his wife and their two daughters were murdered in 1942. None of their relations or friends survived the war. During the 70 years that passed from the time of their murder, it was as if the entire family had vanished. The only mention of the Beguns appeared in a Yad Vashem form filled out in 1967 by a Tel Aviv resident, who wrote that he and Arie Begun were from the same city.

In the municipal archives of Brest, Yad Vashem researchers discovered a little-known collection of some 12,000 application forms for identity cards that had been submitted by the city’s Jewish residents to the authorities immediately after the start of the German occupation of the city. Among those documents was Arie Begun’s application, which had submitted together with his photograph. He listed his profession as “physician.”

The researchers then located Begun's tax declaration form, signed on October 20, 1941, before the city's Jewish inhabitants were moved into the ghetto. From this form, the researchers learned that Dr. Begun was a dermatologist and that he had a clinic on Pilsudskiego Street. Although Begun declared a monthly income of 810 rubles, the tax assessor added the comment that Begun's earnings were much higher, reaching 6,840 rubles a month. This was because Begun neglected to declare that he received 30 patients daily in his home.

Two months later, on December 21, 1941, Begun submitted his annual tax declaration. His address was different now: 73 Kostuszko Street. The researchers learned from this change in address that Begun had been transferred to the ghetto. "He works in a Jew-clinic in the ghetto and earns approximately 200 rubles a month," wrote the income tax assessor.

Eight months later, on August 31, 1942, Begun filled out another tax declaration. He was now earning only about 100 rubles monthly from his work in the Judenrat clinic. In contrast with the previous form, it was now explicitly written that Begun was working "only inside the ghetto." This is apparently the last document signed by Begun before his death. A month and a half later, in mid-October 1941, all those remaining in the ghetto were murdered.

Another archive, in Moscow, was found to hold a list of the names of the murdered Jews of Brest-Litovsk. It had been drawn up by one of the Soviet committees investigating Nazi crimes that had been set up under Joseph Stalin's orders, which accompanied the Red Army as it reentered regions that had been liberated from the Nazis. According to this list, Arie Begun was 52 at the time of his death. More important, the list revealed that he had a family, all of whose members were murdered with him. The Yad Vashem researchers thus discovered the three other members of Begun's family: his wife Sofia, aged 48, and his two daughters, Sisilia, 22, and Shulamit, 16. The fact that one of his daughters was named Shulamit (Sulamifia in Russian) and that he signed the above official papers "Arie," instead of using the accepted Russian alternative, "Lev," demonstrated to the researchers that the Beguns had been a Zionist family.

"Thus," summed up Yonin, "from bureaucratic forms, we recreated an entire family. Had it not been for the archival documentation, we would have never known about the family's existence." Yonin described it as "a very moving event."

Last summer, Yad Vashem completed the mapping of yet another such "unknown" family.

In an archive in Riga, capital of Latvia, Yad Vashem researchers located books containing the administrative records of the city's tenants' committees. In one of those records, dating from 1941, the name of Minka Chakars nee Edelman appears; she is listed as having been born in 1910 and as living at 132 Marijas Street in Riga together with her only daughter Austra, who was born in 1940.

A close study of later records also found in this archive showed that on October 22, 1941, Minka moved to 2 Katolu Street, which was inside the ghetto. However, by the end of that year, she had moved back to her original address, which was outside. The researchers, who knew very well why she had entered the ghetto, could not understand how she had emerged alive and how she had returned to her home within only a few short months.

The answer was provided by three additional documents. The first was an order published by the Germans on October 7, 1941; it declared that any Jewess married to a Latvian could continue to live with him if he consented and on condition that she underwent sterilization.

The second document is a list of 47 Jewish and gypsy women who underwent sterilization surgery in 1942 and 1943. Minka's name appears on that list. In the hospital-discharge form that the physician filled out, he wrote down in Latin that Minka's operation had taken place on April 28, 1942. The third document found was a certificate indicating that she had converted to Christianity in 1941. It was issued on October 24, 1941, two days after Minka's internment in the ghetto.

The testimony of a relative who was still living helped Yad Vashem's researchers complete the narrative of Minka's story. According to it, Minka was a Latvian Jewess who had married a Christian named Vilhelms Chakars. In order to save her life and that of her daughter, she converted after the Nazis took over Riga. After she was evacuated to the ghetto, her husband asked his priest for an authorization that she had been baptized. The husband then bribed police officials with gold jewelry and they agreed to release her from the ghetto; apparently, he promised them that she would undergo sterilization, in accordance with the Nazi directive.

Minka and her daughter survived the war. Minka passed away on March 8, 1992, and her daughter died 15 years later. Minka's granddaughter today lives in Riga. Thanks to the recently discovered documents, she now knows that her grandmother was Jewish. The granddaughter agreed to the publicizing of her family's story here, for the sake of her grandmother's memory, but refused to have her own identity disclosed.

Muslims, Jews gather in Paris for interfaith parley

By JOSH LANAMELIS,
SPECIAL TO THE JERUSALEM POST

09/07/2012 03:22

PARIS – Moshe Kantor, the president of the European Jewish Congress, told Jewish and Muslim leaders on Tuesday that “an attack on one of us is an attack on all of us,” referring to recent rulings in Europe against circumcision and ritual slaughter.

Speaking at the opening session of the Second Gathering of European Jewish and Muslim Leaders in Paris, Kantor added that such attacks were against “all people of faith,” and contradicted not only the principle of free expression but also the very basis of modern European society.



“An attack on one of us is an attack on all of us,” says European Jewish Congress president Moshe Kantor.
PHOTO: COURTESY ALAIN AZRIA/EUROPEAN JEWISH CONGRESS

The conference – organized by the **European Jewish Congress**, the Grande Mosque de Paris, and the New York-based Foundation for Ethnic Understanding – drew around 100 religious leaders and lay participants from nearly 20 European countries, and was also attended by delegates from Morocco, Israel, and the United States. The first such gathering was in December 2010.

Kantor’s urgings for religious unity were echoed by the grand mufti of Sarajevo, Dr. Mustafa Ceric. “Jews and Muslims aren’t the ghosts of Europe; they are the hosts. They helped shape Europe.”

Speakers at the two-day conference highlighted the role of education in breaking down barriers between the communities.

In a declaration entitled “A Zero Tolerance For Religious Bigotry,” the participants called for the initiation of “sustained dialogue and cooperative projects between Muslims and Jews; [and] replacing mutual fear and resentment with a continent-wide movement of Muslims and Jews committed to communication, reconciliation, and cooperation.”

The need for such projects was underscored by the chief rabbi of Toulouse, Rabbi Harold Weill.

Weill told the conference that after the terror attack by a local Muslim extremist on a Jewish school in Toulouse in March 2012 – which took the lives of four people, including three children – he received about 1,500 messages of condolence and support.

Not one of them came from Toulouse’s Muslim community.

He described this as the “third dagger blow” he received, the first two being the killings and the discovery that a Muslim had committed them.

Weill added that he had felt safer as a Jew in Morocco on a recent visit there than he did in Toulouse.

Delegates at the conference described local initiatives and projects that had fostered cooperation and trust between Muslims and Jews. Former Manchester lord mayor Afzal Kahn praised the introduction of professional and business networks linking both communities. The chief rabbi of Nice, Rabbi Joseph Abittan, said that he had won the respect of local Islamic audiences by speaking to them in mosques in Arabic about religious themes common to both the Torah and the Koran.

The Holocaust was referenced as a source of unity between the communities.

Dalil Boubakeur, the rector of the Grande Mosque de Paris, said that the mosque had saved hundreds of Jews from the Nazis. The Dutch human rights advocate Rabbi Avraham Soetendorp was hidden by a non-Jewish family during the war, and said he felt a sense of “inner wholeness” when present at such gatherings.

“Let us draw strength from one another,” he urged.

Rabbi Marc Schneier, the president of the Foundation for Ethnic Understanding, congratulated the participants on the progress they had made.

“We have created the brand, we have a great brand, and now we must market the brand,” he said.

The conference was told that three synagogues and three mosques in northern Israel would take part in what was described as a twinning event in November.

Imams in Majd el-Krum, Acre and Haifa would exchange pulpits with their rabbinical counterparts in Atlit, Acre and Haifa. The imams and rabbis would speak at local schools, and take part in other interfaith events.

The plan, initiated by Rabbi Schneier, is being implemented by Bahij Mansour, director of the Department of Religious Affairs at the Foreign Ministry, and Ya’acov Salameh of the Department of Religious Communities at the Interior Ministry.

THE JERUSALEM POST
Israel's leading English daily and most read English website



The radical party has 41 seats in Ukrainian parliament and is expected to legitimize public displays of anti-Semitism.

PHOTO: REUTERS/GLEB GARANICH

Experts weigh in on rise of Ukrainian Svoboda party

By BENJAMIN WEINTHAL,
JERUSALEM POST CORRESPONDENT

10/30/2012

BERLIN – The radical right-wing Svoboda (“Freedom”) party, which openly admires the World War II pro-Nazi Ukrainian Insurgent Army, has secured 41 seats in the Ukrainian parliament and is expected to legitimize public displays of anti-Semitism.

In telephone and email interviews with The Jerusalem Post on Monday, experts on Ukrainian xenophobia and anti-Semitism raised alarm bells about the results of the election.

Irena Cantorovich, a scholar at Tel Aviv University’s **Moshe Kantor Database for the Study of Contemporary Anti-Semitism and Racism**, wrote, “This is the first time in the history of modern Ukraine that a nationalistic party enters the parliament and it will probably have more than one representative in it. Svoboda is known for its racist and anti-Semitic views and several complaints were filed against its leader, Oleg Tyagnibok, for his anti-Semitic comments.”

She noted that Tyagnibok claimed that “Ukraine is being controlled by a Russian-Jewish mafia. The party’s platform also includes support for the rehabilitation of Ukrainian nationalists who collaborated with Nazi Germany.”

“Members of the party took part in anti-Semitic incidents such as damaging synagogues, Jewish centers and cemeteries. The party is also active against the

coming of Jewish religious pilgrims to Uman. In the previous election, the party received only 1 percent of the votes and now about 7%, so we can see that their influence is growing,” added Cantorovich, who has written about Ukrainian collaborators who worked with the Nazis in their efforts to kill Jews in the country.

“However, it is too early to determine whether this will have any effect on Jewish life in Ukraine and on the number of anti-Semitic incidents in this country.”

Svoboda was founded in 2004 and had previously named itself the Social-National Party of Ukraine.

Speaking with the Post from Ukraine, Vyacheslav A. Likhachev, an expert at the Eurasian Jewish Congress, said that the “party has a very anti-Semitic core in its ideology.”

Likhachev, who works for the Congress of Ethnic Minorities of Ukraine monitoring xenophobia in the country, said Svoboda’s entry into parliament “means nothing on a practical level” because “opposition forces cannot change the general situation in the country. It will not lead to any changes in legislation.”

He noted that the extremist party secured 41 members of parliament from 450 members, said that while the number is large, it is not enough to provide a program and affect policy changes.

Likhachev said the “leaders of the party are famous for openly racist and anti-Semitic speeches” and that the party’s victory in the election was a “symbolic legitimization of Neo- Nazis and anti-Semitic ideology in the eyes of society.”

“Svoboda is composed of the same elements as auxiliaries of the Nazis that committed mass murders of Jews, Russians, and Poles,” Dr. Shimon Samuels, the Simon Wiesenthal Center’s director for international relations, told the Post.

He added that the vote represented the desire for “a scapegoat for corruption“ in Ukrainian society and that the focus was on the Jewish community in that regard. “Ukrainians have hopes of association membership in the European Union and the election results can only void any such prospects,” Samuels said.

“This is a very disturbing development, but perhaps not surprising given Ukraine’s history of vehement anti-Semitism. Svoboda did much better in Western Ukraine, a region that even imagines it might breakaway from the rest of Ukraine and join the EU,” said Tom Gross, a political commentator who has written about Eastern Europe and international affairs.

“The party reportedly won over 50% of the vote in Lviv and if this turns out to be the case, I believe it would mark the first time since World War II that a majority in any city in Europe voted for a blatantly anti- Semitic party. Lviv is a city that was historically over one-third Jewish, but almost all the Jews were murdered by the Nazis and their Ukrainian collaborators and yet in which today you will find very little by way of Holocaust commemoration,” Gross continued.

The JTA reported in October that “a Jewish doctor in Lviv, Ukraine, was beaten to death by an assailant identified by some local news sources as a 26-year-old Arab.” The victim, 67- year-old Leon Freifeld, was a member of the Lviv Jewish community.

Balkan leaders honoured for ‘tolerance, honesty, moral courage, and reconciliation’ at European Council on Tolerance and Reconciliation ceremony

Updated: 16/Oct/2012 19:22

BRUSSELS (EJP) --- Croatian President Ivo Josipovic was honoured alongside former Serbian President Boris Tadić with the second-ever European Medal of Tolerance Award Tuesday in Brussels, in recognition of the Balkan statesmen’s “significant contribution to promoting, seeking, safeguarding or maintaining Tolerance and Reconciliation on the European continent”.

Conferred on them by the European Council for Tolerance and Reconciliation (ECTR), an independent organization uniting former European heads of states,



Former Serbian President Boris Tadić (L) and Croatian President Ivo Josipovic the second-ever European Medal of Tolerance Award Tuesday in Brussels

Nobel Peace Prize laureates and other tolerance-promoting individuals, European Jewish Congress president Moshe Kantor spoke of the Balkan War being a “bump in the road” of the European Union’s path to becoming more democratic and tolerant at a press conference announcing the honorees.

Praising both recipients for their efforts in “opening the way to building trust between Balkan nations”, former President of Poland Aleksander Kwasniewski added that “reconciliation is a long, difficult and important process that will never be finished”, congratulating the EU on its recent Nobel Prize award, and highlighting the founding principle of the EU as centering on reconciliation. Stressing the need to create open border and open trade to accommodate the legions of displaced people across the European continent following WWII, he said “if you see the relationship today between old enemies France and Germany, you see what can be achieved through reconciliation”.

“The EU vision and dream is at a crossroads,” cautioned Kantor. Whist praising the unity between eastern and western Europe in the wake of the lifting of the Iron Curtain, he warned of the inevitable rise of influence of far-right nationalist parties amid a climate of financial crisis in Europe and beyond. “The EU of 2012 is as intolerant as ever before,” he said, highlighting the example of the entry into parliament of the extremist Greek Golden Dawn party, which openly uses Swastika iconography as its party symbol.

Talking of the need for “rules, proposals, laws” to make tolerance mandatory across the EU, he introduced ECTR’s proposals for a general law of tolerance, which was presented later Monday at an official ceremony in the presence of European Parliament President Martin Schulz, as well as the two recipients of the European Medal of Tolerance.

Expanding on the Model Law for Promotion of Tolerance, a version of which it seeks to make mandatory across all 27 member states, Chair of the Task Force in charge of its inception Yoram Dinstein said that “tolerance is the glue that cements together the bond between distinct groups in a single society”.

“Tolerance is very easy to approve of abstractly, the problem arises when you move to practically applying it to the issues of the here and now in society,” he added, explaining that no European Union treaty currently exists on the subject, due to our rapidly evolving notions of tolerance. “Views considered tolerant ten years ago are no thought as such today and vice versa,” he said.

Admitting that the proposed law was subject to negotiation of individual member states who would have to reconcile it with their national legislators, he argued that “now the EU

has received the Nobel Peace Prize, it must understand that without tolerance, there will always be conflict.”

A common point of reference was needed by member states, in order to establish the distinction between tolerance and its limitations, he added. The exceptions to tolerant thought and speech range from female circumcision to Burka wearing, according to the draft, which it argued provided an obstacle to crime prevention.

Another potential tolerance minefield arises from the issue of migration, he suggested. “Migrants are entitled to tolerance by society as much as anyone else, but they have a duty to integrate into their adopted society - if they’re not prepared to do so, they should be forced to leave, subject to a legal process,” he continued, adding that “integration does not mean assimilation”.

“The future of the EU is very much inter-connected to migration,” interjected Kwasniewski. “We cannot support an ageing demography without migration. Tolerance would help us in coping with inevitable migration, which is the future of a multi-cultural EU”

“Multi-culturalism doesn’t mean razing the culture of your adopted country, or displacing it,” reasoned Dinstein. “You can’t establish a country within a country, a migrant group within a group.”

“A dedicated centre must be established to provide migrants with a transitional period to integrate into their adopted country,” added Kantor.

The definition of tolerance itself needs to be established, asserted Dinstein. Whilst current definitions of tolerance would preclude racism and religious-based bigotry, anti-Semitism must be individually stated as a separate definition, “as unlike Christianity and Islam, it’s not necessarily based on religion, but lineage and ethnic heritage,” he said, evoking Nazi definitions of what constitutes a Jew.

“Holocaust denial should be a crime,” he continued, as should “denial of any genocide which has been ruled on by an international court”.

Croatian President Ivo Josipovic has occupied office since 2010, having previously presided over the democratisation of the former Communist party, to become the Social Democratic Party, over which he currently presides. He was elected into power, having campaigned for Nova Pravednost (New Justice), calling for a new social and legal

framework to address the deep social injustices, corruption and organised crime, and the protection of individual and fundamental human rights.

In April 2010, Josipovic met with the Bosnian Croat Catholic archbishop cardinal Vinko Puljić and the head of the Islamic Community reis Mustafa Cerić and the three made a joint visit at the sites of Ahmići massacre and Križančevo selo killings, and paid respect to the victims.[16] Ivo Josipović made an official visit to Bosnia during which he addressed the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina,[17] and in his speech he expressed a “deep regret” for Croatia’s involvement in efforts to divide Bosnia and Herzegovina in the 1990s, resulting in the Croat-Bosniak war and suffering for many people on both sides, for which move he was criticised by political rivals, who accused him of breaching the Croatian constitution.

During a visit to Israel in February 2012, Josipovic also apologized for the Ustaše crimes against Jews in 1940’s.

Former Serbian President Boris Tadic served almost two terms as president, ending in his resignation in April 2012. He has been a staunch supporter of Serbia’s accession talks to the EU. In 2004, he made an official apology on a trip to Bosnia-Herzegovina to all those who suffered as a result of crimes committed in the name of the Serbian people. He has since further spoken out against the breakup of Bosnia-Herzegovina, instead defending its territorial integrity.

Tadić presided during the independence referendum in Montenegro (2006). He was the first foreign head of state to visit Montenegro after it became independent on 8 June, and promised to continue friendly relations. Serbia declared independence as well, and Tadić attended the first raising of the flag of Serbia at the United Nations Headquarters in New York.

In 2007, he similarly issued an apology to Croatia for any crimes committed in Serbia’s name during the war in Croatia. He has declared that all war criminals should face trial by an international court for their crimes and personally handed over former Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic to The Hague to be tried on war crime charges in relation to his activities in wars with Bosnia, Croatia and Kosovo.

The inaugural European medal of tolerance was conferred on King Juan Carlos I of Spain in 2010 for his lifelong dedication and devotion to the issues of tolerance and political reconciliation.



Paideia Takes a Look at Itself

Posted on APRIL 30, 2012 Written by EJP

Meyers-JDC Brookdale Institute has released a new research report, The Paideia European-Jewish Leadership Program: Graduate Views of Program Contributions and Impacts.

From the executive summary:

Paideia – the European Institute for Jewish Studies in Sweden was created in 2000 through grants from the Swedish government and the Marianne and Marcus Wallenberg Foundation as an academic and applied institute of excellence, with the mandate of working for the rebuilding of Jewish life and culture in Europe, and educating for active minority citizenship. It does this through offering an intensive one-year educational program in Jewish Studies directed at future leaders of Jewish life and inter-cultural work. Each year 20-25 participants attend the program, from both Jewish and non-Jewish backgrounds and a variety of European countries. In addition to the one-year Jewish Studies Program, Paideia has also developed activities for its graduates including alumni conferences, educational weekends and Project-Incubator, a two-week summer program to support projects and social innovation across Europe. Project-Incubator was introduced as a follow-up program for alumni, but has expanded its target group beyond graduates. Since its introduction in 2006, the program has developed over 100 different projects.

Key findings include:

- Program alumni reside in more than 20 countries: 31% in various European post-communist countries, 20% in the Former Soviet Union (FSU), 33% in Sweden, the Netherlands or Germany, 7% in the UK or the U.S., and 9% in Israel
- Two-thirds (66%) reported greater involvement in Jewish community life due to their participation in the program, while 34% reported no change
- More than half (57%) reported that their participation in the program had impacted on their professional life/career to a very great or great extent
- Two-thirds (66%) reported involvement in activities related to Jewish culture or the Jewish community (24%, as very active and 44%, as active)
- The majority (78%) reported current volunteering for Jewish related activities (31%, regularly and 47%, occasionally)
- Half (51%) reported current work in a Jewish organization or in an organization concerned with Jewish issues. There were no differences by year of graduation or religion

World at ‘moment of truth’ on Iran, Uzi Arad tells ‘Post’

By YAAKOV LAPPIN

06/04/2012 15:44

From sidelines of fifth International Luxembourg Forum on Preventing Nuclear Catastrophe, Arad says Iranians want end to sanctions, world wants end to Iranian nuclear program.

BERLIN - The international community has reached “the moment of truth and confrontation” on Iran’s nuclear program, former National Security Council chairman Uzi Arad told The Jerusalem Post Monday.

Speaking on the sidelines of the fifth International Luxembourg Forum on Preventing Nuclear Catastrophe, which was attended by security experts from around the world, Arad said, “The Iranians want to get rid of sanctions against them, and the international community wants Iran to cease its nuclear program.”

Describing the current situation as a “collision path,” Arad said “both sides have advanced. Iran advanced its nuclear program, and the international community has increased sanctions.”

Arad, of the Institute for Policy and Strategy at the Lauder School of Government at the IDC, added that the next step in the ongoing struggle between the two camps depended on their “level of determination” to stick to their guns.

He pointed out that Israel’s expectations were the same as those of the UN Security Council, which has called for a total freezing of Iranian uranium enrichment activities, unlike some propositions being raised by P5 + 1 negotiators, who have reportedly suggested that Iran could continue to enrich uranium to a low level under an agreement.

Earlier, the president of the Luxembourg Forum, Viatcheslav (Moshe) Kantor, who is also president of the European Jewish Congress, kicked off the conference by sounding the alarm over Iran’s ongoing enrichment activities.

During his address, Kantor told senior delegates from Russia, the US, Germany, and other countries that Tehran has “tripled its enriched uranium output,” and slammed “fruitless negotiations” that have failed to stop Iran’s nuclear advancement.

He called on the international community to toughen sanctions if Iran maintains its current course, saying, “Iran has reached the red line.” Ultimately, an economic blockade against Iran might be required, he added.

Rolf Nickel, the German Commissioner of the Federal Government for Disarmament and Arms Control, said he and five other countries that are negotiating with Iran would have to “keep up the option of further sanctions if they become necessary” ahead of a third round of talks in Moscow in mid-June.



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