Holocaust Museum (1994): Memorandum 01

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July 7, 1994

MEMORANDUM

TO : COUNCIL MEMBERS

FROM : MARIAN S. CRAIG, COUNCIL SECRETARY

RE : INFORMATIONAL MATERIALS

The Office of Council Relations has begun putting together various materials regarding the Museum, as suggested by the Council in the recently passed Governance package. This is our maiden effort. We are centralizing the flow of information for your convenience, and we hope that what follows will be helpful and informative.

I. Visitors to the Museum: As of July 4, the Museum has hosted 2,529,798 visitors, of which 1,622,152 have viewed the permanent exhibition. The daily long lines, as well as weekend attendance, suggests that these numbers will grow substantially before the tourist season in Washington, D.C., is over.

II. Travel: Those of you with outstanding travel reimbursements will be pleased to know that the logjam has been broken. Only the most recent vouchers for the June Council meeting remain to be prepared. Elaine Heumann Gurian has instructed us to hire a person to handle the Council's travel. As soon as an individual is found, we will furnish a name and direct telephone number to you. In the interim, we will continue to move reimbursements with as much speed as possible. It will facilitate the process if you will please furnish a copy of your itinerary as well as airline/train receipts, hotel bills, receipts for taxis, etc., and a signed travel reimbursement form which is usually part of every meeting packet. If you do not have these voucher forms, please let us know: telephone: (202) 488-0459; fax: (202) 488-2613.

Please continue to call Bob Pullman at Carlson's travel agency, collect to (202) 898-1225, to make travel arrangements for official Council business. Carlson's hours are 7:45 a.m., to 5:30 p.m. Your personal ID is: NPSC. Washington, D.C., per diem rates continue to be $113.00 for lodging; $38.00 for food/incidental expenses, unless the Council provides food. As we refine the travel process, we will keep you abreast of the details.
III. Calendar of Events: An abbreviated list of "happenings" follows. We will develop a full calendar of events for 1994 in the very near future. Please note that some of the dates and events outlined here are tentative and may change. We suggest that you confirm the events with this office -- (202) 488-0459 -- or the responsible staff person whose name and direct-line telephone number appear with the entry.

July

12  Film Presentation: "The Partisans of Vilna"
6:30 p.m., Joseph and Rebecca Meyerhoff Theater
Contact: Lydia Perry (202) 488-0466

Visit of Carol Browner, Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency
2:00 p.m.
Contact: Ralph Grunewald (202) 488-2633

19  Chamber Music Series. Rare works by persecuted composers. Steven Honigberg, National Symphony Orchestra cellist.
7:00 p.m. (2 hours), Members - $7.00; Non-Members - $10.00
Contact: Lydia Perry (202) 488-0466

July 30 - August 1 - National Conference for Educators
See enclosed memo. Contact: Dawn Warfle (202) 488-0464

September

Speakers: Jozef Jablonicky, Director of Politology Section, Slovak Academy of Sciences
Ivan Kameneck, Researcher, Institute of History, Slovak Academy of Sciences
Commemorator: Paul Strassman
6:00 p.m., Rubinstein Theater  Tentative
Contact: Michael Berenbaum (202) 479-9731

27  Lecture/Film: Author Anna Rasmus on her new book, Wintergreen; screening of the film "Nasty Girl" about Ms. Rasmus efforts to uncover the activities of her home town during the Nazi period
Time and place to be announced
Contact: Lydia Perry (202) 488-0466

29  Meeting of the Academic Committee  Tentative
Contact: Wesley Fisher (202) 479-9732
IV. Enclosures: Finally, enclosed are some materials that we believe will be of interest to you:

Announcement of the National Conference for Educators, July 30-August 1, 1994

News Releases:
- Film Presentation Marks 50th Anniversary of Ghetto Liberation: "The Partisans of Vilna"
- U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum Dedicates Plaza to Eisenhower in D-Day Commemoration
- Eisenhower's Role in Liberation and Aftermath
- D-Day Selected Chronology: May 15 to June 30, 1944
- The D-Day Decision: General Eisenhower's Proclamation
- Holocaust Museum Issues Statement on Rwandan Massacres

Chairman's Remarks, Dedication of the General Eisenhower Plaza, June 6, 1994

Press Clippings:
- Child's View of the Holocaust (3 pages)
- Holocaust Museum: Victim of Success? (1 page)
- The Holocaust Museum: A Year to Remember (2 pages)

MORE TO COME NEXT TIME!
Registration in Classroom A
Receive registration packet of materials and conference badge, and sign-up for afternoon orientation/architecture tours, and Sunday/Monday concurrent workshops.
(Registered participants may visit all Museum exhibitions including the Permanent Exhibition, Resource Center for Educators, Learning Center, and the Research Institute until the Museum closes at 5:30 p.m.)

Guided orientation/architecture tour (limit 20) Amy Kales (meet outside of Classroom A)

Guided orientation/architecture tour (limit 20) Rod Sauter (meet outside of Classroom A)

Museum closes

Registration at the 15th Street Museum entrance
(Registered participants may visit "ASSIGNMENT RESCUE," Resource Center for Educators, and "Remember the Children." The Museum Cafe will be open for participants until 6:45 p.m.)

OPENING SESSION (The Joseph and Rebecca Meyerhoff Theater)
"The Holocaust: Making Choices About What To Teach"
Greetings: William Parsons, Director of Education, USHMM
Guest Speaker: Dr. Helen Fagin, Chairperson, Education Committee, USHMM

Self-guided tour of the Permanent Exhibition

End of session.

General session (The Joseph and Rebecca Meyerhoff Theater)
"Questions of Rationale, Methodologies, and Content"
William Parsons, Director of Education, USHMM,
Stephen Feinberg, Wayland Middle School, Wayland, Massachusetts
William Fernekes, Hunterdon Central Regional High School, Flemington, New Jersey

Lunch on your own
1:00-2:15 p.m. 4 Concurrent Workshops

1. "Developing Curriculum: High School" -- William Fernekes (C)
2. "Developing Curriculum: Middle School" -- Steve Feinberg (B)
3. "Holocaust History: A Discussion" -- Helen Fagin, facilitator (A)

2:30-3:15 1994 National Writing and Art Contest Awards Ceremony Participants are invited to join the public in the Joseph and Rebecca Meyerhoff Theater

3:30-4:45 4 Concurrent Workshops

1. "Interdisciplinary Approaches: Using Literature" -- Grace Caporino (B)
2. "Survivor Testimony in the Classroom" -- Sam Totten (C)
3. "Community and National Resources for the Classroom" -- Kristy Brosius (A)

5:00 p.m. Conference adjourns

7:00-7:30 Reception (at The Washington Vista Hotel)
(Coffee, desserts)

7:30-9:00 General session (The Washington Vista Hotel)
"Helping Students Learn About Holocaust History"
Introduction: William Fernekes
Speaker: Sybil Milton, Senior Historian, USHMM

9:00 p.m. End of session

Monday, August 1

9:30-10:45 a.m. 5 Concurrent Workshops

1. "Introducing Holocaust Curriculum: Community Responses" -- William Parsons, Dawn Marie Warfle
2. "Survivor Testimony in the Classroom" -- Sam Totten (B)
3. "Interdisciplinary Approaches: Using Art" -- Shari Werb (C)
4. "Holocaust History: A Discussion" -- Sybil Milton (A)
5. "Using USHMM Educational Resources" -- Marcia Sabol, Arnie Kramer (The Helena Rubinstein Auditorium)

11:00-12:30 p.m. CLOSING SESSION (The Joseph and Rebecca Meyerhoff Theater)
"Implications For Our Lives Today," a roundtable discussion with students followed by a question and answer period with conference participants.

High school students from Flemington, N.J., and Washington, D.C. and conference faculty (Parsons (facilitator), Feinberg, Fernekes, Totten, Milton)

12:30 p.m. End of Conference
For Release: Immediately
Contact: Joan Wadkins
202/488-0442

FILM PRESENTATION MARKS 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF GHETTO LIBERATION

Washington, D.C. -- The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum will present a special screening of The Partisans of Vilna on July 12, coinciding with the 50th anniversary of the liberation of Lithuania's most infamous ghetto.

The program will begin at 6:30 p.m. in the Museum's Joseph and Rebecca Meyerhoff Theater -- 100 Raoul Wallenberg Place, S.W. -- with an introduction by the producer of the 1986 documentary, local journalist and filmmaker Aviva Kempner.

The 130-minute documentary chronicles Jewish resistance in the Vilna ghetto, a history woven through the recollections of 40 former partisan fighters interviewed for the film. On July 13, 1944, the Vilna resistance joined with Russian partisans to liberate the survivors of the ghetto. Less than 3000 Jews survived the three-year occupation, a small remnant of the 57,000 who thrived in Vilna before the Nazi onslaught.

Admission to the program and screening is free, but advance registration is required. To register, please contact the Museum's public programs office at 202-488-0427.

# # #
WASHINGTON, D.C. -- June 6, 1994. The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum today dedicated its plaza on Raoul Wallenberg Place to the memory and accomplishments of D-Day Commander Dwight David Eisenhower, the only memorial in Washington honoring this exceptional soldier and president. The Plaza also honors all the Allied forces who liberated Europe from Nazi tyranny.

More than 650 veterans of both D-Day and the liberation of the camps, survivors and other special guests of the Museum attended the ceremony, which preceded the National Commemoration of D-Day across the river at Arlington National Cemetery. Ambassador Paul Nitze, a diplomat and national security expert who served the American government in many senior capacities over a fifty-year career, spoke of General Eisenhower's leadership and accomplishments; the General's granddaughter, Anne Eisenhower Flotl, quoted from her grandfather's wartime correspondence, and provided personal reflections.
Miles Lerman, Chairman of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council, characterized the dedication of the Museum's outdoor space to General Eisenhower as a symbol of the triumph by the Allied forces over the Nazi policies of hatred and genocide: "War can never be glorified, but sometimes it is unavoidable. Sometimes war is necessary. Sometimes it is not the worst of alternatives, but the only alternative. World War II was one of such moments in history."

In his role as Supreme Commander of the Allied Expeditionary Forces, General Eisenhower was responsible for basic policy decisions on civil affairs operations for Germany as it was occupied by Allied forces. By April 1945, when American forces had liberated the Ohrdruf and Buchenwald camps, Eisenhower became the leading proponent for publicizing the atrocities discovered there. In a now-famous letter to General George Marshall written on April 15, he wrote:

"The things I saw beggar description. The visual evidence and the verbal testimony of starvation, cruelty, and bestiality were so overpowering as to leave me a bit sick. I made the visit deliberately, in order to be in position to give first-hand evidence of these things if ever, in the future, there develops a tendency to charge these allegations merely to "propaganda."

Eisenhower arranged almost immediately for visits by prominent American politicians and reporters to the camps; he also sent photographs to Winston Churchill and encouraged the British to publicize the conditions at camps liberated in their sphere of operation.
As the war ended and the Allied forces retained control of postwar Germany, Eisenhower also took a firm stance on denazification, twice reprimanding General George Patton for the retention of Nazis in positions of postwar authority for the sake of administrative efficiency. He strongly supported and facilitated war crimes trials of Germans who had been involved in crimes against civilians now known as the Holocaust; evenhandedly, he also protected German prisoners-of-war against illegal and random retribution.

At the conclusion of the dedication ceremonies, representatives of the 1st, 4th and 90th Infantry Divisions, as well as of the 82nd Airborne Division, laid memorial wreaths by the wall dedicated to General Eisenhower. The infantry divisions landed on Omaha and Utah Beaches on June 6, 1944, and liberated the camps and subcamps of Dachau and Flossenbad; the 82nd Airborne both parachuted into Ste. Mere-Eglise on D-Day and later liberated the concentration camp at Wobbelin.

Ambassador Nitze summed up the purpose of the dedication in his remarks: "Let all who visit here remember those who fell in battle against injustice, whether they died on the beaches of Normandy or in the ghettos and camps of occupied Europe. Many of their sacrifices go unwitnessed and unrecorded, with no marker or headstone. The sum of victory is made up of their small heroisms."

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EISENHOWER'S ROLE IN LIBERATION AND AFTERMATH

In December 1943, when Gen. Eisenhower was appointed Supreme Commander Allied Expeditionary Forces (SCAEF), basic policy decisions on civil affairs operations for occupied-Germany were initiated. These policy decisions included assigning full control of and responsibility for civil affairs and military government to military commanders. This determination and subsequent plans developed in 1944 resulted in Eisenhower’s responsibility for all civil affairs, including relief, industrial policy, the DP camps, and denazification, as well as the protection and salvage of art and cultural property looted by the Nazis and Axis nations.

In the spring and summer of 1944, it was decided that German industrial production, insofar as it was not needed in the war against Japan, would be converted to peacetime production, with goods available for restitution and reparations. The directives "for military government in Germany prior to defeat and surrender" issued on May 31 also specified that critical shortages were to be alleviated only to the minimum extent necessary to prevent disease and unrest and that any excess German food and other commodities were to be used for relief in liberated countries.

Eisenhower and his staff obviously assumed that a surplus of goods would be available in Germany, but this was not the case after May 1945. In May 1944, it was also decided that if supplies were inadequate, Germany, as the enemy country, would receive the lesser share. Thus, planning for the period after surrender did not foresee actual conditions encountered in April 1945, such as extreme food and housing shortages or the tragic status of Jewish survivors.

In late September, American troops were already on German soil, occupying a small zone southwest of Aachen; the Russians were not yet on German soil. At that time, Gen. Marshall and President Roosevelt rebuked Eisenhower for press photographs showing American soldiers with German women and children, since "such photographs are objectionable." This resulted in Eisenhower’s issuing regulations for a stringent nonfraternization policy.

more

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Liberation of the Nazi Concentration Camps

By early April 1945, American forces had reached the Frankfurt area and on April 6, the 4th Armored Division of the Third Army took Ohrdruf, located 30 miles east of Merkers. Shortly thereafter, on April 12, Eisenhower visited the salt mines at Merkers together with Gens. Omar Bradley and George Patton and ordered that records, gold, treasure, and other materials stored there be moved to Frankfurt. That same day, he also inspected conditions at liberated Ohrdruf, together with Patton and Bradley.

On April 13, Eisenhower also toured conditions at the newly-liberated Buchenwald concentration camp. In a letter he subsequently drafted to George Marshall on April 15, 1945 [Source: Papers of Dwight D. Eisenhower, v. 4, pp. 2615-16], he wrote:

On a recent tour of the forward areas in First and Third Armies, I stopped momentarily at the salt mines to take a look at the German treasure. There is a lot of it. But the most interesting -- although horrible -- sight that I encountered during this trip was a visit to a German internment camp near Gotha. The things I saw beggar description. When I was touring the camp I encountered three men who had been inmates and by one ruse or another had made their escape. I interviewed them through an interpreter. The visual evidence and the verbal testimony of starvation, cruelty, and bestiality were so overpowering as to leave me a bit sick. In one room, where they were piled up twenty or thirty naked men, killed by starvation, George Patton would not even enter. He said he would get sick if he did so. I made the visit deliberately, in order to be in position to give first-hand [emph. in original] evidence of these things if ever, in the future, there develops a tendency to charge these allegations merely to "propaganda."

Eisenhower also sent photographs of the camp to Churchill on April 18, 1945. The next day he drafted a second cable to George Marshall [Source: Papers of Dwight D. Eisenhower, v. 4, p. 2623]:

From Eisenhower to Marshall for eyes only: We continue to uncover German concentration camps for political prisoners in which conditions of indescribable horror prevail. I have visited one of these myself and I assure you that whatever has been printed on them to date has been understatement. If you would see any advantage in asking about a dozen leaders of Congress and a dozen prominent editors to make a short visit to this theater if a couple of C-54's, I will arrange to have them conducted to one of these places where the evidence of bestiality and cruelty is so overpowering as to leave no doubt in their minds about the normal practices of the Germans in these camps. I am hopeful that some British individuals in similar categories will visit the northern area to witness similar evidence of atrocity.

On April 19, Marshall's cabled response said that the proposal had been cleared and approved by the Secretary of War and the President. Eisenhower met with a group of American congressmen, editors and publishers who had seen Buchenwald on April 26 to discuss the
concentration camps they had visited. On April 20, ten members of Parliament viewed the camps and, on April 21, Churchill asked Eisenhower if he would take another British parliamentary group to see the camps "if this is not too great a burden upon you, as soon as the present one returns."

Eisenhower's record disseminating information about conditions in the liberated concentration camps is unambiguous. Louis Weinstein, who served as Eisenhower's adjutant and driver and, later, became a prominent Boston attorney, has written in his memoirs that Eisenhower was as reluctant as Patton to personally tour these camps. The official record does not confirm this and all of Eisenhower's letters and cables on the concentration camps were personally drafted by him, not by one of his aides.

**Denazification and War Crimes Trials**

On July 18, 1945, Eisenhower sent a confidential memorandum to all officers exercising general court-martial jurisdiction that reiterated decisions previously made by the War Department and Allies on war crimes. The rest of the memorandum deals with American mistreatment of German prisoners of war. Eisenhower wrote:

> During the present war the United States has repeatedly recorded its determination to try and, upon conviction, to punish those who directed and those who executed the war crimes and atrocities which have shocked the conscience of mankind. In such trials the plea that the accused acted under superior orders is not to be accepted as in itself a sufficient defense. Such defenses were rejected in cases of war criminals already tried and executed in this theater by military commissions appointed under my authority. America's moral position will be undermined and her reputation for fair dealing debased, if criminal conduct of a like character by her own armed forces is condoned and unpunished by those of us responsible for defending her honor.


In August, Patton's leniency toward the employment of former Nazis in local governments created serious controversies. On Aug. 23, Eisenhower wrote Patton about implementing American directives that "all members of the Nazi party who have more than nominal participants in its activities or active supporters of Nazism or militarism be removed and excluded from public office and positions of importance in quasi-public and private enterprises." Eisenhower reminded Patton that these directives specified that "no such persons shall be retained because of administrative necessity, convenience, or expediency...Moreover, the retention of Nazis in public positions or other positions of importance is a most delicate subject both here and at home."

In an interview with the *New York Times* on Aug. 28, 1945, Eisenhower emphasized the importance of the denazification program. [Source: Eisenhower Papers, v. 6, pp. 307-9].
On Sept. 11, Eisenhower once again rebuked Patton with a letter that stated:

Dear George: As you know, I have announced a firm policy of uprooting the whole Nazi organization regardless of the fact that we may sometimes suffer form local administrative inefficiency. Reduced to its fundamentals, the United States entered this war as a foe of Naziism [sic]; victory is not complete until we have eliminated from positions of responsibility and, in appropriate cases properly punished, every active adherent to the Nazi party. [Source: Eisenhower Papers, v. 6, p. 351]

On Sept. 24, an editorial in the New York Times criticized Patton for his comments that "too much fuss has been made regarding denazification of Germany and that this thing is just like a Democratic and Republican election fight..." George Marshall cabled Eisenhower on the same day to "see that Patton refrains from such comments."

Eisenhower than cabled Marshall on Sept. 25, 1945, and informed him that he had reprimanded Patton. He also cabled Patton on the same day, stating that "orders on this matter are unequivocal and during my recent visit to you, you definitely stated that my policies with respect to denazification and care of displaced persons were being carried out." [Source: Eisenhower Papers, v. 6, pp. 374-6]. This and other conflicts ultimately led to Patton's reassignment.

On the issues of war crimes and denazification, Eisenhower's record is unambiguous and well-documented in the historical literature about his conflict with Patton.
D-DAY SELECTED CHRONOLOGY: MAY 15 to JUNE 30, 1944

This chronology lists some of the major events of the Holocaust and World War II in the weeks before and after D-Day (June 6, 1944). It also includes other happenings as revealing illustrations of broader developments during 1944. As you consider this chronology, keep in mind that this selected chronology includes information unknown to the American people in 1944.

Following is a summary of the selected chronology, prepared by the United States Holocaust Research Institute:

The deportations and mass killing of European Jews continued throughout 1944. In the first four months, the Germans arrested and deported more Jews from France than in any comparable period in 1943. Deportations also continued from Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands, and resumed in Slovakia. Until early 1944, Hungary was a relative island of calm insofar as Jews were concerned. This changed with the German occupation. There were 762,000 Jews living in Hungary as of March 1944; nearly 500,000 were killed that year. About 30,000 Hungarian Gypsies were also deported and murdered.

Late in the summer, Soviet military forces liberated a number of concentration camps, killing centers and remnant ghettos in the East including at the end of July, Majdanek in the outskirts of Lublin and in September, the Klooaga and Vaivara concentration and labor camps in Estonia. Soviet forces also liberated remnant ghettos in Vilnius, Riga, and Lvov.

The major western capitals freed late in 1944 include Rome, Paris, Brussels, and Antwerp. In September, Allied troops entered the vacant Breendonck concentration camp in Belgium and, in late November, the French First Army and American Seventh Army arrived at the vacant concentration camp at Natzweiler-Struthof in Alsace (France). Thus in both the West and the East, Allied armies were confronted with the growing realization of the magnitude of Nazi genocide. Yet even in 1944, new concentration camps were established, including Froeslev, on the Danish side of the German-Danish border, and Bolzano-Gries in northern Italy. Moreover, the so-called "euthanasia program" expanded to hospitals and sanitariums in the German Reich, extending killing operations to include Polish and Russian forced laborers ill with tuberculosis.

In 1944, armed resistance in Europe grew bolder, smuggling arms and ammunition, collecting and transmitting intelligence to the Allies, and committing sabotage. As Germany's military reverses made it obvious that the Allies would win, partisan movements appeared in almost all European countries, launching revolts in Warsaw and Slovakia and engaging in military operations in France, Greece, and Yugoslavia.

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Resistance by members of persecuted minorities proved far more difficult. Jewish armed resistance became increasingly visible in 1944, including the Sonderkommando revolt in October at Crematorium IV in Auschwitz-Birkenau. There was also a revolt at the Gypsy family camp (BIIe) at Auschwitz-Birkenau in mid-May.

German reprisals against sabotage and armed attacks by native resistance movements triggered new massacres of innocent civilians, as in the town of Oradour-sur-Glane (France). Moreover, the abortive military conspiracy to assassinate Hitler in July 1944 and the subsequent arrest of their families punctured the myth of a monolithic Nazi state ruling over completely docile and submissive subjects.

We must nevertheless remember that the return of the western Allies to Europe with the opening of the Second Front on D-Day could not thwart ongoing mass murder in the shrinking territory still under German occupation.

MAY 1944

May 15-July 8  About 437,000 Hungarian Jews are deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau; most are gassed on arrival.

May 16  At 4 a.m., Dutch SS and police arrest individuals with the characteristics of Gypsies (Roma and Sinti). About 500 people are imprisoned at Westerbork transit camp: 300 are classified as Gypsies. On May 19, 245 are sent to Auschwitz; 30 survive.

A complete lock-up (Lagersperre) of the Gypsy family camp (BIIe) at Auschwitz-Birkenau is ordered. The first SS attempt to liquidate the Gypsy camp begins at 7 p.m. and fails because of armed resistance by Roma and Sinti prisoners. Armed with knives, shovels, wooden sticks, and stones, the Gypsies resist the armed SS, who withdraw.

May 18  The Polish 2nd Corps enters Monte Cassino, opening the road to Rome after a long and bloody battle with German troops.

May 19  Jewish members of a Sonderkommando (special labor unit) assigned to destroy the bodies of victims massacred at Ponary, near Vilna (Lithuania), escape. Of the 80 escapees, only 11 survive.

May 20  The 74th convoy leaves Drancy (located in suburban Paris) with 1,200 Jewish deportees to Auschwitz; 904 are gassed on arrival.

May 21  Transports of 507 Jews which left Malines transit camp (Belgium) on May 19, and 453 Jews from Westerbork transit camp (Netherlands) arrive at Birkenau. On the same day, a transport with 122 male and 124 female Dutch, German, and stateless Roma and Sinti arrive at Auschwitz-Birkenau from Vught concentration camp in the Netherlands.
May 21

Transports of 507 Jews which left Malines transit camp (Belgium) on May 19, and 453 Jews from Westerbork transit camp (Netherlands) arrive at Birkenau. On the same day, a transport with 122 male and 124 female Dutch, German, and stateless Roma and Sinti arrive at Auschwitz-Birkenau from Vught concentration camp in the Netherlands.

May 23

Allied forces go on the offensive and on May 25 break out of the Anzio beachhead in Italy.

Also in May:

A campaign of reprisals by the SS begins in southwest France in order to teach the French the cost of aiding the resistance.... Ghettos are created in Szeged and Ujpest in occupied-Hungary.... Fear of an Allied landing results in the first evacuation of prisoners from Breendonck concentration camp in Belgium.... The killing center at Chelmno re-opens from May to August.... Eichmann's representative in Italy, Friedrich Bosshammer, extends round-ups of Jews to patients in psychiatric institutions in an attempt to impress Eichmann with his zeal in implementing the "final solution".... A ghetto is set up in Sabotijksi in Yugoslavia and 3,500 Jews are imprisoned near the railroad station.

June 4

Rome is liberated by the American Fifth Army.

June 5

Anti-Jewish laws are repealed in liberated Rome and a ceremony is held at the main Rome synagogue, attended by Jewish members of the Allied forces.

36 French Gypsies and Spanish Republican political prisoners are transferred to the Gurs internment camp near Pau in southern France; 151 non-Jewish female inmates from Brens internment camp in southwestern France are also transferred to Gurs.

June 6

D-Day. Allied forces under the command of General Dwight D. Eisenhower conduct amphibious landings on the beaches of Normandy, France.

1,800 Jews on the island of Corfu are rounded up and held in that island's fortress. More than 1,500 of these Jews are deported on June 14 to the Ionian island of Leukas (Leucadia) and then to the seaport and railroad terminus city of Piraeus. The deportees were transported from there to Auschwitz, arriving on June 20.
June 8
Gemma LaGuardia Glueck, sister of New York Mayor Fiorello H. LaGuardia and married to a Hungarian Jew, is arrested in Budapest; she is subsequently deported via Mauthausen to Ravensbrück concentration camp.

Bayeux is the first French city liberated by Allied troops.

June 9
Hannah Szenes crosses the border from Yugoslavia into German-occupied Hungary.

President Roosevelt announces that the United States will accept 1,000 refugees from Italy who would immediately be brought to the United States, outside of regular immigration procedures, and placed in an "emergency refugee shelter" to be established at Fort Ontario near Oswego, New York. There they would remain for the duration of the war.

June 10
A German SS unit massacres the inhabitants of Oradour-sur-Glane (Haute Vienne Department), France, in reprisal for the disappearance of a German officer. The men were taken to several barns, where they were machine-gunned and then burned. The women and children were burned alive in the town's locked church. Among the 642 inhabitants killed in the slaughter were 252 children, 18 Spanish republican refugees and several Jews; five men and one woman escaped.

June 12
President Roosevelt sends a formal message to Congress announcing the creation of the Fort Ontario Emergency Refugee Shelter, mixing humanitarianism with military requirements. He states: "As the hour of the final defeat of the Hitlerite forces draws closer, the fury of their insane desire to wipe out the Jewish race in Europe continues undiminished. This is but one example: many Christian groups are also being murdered. Knowing that they have lost the war, the Nazis are determined to complete their program of mass extermination."

German Army Group Center of the German Army in Russia proposes Operation Hay, the deportation of 40,000-50,000 Russian children ages ten to 14 for use in German trade occupations and, later, as military auxiliaries. This operation was approved by Alfred Rosenberg, Reich Minister of the Eastern Territories, but the Russian offensive of June 22 prevents its implementation.

The first German "miracle weapon," the V-1 rocket bomb, is launched against London; the "V" stands for "retaliation" or "vengeance."

June 22
Concentration camp prisoners from Alderney in the Channel Islands are deported via Guernsey to Sollstedt (Germany), arriving there in Septem-
ber. Initially allocated to Neuengamme concentration camp, they are reassigned to Buchenwald concentration camp.

June 22-Aug. 29 The Russian offensive against German Army Group Center liberates Byelorussia and Russian troops enter Poland and the Baltic states. Almost 300,000 German troops are lost.

June 23-July 14 7,196 Lodz ghetto residents are deported to Chelmno, where they are killed.

June 25 A report about the liquidation of the "Theresienstadt family camp" in Auschwitz-Birkenau is filed at the British Embassy in Switzerland by a representative of Czechoslovak government-in-exile in Geneva. The report is forwarded to London and Washington with a request that Allied air forces bomb the gas chambers and that Germany be threatened with collective reprisals.

The Germans declare a state of emergency in Denmark in response to an increasing number of resistance attacks.

June 30 The 76th convoy with 1,100 Jewish deportees leaves Drancy, arriving in Auschwitz on July 4.

A transport with 2,044 Jews from Athens and Corfu arrives at Auschwitz-Birkenau; 1,423 are gassed on arrival. On the same day, a transport also arrives with 1,000 Jews from the Fossoli transit camp in Italy, of whom 231 are selected for labor; the rest are gassed.
THE D-DAY DECISION: GEN. EISENHOWER'S PROCLAMATION

On June 4, 1944, deteriorating weather in the English Channel forced Gen. Eisenhower to call back the invasion fleet. The text of his proclamation to launch the invasion on June 6 follows:

Soldiers, Sailors and Airmen of the Allied Expeditionary Force!

You are about to embark upon the Great Crusade, toward which we have striven these many months. The eyes of the world are upon you. The hopes and prayers of liberty-loving people everywhere march with you. In company with our brave Allies and brothers-in-arms on other Fronts, you will bring about the destruction of the German war machine, the elimination of Nazi tyranny over the oppressed peoples of Europe, and security for ourselves in a free world.

Your task will not be an easy one. Your enemy is well trained, well equipped, and battle-hardened. He will fight savagely.

But this is the year 1944! Much has happened since the Nazi triumphs of 1940-41. The United Nations have inflicted upon the Germans great defeats, in open battle, man-to-man. Our air offensive has seriously reduced their strength in the air and their capacity to wage war on the ground. Our Home Fronts have given us an overwhelming superiority in weapons and munitions of war, and placed at our disposal great reserves of trained fighting men. The tide has turned! The free men of the world are marching together to Victory!

I have full confidence in your courage, devotion to duty and skill in battle. We will accept nothing less than full Victory!

Good Luck! And let us all beseech the blessing of Almighty God upon this great and noble undertaking:

Dwight D. Eisenhower
HOLOCAUST MUSEUM ISSUES STATEMENT ON RWANDAN MASSACRES

May 25, 1994 -- Washington, D.C. Officials representing the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, the only national museum and memorial to the victims of the Holocaust, today issued the following statement:

"It is now apparent that in the last two months hundreds of thousands of civilians have been slaughtered in Rwanda. The killing of members of the minority Tutsi tribe, for no other reason than that they belong to this tribe, is reprehensible and an outrage against our common humanity."

"Designating these massacres as 'tribal warfare' is a convenient excuse for international indifference. Africans who are killed solely because of their tribal identification and a history of conflict with other tribes are no less victims of ethnic hatred than today's Bosnian Muslims or yesterday's European Jews."

"The United States Holocaust Memorial Council urges the world community to take every effectual action to stop the killing and alleviate the sufferings of the Rwandan people. There is no rationality to the madness of ethnic murder, and no exoneration for those who do not do what can be done to end it."

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A Project of the United States Holocaust Memorial Council
100 Raoul Wallenberg Place, SW, Washington, DC 20024–2150, Telephone (202) 488-0400, Fax (202) 488-2695
REMARKS

MILES LERMAN
Dedication of the Gen. Eisenhower Plaza
June 6, 1994

Thank you, Ruth.

Salutations

Cornelius Ryan wrote in his famous book about D-Day, called *The Longest Day*:

"The great crusade's unalterable purpose was not only to win the war, but to destroy Nazism and bring to an end an era of savagery which had never been surpassed in the world's history."

Fifty years ago, this very morning, still under the cover of darkness, Allied troops set out from England's shores to begin the great assault on the shores of Normandy.
It is not exaggeration to say that the fate of the world, the future of freedom was at stake. Few moments in human history were as important. Seldom, if ever, has more been at risk in the outcome of one battle.

We are here this morning to dedicate the General Dwight D. Eisenhower Plaza, within sight of the monuments of our founding fathers, George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and Abraham Lincoln.

We stand here in front of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum with gratitude in our hearts for the valiant sacrifices made by the soldiers of all allied armies who fought from Normandy to Stalingrad to bring the Nazi tyranny and the mass murder on innocent people to an end.

I know full well the meaning of the Holocaust. Most of my
family perished in its inferno. I also know fully well the taste of freedom, for it was two weeks prior to D-Day -- on May 22, 1944 -- that I entered the city of Lvov on top of a Red Army tank clutching a machine gun in my hands. This is a moment I will cherish until the end of my days.

As a partisan fighter I fought and dreamed of liberation, and it was May 22, 1944, when the Soviet and Polish troops had finally driven the Nazi invader from Southeastern Poland the area where I fought for 23 months.

It took six years of brutal battles on land, and on sea, millions of casualties, billions of dollars of military equipment to bring Nazi Germany to its knees.

It took the brilliant military leadership of Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower and the stamina and collective determination of all
allied forces to put an end to this nightmare.

What an enormous sacrifice it was of millions of young boys killed in battle; of millions of innocent men, women, and children murdered in the gas chambers; and millions of civilian casualties of war. What an enormous sacrifice for thousands of brave soldiers killed and wounded in the invasion of Normandy.

One may ask: "Were these sacrifices necessary?"

The answer must be that war can never be glorified, but sometimes it is unavoidable. Sometimes war is necessary, and even urgent because it is the only alternative.

World War II was one of such moments in history.
To us survivors, and to the many people who lived under Nazi occupation, D-Day was the spark of hope and inspiration that this may be the beginning of the end of Nazi evil.

We can never thank enough Gen. Eisenhower and all the veterans of World War II because we fully realize that were it not for their sacrifice, none of us would be alive today.

Not long ago, in November of 1992, liberators and those whom they had liberated went back to the places of martyrdom and to the fields of Normandy for the purpose of collecting soil from the beaches of Omaha and from the graves of 9,382 American Soldiers who made the supreme sacrifice to keep the world free.

This soil is now deposited in the Hall of Remembrance of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum along with the soil
of 55 concentration camps and killing centers and other places of martyrdom of Nazi victims.

The mixing of this soil will serve as a symbol that these soldiers died in battle to put an end to the great evil in human history.

By dedicating the Dwight D. Eisenhower Plaza we honor not only the Supreme Commander of the Allied Forces, but the tens of thousands of veterans who joined him in battle at Normandy and the soldiers of all other armies who fought throughout Europe. We pay homage to them for fighting and dying to keep the world free.

We are honored to have Ann Eisenhower Slottl, the granddaughter of Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower and many others who knew Gen. Eisenhower personally. We are also
particularly honored to have so many veterans and liberators with us today. We salute you all and we thank you for your courage and bravery. The World will never forget you, and we will never be able to thank you enough.

Thank you very much.
[pause]

It is now my pleasure to introduce Sheila Johnson Robbins of New York, a member of the United States Holocaust Memorial Council. Sheila and Jo Carole Lauder of New York who is here with us today led the early efforts to name this plaza after Gen. Eisenhower. We thank you, Jo Carole and please stand up to be recognized,

And we thank you Sheila Robbins for your foresight and for your initiative in this important matter.

Ladies and Gentlemen, may I present to you Sheila Johnson Robbins.
Child's view of the Holocaust

'Daniel's Story' at Memorial Museum

By JANE CALEM ROSEN

There is a room in the heart of Washington where children can learn how to cry.

These are not tears of physical pain or tears of anger. They cry because they have experienced, possibly for the first time, the anguish of another person - a stranger - and imagined it to be their own.

The room at the Holocaust Memorial Museum is part of an exhibit, "Remember the Children: Daniel's Story," designed for children 8 to 12.

Given its grim theme, it's hard to fathom that "Daniel's Story" competes with the National Zoo and the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum for a spot on the family travel agenda. But its uniqueness makes the exhibit a must for many tourists.

That was the case for Randi and Jeffrey Levine of Jericho, L.I., who had come with their children, Benjamin, 9, Jessica, 7, and Dara, 5.

The older children learned about the Holocaust and the museum from their Hebrew school teachers at Old Westbury Hebrew Congregation.

"We dragged them to all the monuments, but all they wanted to see was this," said Randi Levine.

"I didn't realize"

It is "very important to give them a sense of appreciation of who they are," she said.

Ethnic heritage alone does not define those attracted to the museum.

Rikki Dalton and Ryan McIntosh, both 11 and non-Jews from Minnesota, were visiting with their teacher, Maria Savaiano, as a reward for winning a scholastic competition. Said Savaiano: "I saved the thing with the greatest impact for last."

Her two pupils, who also viewed the museum's permanent exhibit (not recommended for children under 11), agreed the experience had made a powerful impression.

"My best friend in school is Jewish," said Ryan, "but I didn't realize before the trip how bad things actually were."

"It so surprised me that some people still think this didn't happen," said Rikki.

Using an interactive format, "Daniel's Story" helps children absorb the historical truth in a way that moves but does not overwhelm them.

As visitors go from room to room in the exhibit, they hear the voice of Daniel, a composite of actual Holocaust victims.
in 1933. Visitors also learn about his family and friends. An audio tape echoes his written words, which describe the changes his family experienced as the Nazis entered their lives, and his mounting fear, anger and confusion.

The exhibit starts in Daniel's comfortable home in Frankfurt, where lace adorns the kitchen windows, a stark contrast with the dark, cramped room the entire family shares in the Lodz ghetto in Poland, to which they are deported in 1941. There, only a threadbare curtain hangs.

Children are encouraged to touch objects such as Daniel's soccer ball and swimming trophies, and the passport he is required to carry after 1938, marked "J" for Jew.

His once shiny new suitcase becomes a horrifying symbol of the family's forced exile. "I used to think it would be fun to travel," Daniel says poignantly, "but now I'm afraid to leave home."

That he had no choice is a lesson in the darkest history of prejudice. Youngsters are asked to relate Daniel's circumstances to their own. "How would you feel if you could no longer attend public school, go swimming or to the library?" Daniel wants to know.

P.S.: 'I'm sorry'

Susan W. Morgenstein, director of exhibitions, said education is the museum's primary mission. To be certain "Daniel's Story" meets that goal, it was developed with the input of three child psychologists and later "test-marketed" on New York City grade-school children.

The exhibit ends in 1945, 12 years after Hitler came to power, when Germany surrendered and Daniel and his father were liberated from Auschwitz-Buchenwald.

"It creates memory of a time ago," said Morgenstein, "because it is based on a real chronology."

To be sure, along with education, emotional impact is the museum's enduring legacy.

At the end of "Daniel's Story," children are invited to write a postcard to him. Their own words, graceful in their simplicity, heartrending in content, reveal how profoundly they are affected. "I know you were scared of the Nazis, but you were brave," reads one.

"I am sorry that the Germans could do something this terrible to others, especially since I am 1/2 German," reads another.

"These are tears of sadness and of fright," reads a third. "They were crying out for help, but no one listened."

(Jane Calem Rosen is Associate Editor of the Jewish Standard in Teaneck, N.J.)

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### Travel Tips

- **INFORMATION:** The Holocaust Memorial Museum is at 100 Raoul Wallenberg Place, SW (formerly 15th St.). There is also an entrance on 14th St. (202) 488-0400.
- **WHEN TO GO:** Hours are 10 a.m.-5:30 p.m. daily. Box office (at 14th St. entrance) is open 9 a.m.-4 p.m., but arrive 9 if you want tickets for that day. A limited number are distributed each day, and the limit is four per person. Tickets indicate time of admission to the permanent exhibition.
- **WHAT TO SEE:** The permanent exhibition, for adults and children older than 11, requires an admission ticket. Admission to the museum is free, but to obtain tickets in advance for a nominal fee, call Ticketmaster at 1-800-551-7328. No ticket is required to visit "Remember the Children: Daniel's Story," street level; "Assignment Rescue: The Story of Varian Fry," concourse level; the Wall of Remembrance, concourse level, and "Schindler," an exhibit commemorating Oskar Schindler, concourse level.
- **GROUP VISITS:** Write, at least four weeks in advance to: Scheduler, USHMM, 100 Raoul Wallenberg Place, SW, Washington, DC 20024.
- **TAKING PHOTOS:** The museum does not permit any video cameras. Still photography is allowed, but without flash. News Staff Photographer Harry Hamburg recommends either Fuji 800 ASA or Kodak 1600 ASA negative film for interior photos.

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He is 12 when the story begins in 1933. Visitors also learn about his family and friends. An audio tape echoes his written words, which describe the changes his family experienced as the Nazis entered their lives, and his mounting fear, anger and confusion.

The exhibit starts in Daniel's comfortable home in Frankfurt, where lace adorns...
GRIM REMINDER: Top, the Hall of Witness at the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C., and above, concentration camp uniforms.

GRIM REMINDER: Another of the museum's exhibits is "Assignment Rescue: Varian Fry and the Emergency Rescue Committee." On the concourse level.

Fry was an American journalist who traveled to the south of France in the early '40s and risked personal danger to save 2,500 people, including some of Europe's most famous artists and intellectuals.

Visitors walk through a replica of Fry's Gramercy Park study with his typewriter and manuscripts and an outdoor café in Marseilles, where he made underground contacts and formulated his plans. On view also are typewritten lists of those he was sent to rescue, as well as letters and postcards he wrote to his mother in Ridgewood, N.J.

"Varian Fry was like an angel," said Sarah Robinson, 13, visiting with her class from Cave Springs Junior High School in Virginia. -- J.C.R.
Arts Beat

Holocaust Museum: Victim of Success?

By Judith Weinraub and Eric Brace
Washington Post Staff Writers

Mega-success apparently brings along its own unique problems. Or so it seemed at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum last week when the museum’s deputy director, Elaine Heumann Gurian, announced she would be leaving, bringing the number of recent senior staff departures to four.

Naomi Paiss, the museum's director of communications, left Friday to become public affairs vice president for the National Wildlife Federation. Susan Morgenstein, the director of exhibitions, left two months ago, but maintains an ongoing relationship with the museum as a consultant. And Director of Security Jim Davis left in March to become chief of security for the National Gallery. (Acting directors have been named for the exhibitions and security departments.)

Now the museum staff is worrying about what will happen when its director, Jeshajahu Weinberg, 76, returns to his home in Israel. Although Weinberg has not announced his retirement date, when the museum opened in April 1993 he said he would stay through 1994.

“It’s important the public doesn’t get the impression of an exodus,” says Miles Lerman, chairman of the Holocaust Council, which serves as the museum’s board. “The departures are purely coincidental. The institution is solid. We have stabilized the waters. We have gone from building a museum to running a museum. People recognize this.”

Gurian, who told her bosses she wanted to move on in part because her specialty now is opening museums, is currently working on a management book on institutional trauma. Thanks to that research, she has an explanation for the large number of senior staff changes taking place. “In an ordinary institution, people come and go as part of their growth and their personal lives,” she says. “But when you have a big project or big event like the opening of this museum, everybody wants to participate in the results of their hard work, and the normal leaving cycle gets disrupted.

“What’s happening now is that the more normal pattern has reemerged. And no more should be read into it.”
The Holocaust Museum: A Year to Remember

On Its First Anniversary, Officials Marvel at Its Ability to Touch So Many

By Judith Weinraub
Washington Post Staff Writer

One year ago, on the eve of the bleak spring day that marked the opening of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, nervous senior staffers wondered if anyone would visit their imposing new building off the southwest corner of the Mall. Its subject matter was too horrific, some said. Too depressing. Too Jewish. Too frightening to children. "The entire year before, our worry was that no one would come, or that we would appeal to the converted—that this museum would speak to a narrow cast," recalls Kathryn Hill, the museum's director of visitor services. "It wasn't what we hoped or planned, but it was what we had." Only one voice, Stephen Goodell, the museum's director of special projects and a non-Jew, was consistently optimistic. "If you build it, they will come," he regularly told his colleagues, echoing the hopeful prophecy from the film "Field of Dreams." Goodell turned out to be right—far more so than anyone could have imagined. From all over the world, they have come: Alaskan Eskimos, Pennsylvania Amish, children from inner-city schools and Indian reservations, people of state. Members of Congress, governors, mayors, the chief of the Hopi Nation. The cast of "Grease." The Phoenix Suns. Since the museum opened last April 26, nearly 2 million people have climbed the staircase of the Hall of Witness, walked the relocated candlesticks of the Warsaw Ghetto, imagined themselves crowded on the thinly barricaded bed from Auschwitz.

"The museum has touched a hidden nerve. Never in my wildest dreams did I guess the success would be so enormous or broad-based," says Miles Lerman, chairman of the Holocaust Memorial Council, which raised the money to build the museum. "We felt it would take a while to educate America as to why the tragedy of the Holocaust should be of concern to them. As it turned out, the visiting public immediately grasped the message." Adds Goodell, "I never saw this as a Jewish institution. And that was one of the issues that frightened people. I saw the Holocaust as one of the most important events in the 20th century—the ultimate evil.

The museum's statistics are extraordinary. In the past 12 months, it has recorded:

- Nearly 2 million visitors—more than the Hirshhorn Museum (919,000) or the Corcoran Gallery (225,000)—the majority (62 percent) of them non-Jews.
- 5,000 visitors each day to the museum's permanent exhibition.
- 100 to 150 requests a week for Holocaust education materials.
- 3,000 school groups, on average 18 a day; 90,000 children, two-thirds of them from public schools.
- 3,000 people a month using public access computers to search for family members in the National Registry of Survivors.
- A $2.5 million gross in the bookstore due, in part, to the popularity of the museum's catalogue, which has sold 50,000 copies.

One of the continual sources of concern—and argument—among museum officials and staff was the decision to focus its permanent exhibition on the European Holocaust. Would that turn the building into a "Jewish museum? Would it make the place unwelcoming to non-Jewish visitors?"

After all, says Ruth Mandel, vice chairman of the Holocaust Council, "The riches of the institution go way beyond a limited story of one group. The last thing we want to do is make the museum only a monument to a moment."

To avoid that, almost everyone agreed the museum's message had to be all-embracing: "I don't see how you can justify federal land and dollars for something that benefits a tiny segment of the population—and also a religious one," says Sara Bloomfield, the director of public programs. "And a lot of universal lessons about human beings and how we choose to govern ourselves can be offered by telling that one story in great detail. But we wondered if people would see it as universal. Fortunately, they do."

Says the museum's 75-year-old director, Jeshahu "Shaik" Weinberg, with pride. "Once it opened, nobody said it was a Jewish museum."

In addition to the breadth of the audience, few would have expected the range of purposes to which the lessons of the museum would be put, particularly in its opening year. Unlikely groups are drawn to it: the Foreign Service Institute Senior Seminar, which is including visits to the museum in its curriculum; gay marchers on their way to the White House, who, symbolically, chose the museum as their starting point; embattled political leaders from minority regions of the former Soviet Union and the former Yugoslavia, who seek solace—or perhaps answers—from the museum.

Wesley Fisher, deputy director of the museum's research institute, particularly recalls a visit by Ibrahim Rugova, the president of Kosovo, a predominantly Albanian province of Yugoslavia. "It had immediacy for the group," Fisher says. "There was a general feeling: 'Please, God, let it never happen again.'

Sara Bloomfield, center, director of public programs at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, with D.C. students in the Tower of Faces.
But many staffers have been surprised by the well-mannered, almost awed response that seems standard from school groups. "People say they've never been to a public place where children have been so quiet and respectful," says William Parsons, the director of education. One African American child's comment has become legendary among the staff. "You see," the teenager told a friend on their way out of the museum, "other people have suffered too."

"The museum provides a launching pad to get at issues in the world today," says Parsons. "What happens with kids is that when you hold up a clear example of the abuse of power, it makes clear what's at stake: Prejudice and discrimination are things that can escalate. The level of awareness goes up so that things that were tolerated before aren't anymore."

(The museum's work with children will get a massive push from a five-year pilot program designed to help students use the museum to understand more about prejudice and racism. The undertaking, funded by a $2 million grant from the Fannie Mae Foundation, will be officially announced tomorrow.)

Not surprisingly, the museum's success has engendered even greater success. The 67 million-dollar donors at the time of this opening have been joined by nine more—-

largesse that other institutional fund-raisers only gape at.

And the access to European archives that the museum seeks in order to define itself as the central repository for Holocaust scholarship continues to improve. Brewtor Chamberlin, director of the museum's archives, is particularly excited about obtaining microfilm of Auschwitz construction drawings that were taken by Soviet soldiers from Berlin in 1945 and then lodged in a secret Soviet archive. "We have the blueprints, the drawings, the change orders for all of the buildings including the crematoria and the gas chambers," he says. "This is the material that will finally shut up the [Holocaust] deniers."

Slowly, the museum is beginning to feel more assured about its role—confident enough, for example, to broaden its focus outside the European Holocaust by scheduling a photo exhibit on Bosnia next fall, and even to explore the politically risky idea of a "committee on conscience"—the final recommendation of the report to President Jimmy Carter that initiated the museum 15 years ago.

Before the museum opened, the idea of such a committee seemed presumptuous at best. But its unexpected significance as a touchstone for oppressed peoples has altered that perception. "What other museum would be asked to state its position on Bosnia?" asks Shari Weinberg.

Indeed. First Bosnia, Now Rwanda. Undeniably, some of the museum's success must be attributed to current world events that, sadly, echo the Holocaust. Says Kathryne Hill, "Events in Bosnia have reinforced this museum's relevance today in a startling and horrible and undeniable way."

When staffers ask themselves why the museum has attracted so much attention, some point to the extensive information available in both the permanent exhibit and the popular learning center. Others take note of James L. Freed's highly praised architectural design. Still others acknowledge the popularity of Steven Spielberg's "Schindler's List." (Though there were long lines to get in before that," says Weinberg.) And some tentatively raise the question of moral authority. "People recognize their own tendency for evil, but identify with the victims," says the museum's Sara Bloomfield.

Weinberg has his own thoughts on the museum's appeal. "The museum is built around a plot, like a novel or a movie," he says. "And when a plot is gripping you, it drops you inside it. You identify with the heroes and resent the villains. The moment that happens, people are emotionally affected and the story ceases to be just a historical event. We get into the hearts and bones of people—not only into their brains."

Who would have predicted it? Certainly not the Holocaust survivors themselves. "In our darkest hour, our greatest pain was feeling that we were isolated and abandoned and the whole world didn't care," says council Chairman Lerman, a Polish partisan during World War II. "I keep waking up in the middle of the night and pinching myself—is this true? Is this true?"