SARAJEVO PRAGUE HILLERSLEBEN VILNIUS WYSZKOW

WE CANNOT REBUILD WHAT

OSWIECIM KARCZEW GLIWICE KIEV KALININGRAD

WAS DESTROYED BUT WE CAN

BRATISLAVA WARSAW KRAKOW SAMBIR BERDICHEV

PRESERVE WHAT REMAINS

SOFIA BUCHENWALD KOCEVJE ANI L'VIV CHISINAU

ANNUAL REPORT 2001

UNITED STATES COMMISSION FOR THE PRESERVATION OF AMERICA'S HERITAGE ABROAD

SARAJEVO PRAGUE HILLERSLEBEN L'VIV VILNIUS WYSZKOW OSWIECIM

KARCZEW GLIWICE KIEV SOFI BRATISLAVA KALININGRAD ANI SAMBIR

WARSAW KRAKOW SAMBIR BERDICHEV BUCHENWALD KOCEVJE CHISINAU

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ELIE WIESEL
CONCENTRATION CAMP SURVIVOR

"I DO NOT LIVE IN THE PAST, BUT THE PAST LIVES IN ME."

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Inside front cover COMMISSION MEMBERS AND STAFF

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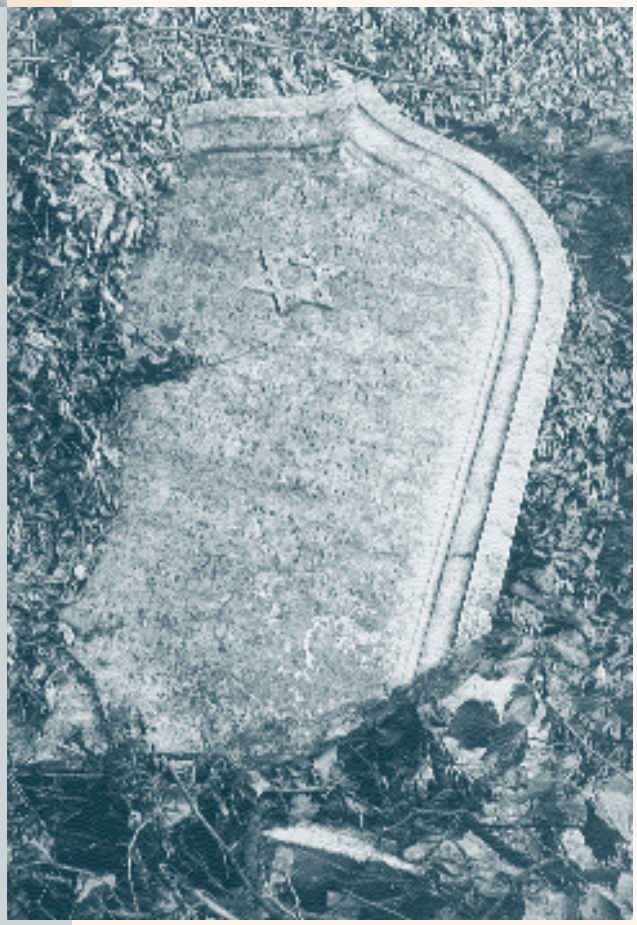
"PROGRESS, FAR FROM CONSISTING IN CHANGE, DEPENDS ON RETENTIVENESS. THOSE WHO CANNOT REMEMBER THE PAST ARE CONDEMNED TO REPEAT IT."

GEORGE SANTAYANA
PHILOSOPHER

Commission Research Director Dr. Samuel Gruber examines a tombstone at an old cemetery in Berdichev, Ukraine.



CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

Michael Lewan speaks at the Auschwitz Jewish Center Foundation annual dinner in New York City (December 6, 2000).

AUSCHWITZ JEWISH CENTER FOUNDATION

The United States Commission for the Preservation of America's Heritage Abroad was created by Congress in 1985 in recognition that the United States, as a nation of immigrants, has its values rooted in lands distant in miles and time. As a people, we believe that the fabric of our society is strengthened by visible reminders of our ancestral past. The history, culture, politics, sociology, economy, and religion of our forefathers have stamped upon our souls an indelible mark of character. As the years go by, Americans need to see the sites, hear the echoes, touch the tombstones, feel the pain, and relive the joy of our ancestral past. How else can we understand the present or prepare for the future?

The Commission's charge is to encourage the preservation and protection of communal properties—specifically, the buildings, monuments, collections, and cemeteries connected with the heritage of Americans from the more than twenty-two countries that comprise Eastern and Central Europe and the former Soviet Union. Americans who trace their family roots to these cultures are, for the first time, able to visit the churches, synagogues, cemeteries, and monuments to which they have binding ties.

What they see often shocks and saddens them. The Nazi extermination of six million Jews and so many other innocents extended to physical places as well. Schools, libraries, museums, and social halls were all expropriated.

"The Commission has helped to enrich Europe's present by honoring its past through the preservation and protection of cemeteries, monuments, and historic buildings. It has also enabled countless Americans to renew their spiritual and cultural ties to the peoples of Central and Eastern Europe. I thank…the Commission…for [its] vision and leadership in safeguarding for future generations…the enduring symbols of the rich cultural, ethnic, and religious past we share."

PRESIDENT BILL CLINTON

MICHAEL LEWAN
COMMISSION CHAIRMAN

"Remembrance is, in every sense, education. Soon no one will be left to describe the horrors of the Holocaust first hand. That is why it is so very important that we document in detail and portray vividly man's inhumanity to man. Only by teaching the young can the civilized world be assured the words 'never again' will have meaning for all time."

Synagogues, churches, and cemeteries were especially sought out for vandalism or destruction.

The Communists continued this wanton behavior. Buildings and graveyards were bulldozed to make room for development. Those that remained were left to suffer the ravages of time and nature. Many, if not most, important sites passed into oblivion.

Some did survive. Today there exist hundreds of synagogues, churches, cemeteries, and other places in desperate need of attention. They stand now not as a reminder of death and decay, but as a testament to the strength and substance of those vital, vibrant souls who once prayed, sang, studied, danced, and lived within their walls. Some sites are artistic treasures and deserve restoration on that basis; some are sacred and command the highest degree of devotion.

Today, a half-century since the defeat of fascism and a decade after the fall of communism, the American people are helping the nations of Eastern

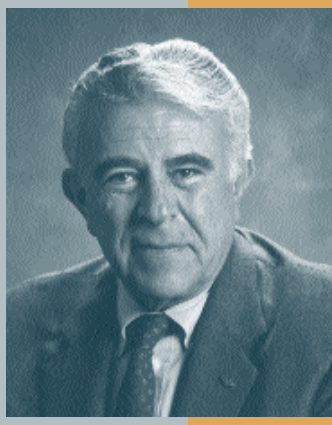
Rabbi Chaskel Besser, a Commission member, picks up bones at the Jewish cemetery in Karczew, Poland. The site is the focus of a Commission-sponsored restoration effort in cooperation with the city and the local Jewish community.

and Central Europe rebuild and restitute what was long ago stolen and believed lost in the vastness of time.

The historic and moral importance of the Commission's work is clear. We must help the emerging democracies of Europe settle old debts and begin anew by building on the foundations of yesterday to create a better tomorrow.

The Commission will continue to use its influence on governments, nongovernmental organizations, and all parties involved to ensure that we find the ways and means to preserve and protect these sacred places for all eternity.

STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF THE UNITED STATES COMMISSION FOR THE PRESERVATION OF AMERICA'S HERITAGE ABROAD



I am pleased to have this opportunity to pay tribute to the important work of the United States Commission for the Preservation of America's Heritage Abroad.

Throughout my tenure in Congress, I have worked diligently to support the struggle for the protection of human rights of ethnic and religious groups around the world. Our efforts reflect the deep and abiding values of freedom and equality that are the backbone of America's civil fabric. The Commission's effective advocacy to preserve places of religious and cultural value, reflects those same values and provides an important partnership in our global fight for human rights.

I have watched the Commission grow in both its accomplishments and its stature to become an integral partner in American foreign policy. That is why I have and will continue to support the Commission's noble mandate. All Americans should be proud that our government strives to ensure that our values and diverse identities are protected through the preservation of the foreign remnants of our shared cultural past.

I am honored to be associated with, and a proponent for, the Commission and its efforts to preserve and protect cultural sites throughout Central and Eastern Europe that are of importance to our American heritage.

Congressman Benjamin A. Gilman

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Former Congressman Stephen Solarz with Rabbi Zvi Kestenbaum, a Commission founder.

"Victory," it is often said, "has a thousand fathers, while defeat is an only child." In the case of the United States Commission for the Preservation of America's Heritage Abroad, truer words have never been said.

As I look back on the origins of the landmark legislation creating the Commission, it is clear that there are many who deserve credit for it. The idea itself originated with Rabbi Zvi Kestenbaum, who first suggested it to Congressman Fred Richmond as far back as 1979, when Richmond introduced the original bill to create the Commission. Several years later, with the bill having languished in the committee to which it was referred and Congressman Richmond no longer in the House of Representatives, Rabbi Kestenbaum came to see me to discuss the proposal at my office in Washington. In the intervening years, I had become the Representative of the Chassidic community of Williamsburg in the House of Representatives, and Rabbi Kestenbaum correctly assumed I would be responsive to his suggestion that such a commission could play a useful role in preserving the cemeteries and monuments associated with the heritage and memories of the Jewish and other immigrant communities of our country.

In February of 1985, in response to Rabbi Kestenbaum's persuasive recommendation, I reintroduced the bill. With the help of Rabbi Moshe Sherer, who was the executive director of Agudath Israel of America, I was able to enlist the support of Senator Edward Kennedy, who introduced the Senate version of the legislation. Shortly afterwards, taking advantage of a foreign aid bill that was under consideration by the Foreign Affairs Committee on which I served, I was able to get the bill included as an amendment to the International Defense and Security Cooperation Act of 1985, which was subsequently approved by the full House of Representatives. At almost the same time, Senator Kennedy was able to get the bill adopted by the Senate as an amendment to the same legislation.

After minor differences between the two versions were ironed out in conference, the legislation was passed by both the House and Senate and signed into law by President Reagan. But the effort to make the Commission a vital

force in the preservation of America's foreign heritage did not end with the passage of the legislation providing for its establishment. Members had to be appointed and a budget secured before the Commission could really begin to do its job.

In obtaining funding for the Commission, a number of congressmen were particularly helpful in persuading the Appropriations Committee to make the necessary resources available. Chief among them were Ben Gilman, who remains a great champion of the Commission in the House of Representatives; and Neal Smith, a congressman from Iowa, who served as Chairman of the subcommittee that had jurisdiction over the Commission, and whose support for a budgetary allocation was indispensable in getting it approved by Congress. On the other side of the Capitol, Senator Frank Lautenberg of New Jersey played a particularly helpful role in securing the support of the Senate for a startup appropriation.

Of course, even with a full complement of commissioners and a budget to hire staff and take care of travel and other essential expenses,

POLAND'S PRESIDENT HONORS WORK OF THE COMMISSION

Chairman Michael Lewan speaks with Polish President Aleksander Kwasniewski after receiving the Commander's Cross Award.

Working together through the Commission over the past several years, Poles and Americans have been preserving and protecting the treasures of Polish cultural heritage. On September 13, 2000, this partnership was recognized and celebrated when Polish President Aleksander Kwasniewski, in an elaborate, marble-pillared hall at the Presidential Palace in Warsaw, awarded Commission Chairman Michael Lewan the Commander's Cross with the Star of the Order of Merit.

The ceremony, attended by more than 100 family members, friends, and colleagues, including the U.S. Ambassador to Poland Christopher Hill, paid tribute to the Commission's many accomplishments in Poland, some of which are described in this report. In particular, the Commission's work with Poland's government and religious institutions to protect and revere sites of particular cultural significance, such as cemeteries, synagogues, and other physical places that survived more than a half-century of neglect.

In accepting the medal, Chairman Lewan promised to continue the important work of strengthening the partnership with the Polish people to build an even brighter future, a future that honors the past. "As new generations make their way," he noted, "we must protect the values, traditions, and observances so critical to survival."

the Commission could not possibly have achieved what it has without dedicated and effective leadership. Here it has been particularly blessed with a chairman, Michael Lewan, who not only was present at the creation of the Commission (in his capacity as my administrative assistant when the legislation was introduced and adopted), but who more so than any single person has been responsible for its striking and singularly significant string of successes. From the corridors of power in Washington, where he has been able to assure a continued source of funding from Congress, to the offices of presidents and prime ministers throughout Eastern and Central Europe, where he has negotiated a series of agreements to protect and preserve cemeteries and other monuments to the heritage of our immigrant communities, he has made the dream of a Commission to honor America's past a vital and living reality of our contemporary national existence.

To him, and all the others who have contributed to the success of this noble endeavor, I offer my profound appreciation for a job well done.

—Former Congressman Stephen Solarz

FORMER CHAIRMAN RECEIVES PRESIDENTIAL MEDAL

Rabbi Arthur Schneier, who served as chairman from 1992 to 1995, received the Presidential Citizens Medal from President Bill Clinton in January. Rabbi Schneier accepted this prestigious award for "devot[ing] a lifetime to overcoming the forces of hatred and intolerance." The Presidential Citizens Medal is awarded in recognition of U.S. citizens who have performed exemplary deeds of service to our nation.

In addition to his service as chairman, Rabbi Schneier has worked for more than thirty years as the founder and president of the Appeal of Conscience Foundation to promote religious freedom and intercultural understanding around the world.

SARAJEVO

BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

SARAJEVO CEMETERY RESTORATION PROJECT

During the 1992–95 Bosnian conflict, Sniper Alley was a notorious locale: men, women, and children were coldly gunned down on their way to school, errands, and work. Mercenaries were paid about $250 for each kill.

Just opposite Sniper Alley is a historic Sephardic Jewish cemetery, which, founded in 1630, is the oldest intact burial ground of any religious group in Sarajevo. Its strategic location made it a favorite of snipers, and its elaborate prayer house, walls, and tombstones sustained significant damage and extensive mining.

After the war, the devastation of this site shocked the former combatants. This cemetery is a national treasure to Croats, Serbs, and Bosnians alike. Thus, in what is likely to be the most important preservation effort in its history, the Commission is, at the request of the government of Bosnia-Herzegovina, working with other international entities to restore the Sarajevo prayer house and cemetery. The effort is proceeding and has already received unprecedented matching funds from Congress to encourage private fundraising. This congressional support is due largely to the support of Congressman Benjamin Gilman and Senator Frank Lautenberg.

Prayer house at the Old Jewish Cemetery in Sarajevo (October 2000). Commissioners Joseph Halfon and Phyllis Kaminsky are leading fundraising efforts to restore the building.

JOSEPH HALFON

The restoration is proceeding according to a two-phase plan. The first phase consisted of de-mining the cemetery site. Working with the Department of Defense, the Commission was active in this de-mining effort, which was undertaken by a Norwegian team and was completed in 1998. At that point, the cemetery was officially returned to the Jewish community.

The project's second phase is the restoration of the prayer house; this work is now in progress. The prayer house restoration is based

> "The international effort to rebuild the cemetery and honor religious traditions does indeed capture the spirit of the larger Southeast Europe Stability Pact launched by the Sarajevo Summit."
>
> **PRESIDENT BILL CLINTON**
> IN A LETTER TO THE COMMISSION

in large part on earlier work completed in 1990. Some design changes are being incorporated, including a caretaker's apartment in the basement and copper sheathing to cover the exterior of the roof. Once the prayer house is completed, work will begin to repair breached walls and bullet-ridden tombstones, provided adequate funding can be raised. When restored, the prayer house will be a multi-ethnic, multicultural center for the entire Sarajevo community, regardless of religious belief.

BLAGOEVGRAD

BULGARIA

OLD AND NEW PARTNERSHIPS

In November 2000, the Commission signed an agreement with the Bulgarian government to cooperate on cultural preservation efforts there. Bulgaria, an emerging Balkan democracy home to about 8.4 million people, has a dramatic and often tumultuous history and a rich and diverse cultural heritage.

Despite the tradition of tolerance and the peaceful coexistence of the broad mosaic of religious and ethnic groups in Bulgaria, much of the country's common cultural heritage remains to be explored. For 2001, the Commission has given a high priority to funding a survey encompassing several aspects of Bulgarian cultural patrimony, focusing primarily on sites of importance to Muslim, Eastern Orthodox, Jewish, and Roma communities.

To do so, the Commission entered into a partnership with the American University in Bulgaria in May 2001. Now in its tenth year, the university boasts a student body from throughout the region whose Scholastic Aptitude Test scores rival those of the best schools in the United States. Committed to promoting the values of an open society, the American University in Bulgaria will serve as an important complement to the Commission's new alliance with the Bulgarian government.

PRAGUE

CZECH REPUBLIC

A COMPANY, A CEMETERY, AND A COMPROMISE

In 1997, Ceska Pojistovna, the Czech Republic's largest insurance company, unearthed the remains of a thirteenth century Jewish cemetery in what is now downtown Prague as it began construction of a new building. The ensuing conflict was clear cut: the future versus the past, "location" versus veneration. Resolution was not so clear cut, as the situation quickly escalated, ultimately involving the Chief Rabbi of Israel, the Czech government, the U.S. Embassy—and the Commission, which was at the forefront of the efforts to encourage the parties to reach compromise and fought to preserve the site to the greatest extent possible.

Commission members traveled to Prague to participate in meetings of the various stakeholders. Over the course of several months, an agreement was hammered out. Though not wholly supported by all involved, the compromise allows Ceska Pojistovna to construct a modified version of its planned building around the cemetery's remains, declares portions of the area extending beyond this property to be a cultural memorial and bans future construction thereon, and allows for the reburial of bones taken from the cemetery for archaeological research. In addition, the Czech government has provided compensation to Ceska Pojistovna to make this compromise possible.

GERMANY

HILLERSLEBEN RECLAIMED

Following World War II, the U.S. Army provided emergency medical services for a group of liberated concentration camp victims brought to an Army unit located in Hillersleben, Germany. Despite this care, sixty-two of the victims died and were buried in an unrecorded plot of land near the temporary U.S. Army field hospital. The site was subsequently razed by the East Germans to clear space for a recreational park. After lengthy negotiations, a group of American Holocaust survivors whose family members were buried at Hillersleben obtained authorization from the local government to restore the site as a cemetery. In 1995, the Commission led an effort to locate the site's boundaries. To do so, it enlisted the National Imagery and Mapping Agency, which used declassified satellite surveillance to fix the boundaries. Preservationists subsequently fenced in the cemetery to commemorate loved ones buried there.

Five years later, the Commission received information from Esther Mittelman of Brooklyn, New York, the daughter of one of those buried at Hillersleben, that the cemetery had been desecrated and damages sustained. The Commission promptly expressed its concern to the German government; just as promptly, the government took corrective steps.

"I am writing to express my thanks to the Commission for your help with respect to identifying a post-war Jewish cemetery located in Hillersleben, Germany…I have to explain that this cemetery, although imbued with all the sanctity of any other Jewish cemetery, has a special emotional significance for the hundreds of Nazi survivors who were rescued at the end of the war, who were brought to a U.S. Army hospital in Hillersleben and who saw friends and relatives, parents and children, die as a result of their wounds and deprivation prior to their arrival here. These people are all buried at Hillersleben, and maintaining the integrity of this cemetery carries an emotional significance of a kind that I believe you will understand…"

RABBI LAZAR STERN
PRESIDENT, SOCIETY FOR THE PRESERVATION OF JEWISH HOLY SITES

"…Regarding our beloved ancestors' gravestones in Hillersleben… we are extremely pleased to hear that the damages have been repaired…May the merit of this significant deed bring you… health and happiness and continued success in all your humanitarian endeavors."

ESTHER MITTELMAN
BROOKLYN, NEW YORK

SURVEYS

OF ENDANGERED CULTURAL SITES IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

THE MISSION

Over the past decade, the U.S. Commission for the Preservation of America's Heritage Abroad has been conducting a program to inventory and describe historic and cultural Eastern and Central European sites of significance to Americans. In the beginning, because of the enormous damage done by the Holocaust and subsequent communist regimes, the work was focused primarily on identifying sites of significance to the Jewish cultural and religious heritage. More recently, the Commission has expanded the initiative to identify and document heritage sites of other ethnic, religious, and cultural minorities. For example, surveys are now being carried out of Roma (Gypsy) sites and sites of religious minorities such as the Old Believers.

THE RESULTS

To date, approximately 5,000 distinct sites in eleven countries have been identified and their physical condition described. A great many of these sites were formerly unknown, and the Commission surveys have given official and often legal recognition to many cemeteries, mass gravesites, and former synagogues. The existence of the Commission's data has accelerated the process of legal protection for these sites—though much work in this area, and in transforming legal protection to real protection, remains to be done.

Survey results have been widely disseminated in published reports and via the Internet, (www.preservationcommission.org) where the nature of the medium allows for regular updating of posted information. Information on individual sites is made available to the public on-line as it reaches the Commission, thanks to the volunteer work of the International Association of Jewish Geneaological Societies.

THE METHODOLOGY

The Commission has carried out its work in a very economical manner, enhanced by contracting much of the work to local experts who have been able to deliver detailed and reliable information at a low cost. By so doing, the Commission has been able to: engage, encourage, and support needy researchers and scholars in former Communist countries; ensure local cooperation and access; utilize existing (usually unpublished) research carried on (often clandestinely) under communism; and encourage and instruct a large number of people in residence who will be able to continue to monitor sites and provide information beyond the completion of the formal inventory work.

THE ROMA

The Roma, or Gypsies, are traditionally thought of as wanderers, unrooted nomads. Yet their heritage, like that of other Central and East European peoples, is tied to the land. Their homes were built here; their dead are buried here; their culture is imprinted here. This past year, the Commission began a survey of the Roma's monumental and architectural heritage in Lithuania. The project's aim is to locate settlement areas, discover burial and other culturally and historically significant sites, produce a site inventory, and offer recommendations on restoration and preservation. The work should be completed in June 2001; as of this writing, a vast photographic inventory of Roma settlements and burial sites has been compiled, and is the first of its kind. Similar studies are now planned for Roma communities in other countries in the region.

THE FUTURE

The effects of the survey have been extraordinary, serving the needs of many diverse constituencies, all of which have free and complete access to the information via the Internet. Survey data are used in many ways—assisting religious Americans who desire information about conditions and access to sacred sites long off limits; aiding genealogical researchers in search of information about the places of birth and death of their ancestors, and the location and condition of family graves; and serving American and local preservation planners engaged in efforts to ensure access, protection, and maintenance of sites and willing to act quickly to address emergency situations as identified by survey teams. The inventory and survey data are also being used to provide the basis for long-term planning so that these sites will survive for future generations—no easy task in the face of the rapidly changing economic, political, and legal frameworks within the many countries surveyed.

Since the Commission's survey work began, many sources of information have become available. Archives are today more open, and independent researchers—including American genealogists and scholars—are readily sharing their findings with the Commission. Various local organizations now exist which can be engaged for the first time as partners in this work. For example, local Jewish history centers and museums can be found in most countries of Central and Eastern Europe; there were few such institutions a decade ago. The Commission has nurtured a number of these institutions, and in general, has significantly contributed to the climate of interest and concern that has allowed them to take root. Moreover, the Commission's policy of making findings available to all interested parties without delay has generated support and goodwill for the inventory and survey process.

Despite the tremendous accomplishments of past years, it is clear that the longer we wait to survey sites, the greater the risk of increased deterioration and destruction at any given site, and the greater the cost to survey each site and prepare plans for improved protection, access, and maintenance. Additionally, a crucial source of information—the older generation that remembers the history and location of many sites—diminishes as old age and death take their toll. As we continue the survey effort in the new millennium, we will increasingly rely on our acquired expertise, record of successful work, and the improved political and economic situations in many of the countries to be surveyed.

HIGHLIGHTS OF COUNTRY SURVEYS

CZECH REPUBLIC: Between 1991 and 1993, 412 cemeteries and almost 300 synagogues and former synagogue buildings identified. Information has provided a basis for an ambitious program of cemetery maintenance and restoration instituted by the Czech Jewish community.

POLAND: Completed in 1994; updated 1995. 1,008 Jewish cemeteries identified and described, along with catalogue of threats to these sites—e.g., vandalism, pollution, and existing or planned development.

UKRAINE: Five-year effort described condition of all Jewish cemeteries, mass graves, and synagogues and former synagogue buildings—over 1,500 in all—located within borders of present-day Ukraine. 272-page report distributed for review in December 2000; this information should soon be available for public use over the Internet. The Ukrainian government decree protects all identified sites from privatization.

ROMANIA: Over 600 cemeteries inventoried throughout Transylvania and other parts of the northern half of Romania; approximately 200 known cemeteries remain to be surveyed. Information also being collected on over 100 synagogues and former synagogue buildings.

Architect's rendering of the Little Camp Monument.

STEPHEN B. JACOBS GROUP, PC

MEMORIALIZING THE LITTLE CAMP

The Buchenwald concentration camp complex included the "Little Camp," a place of unimaginable suffering and hardship. At its peak, the Little Camp imprisoned as many as 30,000 inmates at a time, including Jewish children whose parents had been murdered by the Nazis. Inmates included teenager Elie Wiesel, who became a world-renowned author and Nobel Peace Prize recipient, and seven-year old Mier Lau, now Chief Rabbi of Israel.

The Commission has devoted significant time and energy to ensure that the horrors of the Little Camp will be remembered and its occupants memorialized. To this end, it has successfully raised substantial funds necessary for construction of the memorial. A compelling narrative written by Commissioner Warren L. Miller which describes what happened in the camp will be engraved on the walls of the memorial in English, German, French, Hebrew, Russian, and Polish (an excerpt of this text is included on this page). On the memorial floor will be inscribed the names of places from which inmates were transported to the Little Camp. These places include numerous concentration camps, ghettos, and cities throughout Europe.

A former Buchenwald inmate, prominent American architect Stephen Jacobs, is donating his services to the project. Completion and dedication of the memorial is planned for the Fall of 2001.

EXCERPT FROM THE NARRATIVE FOR THE MONUMENT AT THE LITTLE CAMP AT BUCHENWALD

(TO BE CARVED IN STONE ON THE MONUMENT FACE)

ON THIS SITE WAS THE INFAMOUS "LITTLE CAMP." SEPARATED BY ONLY A BARBED WIRE FENCE FROM THE MAIN CAMP, ITS INMATES WERE SUBJECTED TO THE GREATEST SUFFERING OF ALL THOSE AT BUCHENWALD... THE LITTLE CAMP WAS A PLACE OF DEEPEST DESPAIR FOR THOSE LEFT TO BE FORGOTTEN AND TO DIE FROM COLD, STARVATION, DEHYDRATION, EXHAUSTIVE LABOR, TORTURE AND RAMPANT EPIDEMICS OF DISEASES THAT WENT UNTREATED. AFTER LIBERATION, ALTHOUGH THE MAIN CAMP WAS PRESERVED AND VARIOUS MEMORIALS ESTABLISHED, THE LITTLE CAMP WAS TOTALLY EFFACED AND ALLOWED TO BE OVERGROWN WITH TREES AND BRUSH. THE SITE AND THE HORRORS ITS INMATES ENDURED WERE NEGLECTED BY AUTHORITIES FOR NEARLY FIFTY YEARS.

Former prisoners of the Little Camp at Buchenwald stare out from the wooden bunks in which they slept three to a bed. Elie Wiesel is pictured in the second row of bunks, seventh from the left, next to the vertical beam.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES, COURTESY OF USHMM PHOTO ARCHIVES

LUDWIGSLUST

COMMEMORATING AMERICAN MILITARY BENEVOLENCE

As the largest parachute force in the world, the 82nd Airborne Division has distinguished itself on battlefields from the beaches of Normandy to the deserts of Iraq. Less known, but no less important are the actions of the 82nd Airborne in Ludwigslust, Germany in May 1945.

As the unit captured the city, American paratroopers liberated about 3,500 inmates at the nearby Wöbbelin concentration camp, where SS guards had in their last days ordered corpses piled throughout the barracks. While feeding and providing medical attention to the survivors, the troopers devised a plan to bury 200 corpses found strewn about the camp in a park in front of the Grand Duke of Mecklenburg castle in Ludwigslust. The troopers ordered all the citizens of the town and surrounding areas to dig the graves and walk by the corpses covered with white sheets prior to a burial ceremony led by an Army chaplain.

More than a half-century later, Leonard Linton, a veteran 82nd Airborne paratrooper who took part in the mission, is leading a project in coordination with other veterans and the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum to memorialize and dignify the site with 200 granite tablets. The town council has unanimously accepted the project and pledged half of the funds necessary to complete it. The Commission has endorsed the project, provided a modest matching grant, and has offered to assist with private fundraising efforts. A ceremony to dedicate the memorial is scheduled for May 2001.

Members of the U.S. Army 82nd Airborne Division stand at attention during the reburial ceremony of victims of the Wöbbelin concentration camp in Germany (May 7, 1945).

U.S. Army 82nd Airborne

LITHUANIA

VILNIUS HOLOCAUST MONUMENT

VILNIUS

Frequently, the Commission helps Americans honor the memory of their cultural past by supporting private groups that undertake preservation work on their own. The Commission's contribution usually involves helping cut red tape in foreign bureaucracies and providing expertise and advice.

Along these lines, the Commission recently helped sponsor construction of a Holocaust monument in Vilnius; the actual work was undertaken by the International Foundation for the Arts in Key Biscayne, Florida. Working with the foundation's director, Shelly Pearson, and the Embassy of Lithuania in Washington, the Commission facilitated issuance of needed permits that allowed the monument to be shipped to Vilnius. Formally unveiled in September 2000, as part of an international Holocaust conference, the monument was erected on land that had been part of the Vilnius Jewish ghetto during World War II.

Brendan Melley

Gates to the Old Jewish Cemetery in Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina.

POLAND

AUSCHWITZ JEWISH CENTER

Less than two miles from the Auschwitz-Birkenau death camps is the sole remaining synagogue in Oswiecim, Poland. Led by New York businessman and philanthropist Fred Schwartz and co-sponsored by the Commission, the Auschwitz Jewish Center Foundation has restored the building to its pre-World War II condition. Though, no Jews remain in Oswiecim today, the need for a spiritual and educational retreat from the searing experience at the camps is very real.

At the Chevra Lomdei Mishnayot Synagogue and adjacent Auschwitz Jewish Center, visitors to the camps now can come to reflect, remember, and try to rectify the senseless acts of evil committed a short distance away. The synagogue and center also serve as an important symbol of the vitality of Jewish culture and history that existed long before Oswiecim became infamously known as Auschwitz. Oswiecim was, for 500 years, a town with a vibrant Jewish community. Through exhibitions, genealogical information, a theater showing Steven Spielberg's survivor documentary, as well as a Commission-sponsored summer internship program, the center will be a place to celebrate life near a place synonymous with death.

In addition to its importance as a site of reflection and scholarship, the center has become a symbol of reconciliation. Hundreds came to witness the historic ceremony reopening the synagogue in September 2000 and millions more around the world watched it on television. Israeli, Polish, and American dignitaries, an Arab prince, Holocaust survivors and their families, and town residents all came together to pay homage to the past and to celebrate a new beginning. The center has also become a vital component in helping to encourage understanding. Since the reopening, more than 15,000 people, about half of whom are either Polish or German students, have come to pray, think, remember, and study—a testament to the importance of the center as a unifying force in the ongoing quest to right the wrongs of the past.

"The efforts of the Auschwitz Jewish Center Foundation to promote life at a place which so signifies death will inspire the faith and determination of all those who seek to build a better tomorrow."

JOSEPH I. LIEBERMAN
U.S. SENATOR

JILL VEXLER

Exterior view of the Chevra Lomdei Mishnayot Synagogue and the Jewish Center in Oswiecim, Poland. September, 2000.

Human bones and broken tombstones lay about the shifting sands of the Karczew cemetery, creating haunting images that were featured in *National Geographic.*

RUTH ELLEN GRUBER

SAVING THE KARCZEW CEMETERY

As in so many other communities in Central and Eastern Europe, the Jews of Karczew were lost, dispersed, or killed in the early part of the twentieth century. The ancestral graves remained, however—untended, since there was no religious community left to care for its dead. Over time, tombstones toppled, the ground cover was eaten away by grazing animals, and the cemetery walls were destroyed.

Sand dunes littered with human bones are the distinguishing feature of the Karczew cemetery today. And now, a small but growing Jewish presence in the region, the Jewish Community of Warsaw, has targeted the preservation of this cemetery as its first preservation project under Poland's new communal property restitution law.

The cemetery has been the focus of a decade-long dispute between the Jewish Community and town authorities over the responsibility for restoring it to a respectable condition. At the request of the Jewish Community of Warsaw, the Commission was invited to mediate this dispute. As a consequence, the parties resumed negotiations, the city agreed to bear a substantial share of the cost, and the cemetery will be rescued under an agreement signed at the American Embassy in Warsaw by the town, the Jewish Community of Warsaw, and the Commission in April 2001.

Karczew officials have provided a detailed restoration plan that involves stabilizing the ground, erecting a modest fence, laying topsoil, and planting ornamental shrubbery. The mayor has agreed that the city will perform the work and absorb all labor costs.

MILES LERMAN
CHAIR EMERITUS, U.S. HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL COUNCIL

"I want to pay special compliments to you and to the U.S. Government, which is the only government I know of that created a formal commission that protects the existence of Jewish communities. Your work must continue. The American public should know what has taken place and the efforts you are making in this regard."

AUSCHWITZ BOOK TRANSLATION

The Commission was instrumental in raising the funds necessary to publish in English the monumental work *Auschwitz: 1940–1945*. The *New York Times* called it "the most complete and authoritative history of the vast killing center for the Nazi extermination of the Jews." The five-volume, 1,799-page treatise of more than half a million words, contains copies of important Nazi documents, rare photographs taken clandestinely by SS personnel, gas chamber plans, a day-by-day calendar, and a forty-nine page bibliography. Originally published in Polish in 1995 and later in German, the treatise was substantially enlarged to incorporate new findings from Russian archives of previously unseen captured German documents.

Since their publication in English, the works have received worldwide media attention and broad acclaim from Holocaust experts. The books were published by the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum in cooperation with the Commission. Museum historians at Auschwitz received significant assistance from the U.S. Holocaust Museum in Washington, Yad Vashem Memorial Institute in Jerusalem, and noted Holocaust scholars from around the world.

Rabbi Irving Greenberg, chair of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council, stated that, "This work is very important to the Museum, to research scholars at universities throughout the United States, and to all who are concerned [as to] how and why the Holocaust was carried out. We need to get these volumes to the key members of Congress, the Administration, and the public." And Eli Rosenbaum, director of the Department of Justice's Office of Special Investigations—the office that handles Nazi hunting—called the books "clearly a landmark work and a major contribution to scholarship," indicating that they would be of use in identifying émigrés to this country suspected of being Nazi guards during World War II. The books are available at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C., and in Europe.

U.S. HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL MUSEUM

Commissioner Warren L. Miller (holding book) presents the newly translated work to Miles Lerman, Chair Emeritus, U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council, as (left to right) Sara Bloomfield, Director, U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum; Rabbi Irving Greenberg, Chair, U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council; and Michael Lewan, Commission Chairman, look on.

WYSZKOW

AN UNPRECEDENTED COOPERATIVE EFFORT: WYSZKOW CEMETERY

Four years after breaking ground, the Commission marked the completion of its model cemetery restoration project in Wyszkow, Poland, in September 2000. The project—fencing the Jewish cemetery and constructing a monument adjacent to it—took almost ten years from inception to completion. Along the way—and what made the project truly unique and unprecedented—it attracted support from hundreds of donors from around the world and of diverse religious backgrounds. The Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw served as general contractor; the Polish government provided the memorial tablets; the architectural design and construction were supervised by a Catholic volunteer; a local farmers' cooperative deeded adjacent land and provided a right of way to the site; the city provided improved access to the site, closed a road crossing the cemetery, provided security to the project, and contributed to the landscaping. Finally, the Catholic Church helped engage the individual citizens of Wyszkow with regard to the project, promoting and supporting the effort. This "grassroots" dedication to the project is best demonstrated by the fact that there have been no cases of vandalism associated with the effort.

TOP: Chairman Michael Lewan (foreground) and Costa Rican Ambassador to the United States Jaime Daremblum, a project donor, inspect tombstones recovered from the floor of the former Gestapo headquarters in Wyszkow prior to groundbreaking.

BELOW: Completed monument at the Wyszkow cemetery, Poland. Commissioner Lee Seeman led fundraising efforts.

GLIWICE

OVERCOMING NEGLECT IN GLIWICE

Americans Katherine Hadda and her mother visited Gliwice, Poland, her mother's homeland, in 1998. Although they found a bustling multicultural community, there were few remnants of the Jewish community that had thrived there before the war. And many of those remnants were further degraded by neglect and vandalism.

Together with the Commission and with the assistance of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, Commission associate Katherine Hadda and her mother are helping to restore Gliwice's Jewish cemetery and burial hall. The cemetery is one of the few in Poland that was not razed by the Nazis; the ornate burial hall, one of a handful still standing in Poland, was built in 1902 in the Gothic Revival style. When the restoration is complete, the burial hall will serve as a multicultural educational center and will include a concert hall as well as an exhibition area.

The impetus and inspiration for this project in Poland is Andrzej Folwarczny, a Catholic member of Parliament. He has created a foundation to attract support for the multiphase project, which he sees as one that will bring Poles and Jews together in common understanding of their shared history and future.

KALININGRAD

RUSSIA

BREAKTHROUGH AGREEMENT IN KALININGRAD

Located between Poland and Lithuania, Kaliningrad is a key Baltic seaport and was the first Russian city to sign a preservation agreement with the Commission. After months of negotiation, and with the assistance of Congressman Benjamin Gilman, and the U.S. Embassy in Moscow, the Commission signed a formal Declaration of Cooperation on behalf of the Commission with the mayor of Kaliningrad. Under the agreement, the Commission obtains access to the city's Jewish cemetery; this enables a group of preservationists to begin much-needed restoration of the historic site. The agreement, negotiated by Commissioner Edgar Gluck also contains a formal declaration of the city's intent to preserve the places of worship, monuments, and cemeteries associated with Kaliningrad's cultural heritage. In addition, the agreement permits the city's Jewish community to build a synagogue and a school.

BRATISLAVA

SLOVAKIA

SCHOLAR'S GRAVESITE RESTORED

Scholar Chatam Sofer became chief rabbi of Bratislava in 1806. He founded a noted seminary which trained hundreds of rabbis who went on to serve as Jewish spiritual leaders around the world. Chatam Sofer was also a world-renowned Talmudic expert, the author of several scholarly tracts, and a "bal din"—chief judge. He died in 1839 and was buried in Bratislava. Because of its proximity to the Danube River, the underground crypt housing his grave has sustained significant water damage over the years.

The Commission, working with American preservation groups, the Slovak Minister of Culture, the city of Bratislava, and the support of U.S. Senator Joseph Lieberman, has effected an agreement by which the site and tombstones will be restored. Under the agreement, train tracks passing overhead have been relocated by the city. A New York–based preservation group is providing funding for a memorial at the site.

MARIBOR

SLOVENIA

HISTORIC SYNAGOGUE REOPENS ITS DOORS

The ancient city of Maribor, today a bustling economic and cultural center, was until 1496 the stronghold of Solvenia's late medieval Jewish population. That year, Jews were expelled, and, a few years later, a synagogue dating from 1190 was converted into a church. In the early nineteenth century, the building was sold and used for a storehouse and dwelling.

Today, with the encouragement of the Commission and the Slovenian Ministry of Culture, preservation groups and the Maribor city government have come together to restore the Gothic synagogue for use as a museum and cultural center. The Commission also helped determine that the building had been used as a synagogue prior to being converted. The facility has been transformed into a vital and vibrant manifestation of Jewish history and culture. It will house an exhibition space, a sanctuary for religious, theater, and music events, as well as a reading room and library.

Commissioner Phyllis Kaminsky has been active in efforts to restore the medieval synagogue in Maribor, Slovenia.

MARK COHEN

In a field by the side of the road, a single tombstone in a cemetery that no longer exists. Poland, November, 1989.

KIEV

SAMBOR

UKRAINE

WORKING TOGETHER TO PRESERVE A JOINT CULTURE

In Ukraine, the Commission has helped establish a working body dedicated to confronting the thorny issues of shared—and disparate—heritage. Co-chaired by officials of both nations, the U.S.-Ukraine Joint Cultural Heritage Commission takes on such questions as establishing national legislation to protect cemeteries from development; providing restitution for religious communal properties; and initiating efforts to document the condition of cemeteries, massacre sites, and synagogues.

One of the Heritage Commission's most significant accomplishments to date has been the enactment of a Ukrainian Council of Ministers executive order that bans privatization of or construction on burial sites of all religious groups throughout the country. The Commission, in cooperation with the Department of State, is encouraging Ukraine to codify the executive order into law, thereby making the decree permanent and enforceable at the local level.

CEMETERY RESTORATION CONTROVERSY

Ukraine nationalists took issue with—and action against—efforts by the Ukraine-Israel Association to memorialize a Jewish cemetery in Sambor. The group claimed that there are non-Jews buried at the cemetery who also should be memorialized and insisted that the state seize the property unless crosses were placed on the site, no Jewish symbols or Hebrew be allowed, and the association bear the expense. In response, three large crosses were erected on the site, and memorial construction was halted.

COMMISSION CHAIRMAN MICHAEL LEWAN
LETTER TO THE UKRAINIAN MUSEUM-ARCHIVES

"Ukraine's history is a long, tumultuous, and often heartbreaking one…The writings, artwork, and other artifacts that survived the dark days of Soviet occupation should today receive the attention and care they so richly deserve."

Commissioner Irving Stolberg helps with cleanup at a cemetery outside Kiev, Ukraine.

The Commission, upon receiving information on the situation from the U.S. Embassy in Kiev, wrote to its Ukrainian counterpart, the Vice Minister of Culture and Arts. That letter read, in part:

> *The actions by the nationalists…run counter to the intent of the cultural preservation agreement between our two countries to encourage understanding and tolerance among different ethnic and religious groups…Given the negative worldwide publicity possible as a result of this situation and the clear discrimination apparent in this case, [the Commission] would appeal to your government to do everything in its power to seek a reasonable settlement that allows both sides the opportunity to appropriately honor the memory of their ancestors.*

Andrew Fedynsky (left), a member of the American delegation to the U.S.-Ukraine Joint Cultural Heritage Commission and director of the Ukrainian Museum-Archives in Cleveland, receives a gift from the Vice Minister of Culture of Ukraine, Leonid Novohatko, at the third meeting of the Commission in Kiev, May 2000.

OPPOSITE PAGE: The Babi Yar Cemetery as it was found. Working with the Jewish communities of the San Francisco Bay Area and Kiev, the Commission sponsored the restoration of the Babi Yar Jewish Cemetery which allowed for clearing and fencing of the cemetery. Over 100,000 Jews and other "undesirables" were machine-gunned to death near this site in 1941.

Since the Commission's intervention, a special task force of local government and religious leaders has been formed in Ukraine to try to resolve the dispute. The Commission is monitoring the situation closely and will discuss it at the next meeting of the U.S.-Ukraine Joint Cultural Heritage Commission.

PROMOTING CULTURAL EXCHANGE

Under the auspices of the U.S.-Ukraine Joint Cultural Heritage Commission, an unusual and exciting initiative has been launched. The Ukrainian Museum-Archives in Cleveland, Ohio, has begun a pilot project on the preservation and promotion of Ukrainian culture in the United States. The Commission plans to assist with the implementation of the pilot project with a modest planning grant.

The project was started in response to "two great losses," the mass execution and repression of Ukrainian artists and scholars under Stalin and the mass emigration of many of Ukraine's top cultural figures to the West. To recapture this lost cultural heritage, Ukraine has turned to the United States. The Ukrainian Museum-Archives houses an extensive collection of Ukrainian writings, artwork, and other artifacts brought to America or created by early immigrants from Ukraine. Under the heritage project, this and similar collections in the United States and Ukraine will receive the attention and care they deserve and be available for scholarly research. Moreover, the program will sponsor Ukrainian scholars and interns for work in American museums in addition to holding conferences and college courses in Ukrainian studies at American universities. Work has also begun on a database of Ukrainian cultural sites in America, beginning with churches.

"PERSEVERENCE IS MORE PREVAILING THAN VIOLENCE."

PLUTARCH

STATUS OF AGREEMENTS

The linchpin of the Commission's work to preserve and protect cultural sites abroad is the negotiation of diplomatic agreements with foreign governments. During its first two years, the Commission was authorized to negotiate agreements with six countries in the Central and Eastern European region: Poland, Hungary, the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic, the Federal Republic of Germany, the German Democratic Republic, and Yugoslavia. The rapid emergence of independent democratic republics since then—republics free to pursue their own cultural identities and priorities—led to increased expressions of interest throughout the region in the Commission's programs and activities. So far, the Commission, working with the State Department, has signed agreements with twelve countries in Central and Eastern Europe. In 2000, agreements (Declarations of Cooperation) were reached with Bulgaria and Moldova. In 2001, a comprehensive agreement was signed with the Slovak Republic and one is expected to be finalized with Moldova.

The basic agreement with each of these countries provides for the preservation and protection of the cultural heritage of all national, religious, or ethnic groups that resided within that territory and were victims of genocide. It stipulates that the signatory country will protect and preserve cemeteries, monuments, and buildings as national historic trusts that may not be demolished. Specifically, the agreement provides for:

1. taking appropriate steps to protect and preserve the cultural heritage (places of worship, historically significant sites, cemeteries, and memorials as well as related archival material) of groups that were victims of genocide during World War II;
2. helping to identify and possibly affix plaques to such sites;
3. ensuring that no discrimination will exist against any group; and
4. establishing a Joint Cultural Heritage Commission to oversee the operations of the jointly developed lists and perform other functions as delegated.

Below is the status of negotiations with the various countries of Central and Eastern Europe with which the Commission has been authorized to develop agreements.

BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA: Declaration of Cooperation signed in Washington, D.C., on December 13, 1999, by Stuart Eizenstat, Deputy Secretary of the Treasury, and Ambassador Sven Alkalaj; negotiations led by Commissioners Joseph Halfon and Phyllis Kaminsky.

BULGARIA: Declaration of Cooperation signed in Washington, D.C., on November 2, 2000, by Stuart Eizenstat, Deputy Secretary of the Treasury, and Ambassador Philip Dimitrov; negotiations led by Commissioner Ned Bandler.

CZECH AND SLOVAK FEDERAL REPUBLIC: Full agreement signed in Washington, D.C., on March 17, 1992, by Lawrence Eagleburger, Deputy Secretary of State, and Ambassador Rita Klimova.

Chairman Michael Lewan (right) and Slovak Minister of Culture Milan Knazko sign a cultural preservation agreement. Also pictured (left to right): Slovak Ambassador Martin Butora, Commissioner Irving Stolberg, and Commission Deputy Executive Director Christopher Hill. (March 9, 2001).

Commissioner Ned Bandler (standing) speaks after the signing of a cultural preservation agreement with Bulgaria as (left to right) Deputy Secretary of the Treasury Stuart Eizenstat, Chairman Michael Lewan, and Ambassador Philip Dimitrov look on (November 2, 2000).

ESTONIA: Declaration of Cooperation signed in Washington, D.C., on June 25, 1998, by Commissioners Joseph Halfon and Gary Lavine and Jaak Allik, Minister of Culture. Full agreement under consideration by the government of Estonia.

LATVIA: Declaration of Cooperation signed in Riga, on October 29, 1998, by Commissioners Joseph Halfon and Gary Lavine and Ramona Umblija, Minister of Culture.

LITHUANIA: Declaration of Cooperation signed on June 26, 1998, by Commissioners Phyllis Kaminsky and Warren L. Miller and Saulius Saltenis, Minister of Culture.

MOLDOVA: Declaration of Cooperation signed in Chisinau on September 15, 2000, by Commissioner Irving Stolberg and Ghenadie Ciobanu, Minister of Culture. Full agreement being considered by the government of Moldova.

POLAND: Declaration of Cooperation signed in Warsaw on March 12, 1996, by Chairman Michael Lewan and Andrzej Przewoznik, Secretary General of the Council for the Protection of Memory of Combat and Martyrdom. Agreement to restore the Jewish cemetery in Karczew signed on April 4, 2001 between the mayor of Karczew, the Jewish Community of Warsaw and the U.S. Embassy on behalf of the Commission.

ROMANIA: Full agreement signed in Bucharest on July 29, 1993, by Rabbi Arthur Schneier, then-Commission chairman, and Adrian Nastase, Foreign Minister.

RUSSIA: Declaration of Cooperation signed in Kaliningrad on November 16, 1998 by Commissioner Edgar Gluck and the mayor of Kaliningrad.

SLOVAK REPUBLIC: Updated, separate full agreement agreed upon in Bratislava in September 2000. Agreement signed in Washington, D.C., on March 9, 2001, by Chairman Michael Lewan and Minister of Culture Milan Kňažko.

SLOVENIA: Full agreement signed in Washington, D.C., on May 8, 1996, by Vice President Al Gore and Prime Minister Janez Drnovsek. Negotiations led by Commissioner Phyllis Kaminsky.

UKRAINE: Full agreement signed in Washington, D.C., on March 4, 1994, by Warren Christopher, Secretary of State, and Anatoli Zlenko, Foreign Minister; negotiations led by Rabbi Arthur Schneier, then-Commission chairman.

President Bill Clinton, Ukraine President Kravchuk (standing, left), and Assistant Legal Advisor for Treaty Affairs, Robert E. Dalton, witness Secretary of State Warren Christopher (seated, right) and Ukraine Foreign Minister Anatoli Zlenko sign the Agreement on the Protection and Preservation of Cultural Heritage. (March 4, 1994).

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

PAUL RHODES

Commission Executive Director Joel Barries (left) reviews progress at the model cemetery restoration project in Wyszkow, Poland, with Deputy Executive Director Christopher Hill.

It has been ten years since the United States Commission for the Preservation of America's Heritage Abroad opened its doors for business. I have been fortunate in having had the privilege of being here from the beginning. Through the years, I have been associated with the exceptional citizen volunteers who served as commissioners and who, along with the dedicated chairmen, have brought the Commission into the forefront of protecting and preserving the multi-ethnic cultural roots abroad that are important to Americans.

It is not possible here to properly acknowledge the many members of Congress and White House officials and their staff who have supported the Commission and allowed it to grow, for the hundreds of people who have served as commissioners, volunteers and associates, donors of funds for our preservation projects, and those who provided advice and expertise. There are, however, organizations and people who have contributed to the success of the Commission since its establishment on a sustained basis that should be recognized. I hope no one has been overlooked. If so, it is inadvertent, please accept my apology.

I would like to thank the chairmen who donated so much of their time and effort to the development of the Commission—the late Israel Rubin who served as first acting chairman, Rabbi Arthur Schneier, and our current leader, Michael Lewan, who has served consecutive three-year terms and has overseen the unprecedented expansion in the scope and coverage of our mission.

It must be noted that none of our accomplishments would be possible without the partnership of the dedicated people at the U.S.

Department of State, particularly the American ambassadors, consul generals, and Foreign Service officers, one and all, who have been essential to the success we have had over the years.

Special thanks go to the people who have worked with me in the Commission office. It is a small number. Donald DeHaven served as deputy executive director until his retirement in 1996, followed by project officers Bertha T. Tompkins and Beth Bellizzi, and now our current deputy executive director Christopher A. Hill, who has raised the definition of public service to a new height. Dr. Samuel Gruber has been with us since the beginning as the supervisor of the Commission's massive surveys of endangered cultural sites and resident expert on restoration. We welcome Katrina A. Krzysztofiak who brings a wealth of knowledge of European culture to her position as program manager.

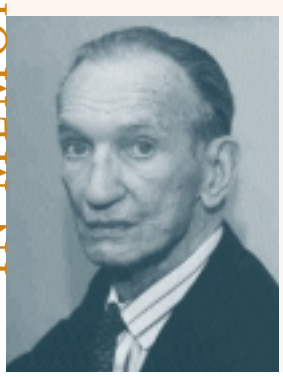
Among the many volunteers who have at one time or another helped us with project work and fundraising, two stand out—Carol Schachter and Jennifer Sue Bond—who have been with us from the start and continue to serve. In addition, Dr. Eleanora Bergman of the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw has helped for years to build the Wyszkow monument and manage the survey of endangered cultural sites in Poland. We also thank the volunteers of the International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies and JewishGen, Inc., who have maintained the thousands of records from the Commission survey program and disseminated them to the public around the world through the JewishGen, Inc., web page.

The preservation projects that the Commission co-sponsors on behalf of the United States could not have been possible without the financial support of private citizens and organizations. Virtually hundreds of individuals, organizations, and private foundations have donated impressive gifts of funds for the restoration projects such as the memorial at the Little Camp at Buchenwald, the Auschwitz Jewish Center, the historic prayer house at

THE TALMUD

"WHOMEVER SAVES ONE LIFE SAVES THE WORLD ENTIRE."

IN MEMORIAM



JAN KARSKI
1914-2000

The Commission remembers Jan Karski, a Polish hero who opened the eyes of the world to the horrors of the Holocaust.

Sarajevo, the cemetery restoration at Wyszkow, the Auschwitz death camp archives translation, and others described in this report. Our legislatively mandated surveys of endangered cultural sites also benefited from substantial gifts from private foundations. One in particular, the Ronald S. Lauder Foundation, has most generously supported all aspects of our work from the very beginning.

Many Holocaust survivors and their families have also made significant donations to restoration projects sponsored by the Commission. The outreach to find these survivors and enable them to participate has been made possible through the cooperation of the National Registry of Jewish Holocaust Survivors at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum.

You will find in this report instances of the Commission's proactive role in obtaining protection for holy places, frequently from imminent privatization or urban renewal projects. Early warning of such instances is essential in allowing the Commission to take appropriate action. We are indebted to the Agudath Israel World Organization and to Athra Kadisha (Society for the Preservation of Jewish Holy Sites) for its work in monitoring endangered sites. The crux of many of the problems has been the lack of documentation on the actual boundaries of razed cemeteries. We are indebted to the U.S. National Imagery and Mapping Agency for its essential contributions to identifying boundaries and burial locations.

Finally, I would like to personally thank Commissioner Zvi Kestenbaum, a founder of the Commission, for having chosen me to serve as its first executive director. It has been a wonderful decade, with many accomplishments and a few defeats from which we have learned and moved on.

—Joel L. Barries

99 STAT. 280 PUBLIC LAW 99-83-AUG. 8, 1985
16 USC 469J. SEC. 1303.
COMMISSION FOR THE PRESERVATION OF AMERICA'S HERITAGE ABROAD

(a) PURPOSE. Because the fabric of a society is strengthened by visible reminders of the historical roots of the society, it is in the national interest of the United States to encourage the preservation and protection of the cemeteries, monuments, and historic buildings associated with the foreign heritage of United States citizens.

(b) ESTABLISHMENT. There is established a commission to be known as the Commission for the Preservation of America's Heritage Abroad (hereafter in this section referred to as the "Commission").

(c) DUTIES. The Commission shall

(1) identify and publish a list of those cemeteries, monuments, and historic buildings located abroad which are associated with the foreign heritage of United States citizens from eastern and central Europe, particularly those cemeteries, monuments, and buildings which are in danger of deterioration or destruction;

(2) encourage the preservation and protection of such cemeteries, monuments, and historic buildings by obtaining, in cooperation with the Department of State, assurances from foreign governments that the cemeteries, monuments, and buildings will be reserved and protected; and

(3) prepare and disseminate reports on the condition of and the progress toward preserving and protecting such cemeteries, monuments, and historic buildings.

(d) MEMBERSHIP.

(1) The Commission shall consist of 21 members appointed by the President, 7 of whom shall be appointed after consultation with the Speaker of the House of Representatives and 7 of whom shall be appointed after consultation with the President pro tempore of the Senate.

(2) (A) Except as provided in subparagraphs (B) and (C), members of the Commission shall be appointed for terms of 3 years.

(B) Of the members first appointed after consultation with the Speaker of the House of Representatives, 5 shall be appointed for a term of 2 years. Of the members first appointed after consultation with the President pro tempore of the Senate, 5 shall be appointed for 2 years.

(C) A member appointed to fill a vacancy on the Commission shall serve for the remainder of the term for which the member's predecessor was appointed.

(D) A member may retain membership on the Commission until the member's successor has been appointed.

(3) The President shall designate the Chairman of the Commission from among its members.

(e) MEETINGS. The Commission shall meet at least once every three months.

(f) COMPENSATION AND PER DIEM.

(1) Members of the Commission shall receive no pay on account of their service on the Commission.

(2) While away from their homes or regular places of business in the performance of services for the Commission, members of the Commission shall be allowed travel expenses, including per diem in lieu of subsistence, in the same manner as persons employed intermittently in the Government service are allowed expenses under section 5703 of title 5 of the United States Code.

(g) AUTHORITIES.

(1) The Commission or any member it authorizes may, for the purposes of carrying out this section, hold such hearings, sit and act at such times and places, request such attendance, take such testimony, and receive such evidence, as the Commission considers appropriate.

(2) The Commission may appoint such personnel (subject to the provisions of title 5 of the united States Code which govern appointments in the competitive service) and may fix the pay of such personnel (subject to the provisions of chapter 51 and subchapter III of chapter 53 of such title, relating to classification and General Schedule pay rates) as the Commission deems desirable.

(3) The Commission may procure temporary and intermittent services to the same extent as is authorized by section 3109(b) of title 5 of the United States Code, but at rates for individuals not to exceed the daily equivalent of the maximum annual rate of basic pay then in effect for grade GS-18 of the General Schedule (5 U.S.C. 5332(a)).

(4) Upon request of the Commission, the head of any Federal department or agency, including the Secretary of State, may detail, on a reimbursable basis, any of the personnel of such department or agency to the Commission to assist it in carrying out its duties under this section.

(5) The Commission may secure directly from any department or agency of the United States, including the Department of State, any information necessary to enable it to carry out this section. Upon the request of the Chairman of the Commission, the head of such department or agency shall furnish such information to the Commission.

(6) The Commission may accept, use, and dispose of gifts or donations of money or property.

(7) The Commission may use the United States mails in the same manner and upon the same conditions as other departments and agencies of the United States.

(8) The Administrator of General Services shall provide to the Commission on a reimbursable basis such administrative support services as the Commission may request.

(h) REPORTS. The Commission shall transmit an annual report to the President and to each House of Congress as soon as practicable after the end of each fiscal year. Each report shall include a detailed statement of the activities and accomplishments of the Commission during the preceding fiscal year and any recommendations by the Commission for legislation and administrative actions.

COMMISSION MEMBERS AND STAFF

The Honorable Michael Lewan
Chairman
Alexandria, VA

The Honorable Zvi Kestenbaum
Chairman, Cemetery Subcommittee
Brooklyn, NY

The Honorable Ned W. Bandler
Bridgewater, CT

The Honorable Chaskel Besser
New York, NY

The Honorable Fran Eizenstat
Chevy Chase, MD

The Honorable Anita Freedman
Portsmouth, NH

The Honorable Edgar Gluck
Brooklyn, NY

The Honorable Joseph Halfon
Spring Valley, NY

The Honorable Phyllis Kaminsky
Potomac, MD

The Honorable Alice A. Kelikian
Cambridge, MA

The Honorable Gary J. Lavine
Fayetteville, NY

The Honorable Michael Levy
Washington, DC

The Honorable Rachmiel Liberman
Brookline, MA

The Honorable Warren Miller
McLean, VA

The Honorable Menno Ratzker
Monsey, NY

The Honorable Lee Seeman
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The Honorable Irving Stolberg
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Deputy Executive Director
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Program Manager
Katrina A. Krzysztofiak