PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

Dear members and friends,

Welcome to our Newsletter for 2020.

We decided to take one topic for this edition - Holocaust Remembrance - and explore how this is expressed in different countries. We felt that this was an important topic due to the continuing rise in anti-Semitism throughout the world, and the persistent increase in Holocaust Denial.

Since the number of survivors who can provide first hand testimony is dwindling, it is incumbent on all of us to use all means at our disposal to inform and educate everyone about the Holocaust, particularly young people in our communities, to ensure that history should not be repeated.

Please encourage your Affiliate to become involved in Holocaust Education in any form possible, so that ICJW can lead the way in countering the attacks that stem from ignorance and hatred.

Best wishes,

Penelope Conway
President, ICJW
The New York United Nation’s team has been participating in UN Holocaust events for many years. We have consistently been impressed with the caliber of the programs and the seriousness and effort put into them by the Department of Global Communications and the UN Outreach Program. In the course of our work at the UN, we have seen great progress on this subject.

In November 2005, rejecting any denial of the Holocaust as a historical event, the UN General Assembly adopted a Resolution designating 27 January – the anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz concentration camp - as an annual International Day of Commemoration in memory of the victims of the Holocaust. It required the Secretary-General to establish a program of outreach on the subject of the “Holocaust and the United Nations”, as well as measures to mobilize civil society for Holocaust remembrance and education, and urged Member States to develop educational programs that will inculcate future generations with the lessons of the Holocaust, and in order to help to prevent future acts of genocide.

In 2005, there were 10 Holocaust education and remembrance activities held in 10 countries. By 2017, the number had grown to 150 events and activities in 50 countries. This considerable growth shows that the United Nations has accepted their responsibility and takes seriously the importance of education about the Holocaust, and works to promote the role of the international community in helping to prevent the recurrence of such horrific tragedies.

Although the UN sets aside this one week for Holocaust remembrance commemoration, there have also been ongoing events throughout the year to educate and raise awareness. These were organized by Kimberly Mann, who until last month was Chief of the Education Outreach Section of the UN’s Department of Public Information. Kimberly has devised the strategy and outreach program to be used by all of the 63 field offices of the UN around the world, where International Holocaust Remembrance Day is marked on January 27 each year. Each year, our team of ICJW representatives feels proud and gratified by the extent of the commitment that the UN has devoted to educating the public during the week of Holocaust Remembrance Day.

The theme of the January 2020 Holocaust commemoration will be “75 years after Auschwitz – Holocaust Education and Remembrance for Global Justice”. 2020 marks the 75th anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz Concentration Camp, the ending of the Second World War, and the ending of the Holocaust. This theme reflects the continuing importance of the collective action against anti-Semitism and other forms of bias, to ensure respect for the dignity and human rights of all people everywhere.
In January 2019, the theme for the Holocaust Remembrance Day was: “Demand and Defend Your Human Rights”, highlighting the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. This theme encouraged youth to learn from the lessons of the Holocaust, act against discrimination and defend democratic values in their communities. It was particularly important because of widespread Neo-Nazism and hate groups that fuel anti-Semitism and other forms of hatred around the world.

The week-long program of Remembrance activities in New York, as in past years, started with a very well attended memorial ceremony in the General Assembly Hall, which was filled to capacity with school groups, and a diverse cross-section of people of all ages and ethnic backgrounds. Survivors shared moving accounts of their survival in the death camps – a lesson for all of us but especially for our younger audience. A month-long exhibit in the UN Visitors Lobby related the stories of diplomats recognized by Yad Vashem as “Righteous Among the Nations” (similar to the UN Geneva exhibition reported below). Another exhibition in the Visitors Lobby was entitled “Witness: Lessons from Eli Wiesel’s Classroom”, and there were also film screenings and presentations about lesser-known chapters in the history of the Holocaust: the haven found in India by Jewish refugees who fled from Europe, and a UN Civil Society briefing on the rescue of Jews in Albania during the Holocaust.

When the UN agreed to display the precious documents of the Eiss Archives – Passports for Life – in the Palais des Nations in Geneva during the last week of January 2019, coinciding with the International Holocaust Memorial Day. ICJW’s representative to the UN in Geneva, Léonie de Picciotto, who had been instrumental in making this event possible, was invited by the Polish Mission in Geneva to co-host the opening of this very moving exhibition. Afterwards, these documents were to be transferred, to Poland, to be displayed at the Auschwitz Birkenau Museum.

The “Passports for Life” exhibition of the Eiss Archives, displayed very professionally by the Polish authorities, explains and records an unprecedented Holocaust rescue effort which saved over two thousand Jewish lives, during the Second World War. Encouraged by the Polish government in exile in London, Aleksander Lados, the Polish Ambassador and his team headed by Konsul Konstanty Rokicki, in Bern, Switzerland, issued and forged Latin American passports which would save a great number of European Jews from the extermination camps. This story was completely unknown for many decades until the documents of the Eiss Archives came to light very recently.

Today, we know that those heroic diplomats, who were constantly harassed by the Swiss Authorities, blaming them for illegal activities, continued their rescue operation throughout the war years; both the Ambassador and the Konsul died poor and unknown in the postwar years, one in Paris, the other in Switzerland. The Jewish organizations, Agudat Israel of Rabbi Eiss, and the World Jewish Congress supplied both the money to buy (!) those passports and the lists of names, photographs and other data necessary for the establishment of the documents! Having purchased those blank passports from local honorary consuls, from Paraguay, Argentine and other Latin American countries, these Jewish organizations had then to smuggle these documents into Nazi occupied countries to reach their destination.

The Polish government is keen to tell the story of the heroic accomplishments of their war time diplomats in Berne, who are being recognized as Righteous Gentiles by Yad Vashem. A ceremony took place, with screening of a film, on December 15th 2019, in the Begin Center in Jerusalem.

Léonie explains: “My family having been amongst those Paraguayan passport holders, issued in Berne during the war by the Polish Consul, Konstanty Rokicki, which indeed saved their lives, and me being the representative to UN Geneva of the Non-Governmental Organization The International Council of Jewish Women, the Polish Ambassador kindly requested me to co-organize the exhibition and then co-host the official opening of at the Palais des Nations, providing important visibility to ICJW.”
Seventy-five years after the liberation of Auschwitz, it is evident that teaching the Holocaust engenders substantial interest in many countries all over the world. While the events have faded with time, remembrance of the Holocaust has intensified. Faced with the genocides that have occurred since 1945, from Cambodia to Bosnia and Rwanda to Darfur, the Nazi Holocaust has become a paradigm for genocide and a powerful metaphor for atrocity. As a result, Holocaust education has gained relevance and has become an integral part of education on human rights and anti-racism.

Fostering and strengthening global citizenship is the challenge of education in general; it is also one of the major challenges of Holocaust education specifically. With a murky wave of xenophobia, racism and hatred flooding the world, educators must mobilise to repel it through global citizenship education and Holocaust education.

The term Holocaust refers to the systematic murder of six million Jews by the Nazis and their collaborators between 1941 and 1945. In many locations worldwide, the Holocaust has become a universal symbol of evil. Just as the Exodus from Egypt became a universal model of fleeing slavery and moving towards freedom, the Holocaust is now the defining symbol of the most tragic undermining of human rights. As such, it has become a metaphor for atrocity and genocide. That universal approach allows us to address the Holocaust in numerous countries in broad pedagogic terms, and to use it as a case study in education against racism and promoting global citizenship.

In my research, I found that the experiential education gained through visiting sites of memory (Auschwitz, Mauthausen, and other concentration camps, or local memorial sites in the various countries) was recognized as the most meaningful and effective form of teaching about the Holocaust. I also found that teachers who had undergone effective methodical teacher training on the topic coped successfully with the questions, so that teaching about the Holocaust as a school subject enabled a special form of education. All the researchers with whom I met across the globe have stressed the urgent need for more research studies in the field of teaching about the Holocaust, since research elicits a stronger awareness that can be used in policy-setting.
Innovative Holocaust Education Projects

The Yellow Crocus Project

In 2005, 6,000 Irish school children participated in an innovative project to commemorate the 1.5 million children who perished during the Holocaust, and the thousands of other young victims of Nazi atrocities. In 2018, more than 100,000 high school children from 11 European countries participated in this powerful educational program. Each received a yellow crocus bulb to plant in memory of the children, as a reminder of the yellow Star of David emblem that Jews had to wear under Nazi rule. Since crocus flowers bloom in Europe at the end of January, coinciding with International Holocaust Memorial Day, when people admire the flowers the children explain what they represent, reminding everyone about the young victims of the Holocaust.

Education through Soccer

Brazil’s greatest passion is soccer. Kids from every social level see these players as their heroes and role models. So why not use that platform to educate and inform, and to help eliminate prejudice and racism?

This year, the Corinthians - one the most popular soccer teams in Brazil - wore the Star of David on their jerseys to remember Kristallnacht, and the Star of David was also placed on seats throughout the stadium.

This is not something new for this Brazilian team. In January, the Corinthians posed for a photo with the hashtag #WeRemember, in honor of International Holocaust Remembrance Day, and their picture got 50,000 likes on social media. In 2018, the team wore uniforms featuring the names of the 11 Jewish victims of the Pittsburgh synagogue shooting.

The Corinthians team was created in 1910 in the Bom Retiro neighborhood of São Paulo, once heavily populated by Jewish immigrants who arrived in the early twentieth century. It is still home to several Jewish institutions today, including the São Paulo Holocaust memorial. The Corinthians is one of Brazil’s most popular soccer teams with over 30 million fans, and it is the favorite among São Paulo’s 60,000 Jews. See the Portuguese-language video about the team and why the Corinthians decided to remember Kristallnacht.
For too long, the Holocaust has been seen in male terms, hiding the specific roles, work, and suffering of the women. It was difficult to grasp or record what Hungarian Jewish women endured, both as Jews and as women, because there was very little information on women in Hungarian Jewish literary texts and memoirs. The chorus of male voices drowned out those of the women.

Today, researchers collecting stories about the Holocaust have realised that women tell different stories in a different way. As young girls, wives and mothers, they clearly experienced things differently and suffered differently. Their memoirs also address topics that have been neglected by historical or literary publications. In addition to the feelings of being physically and spiritually at the mercy of their tormentors, and as well as their horrifying experiences of fear and violence, there are stories of survival and bravery, of solidarity and friendship.

**Untold Stories**

I have edited two anthologies of the untold stories of Hungarian Jewish women. The first volume, “Salty Coffee”, was a collection of memoirs by Hungarian Jewish women who survived the Holocaust and by their daughters, who are “children of the Holocaust”. The second book, “Lányok, anyák” (Daughters, Mothers), is a collection of stories by women of the second and third generations after the Holocaust. It concentrates specifically on the topic of the relationships of women as daughters, sisters, mothers, and “Lager Sisters”.

Whereas the key motives in the narratives of the survivors are solidarity and unity, the second generation's stories tell mostly of silences, absences, things missing or unsaid, and various forms of lies. Many of them tell the story of the daughters' lifelong searches for truth and for reconciliation. These stories are shocking because they are written by daughters who now have crystal-clear insight into issues their mothers and grandmothers have been trying to hide from them for decades. They tell of the pain inflicted – unintentionally, of course – on daughters by their own mothers. At the same time they illuminate the sometimes visible and sometimes completely hidden transmission of the experience of the Holocaust.

In 2012, I launched a traveling exhibition, in cooperation with the Memorial of the German Resistance and the International Auschwitz Committee in Berlin. We crystalized the topics of survival and bravery, solidarity and friendship, in the title of the exhibition: “Sticking Together”, based on the memoirs of a woman survivor who wrote: “The possibility of sticking together with my friend was very important. Alone, neither of us would have survived.”
Gender & Bravery

The topic of my current research is: “Gender and Bravery – Zionist Women in the Rescuing and Resistance Movement in Hungary, 1944-1945”. It is based on a research project in Israel, interviewing surviving women from the Hungarian Zionist resistance movement, 1944-45. While the historical and political facts of the Zionist movement in Hungary are no longer a taboo topic, we know almost nothing about the personal side of their stories. Half of the members of the different Zionist groups who participated in rescue and other actions, were women. In Zionist ideology, the equality of women was an important starting point. Nevertheless, mainstream history speaks only about the effects of the heroic actions accomplished by men - mostly by men in the leadership of their groups.

My 53 narrative interviews focus on the personal memories and untold stories of these Zionist women from Hungary. I was extremely interested in both their reports as well as their private life. I wanted to learn as much as possible about their motivations, dreams, wishes and plans for their future. My research also has an important educational aspect, because I believe that these brave women should be considered as role models for future generations.

After recording more than 150 hours of visual testimony, I realized that these women framed their Holocaust experiences differently. Looking back on their lives, they emphasize their activities in the Zionist movements and the role of Zionism in their personal lives. Holocaust trauma did not determine their life - it was only a terrible “episode” in it. They had challenging and hard lives even after their liberation, and yet they are proud of their lives and their achievements.

Zionist Hungarian women are not only clearly visible, but their stories share specific features. They respond to oppression, they resist and fight. In their Holocaust narratives, it is notable that they saw themselves not as powerless victims, but as courageous women with goals and ideas about their future, which they accomplished through their own actions.
New Holocaust Memorial Planned for Rio de Janeiro

Lilian Bosboom, Chair of Communications and Public Relations, ICJW.

A new Holocaust Memorial is under construction in Brazil’s second largest city, with a stunning view of Rio de Janeiro’s most famous sites, Guanabara Bay and Sugarloaf Mountain. This will be the third Holocaust Memorial in Brazil, after São Paulo and Curitiba.

The new Holocaust Memorial will have an amphitheater, a three-room gallery housing the memory gallery, meditation areas, an interactive media space, 130-seat auditorium, administration and meeting rooms. The monument will be 22 meters high and at the base will be written one of the Ten Commandments: “Thou shalt not kill.”

This was not a simple project. Senator Gerson Bergher launched the initial proposal, but the dream is being realized by his wife, former Secretary of Human Rights and current City Council member, Teresa Bergher. The Holocaust Memorial Cultural Association was created at the initiative of major donors, mostly from private sources, from the Jewish community.

The Memorial project began in 1997 with a contest held by the Architects Institute of Brazil and the mayor’s support at the time. The winner was a young graduate from a Federal University of Architecture of Rio de Janeiro, André Orioli. For 25 years, subsequent mayors ignored the project, until the current mayor, Marcello Crivella, an evangelical Christian, resurrected it in 2017 and made a public space available, known now as Yitzhak Rabin Park.

In 2011, Council member Teresa Bergher has also succeeded in passing the Holocaust Education Act. ICJW Brazil looks forward to working with her to bring this important project to fruition. See the video.

Remembering the Babi Yar Massacre in the Ukraine

Eleonora Groisman, President of the Ukrainian Independent Council of Jewish Women.

On September 29, 2019, members of the Ukrainian Independent Council of Jewish Women honored the memory of Jewish victims of mass executions at Babi Yar. According to the Jewish tradition, we placed stones at the main monument of the Babi Yar Memorial, at the monument to of the victims of concentration camps, at the Menorah monument dedicated to the Jews murdered in the tragedy, and at the monument to the massacred children.

We also held a meeting with the directors the Babi Yar National Historical Memorial Reserve. We discussed the implementation of projects aimed at improving the reserve’s territory, as well as the installation and maintenance of video surveillance cameras for tracking vandals who desecrate the Holocaust monuments. We handed a certificate of gratitude to Boris Glazunov, Director General of the Babi Yar National Historical and Memorial Reserve, to thank him for his important activities aimed at paying tribute to the victims of the Holocaust.
**Holocaust Remembrance in Bulgaria**

The Council of Jewish Women in Bulgaria (CJWB) organized Remembrance Trips during 2018 to mark the 75th anniversary of the rescue of Bulgarian Jews. Bulgaria’s Jews were not sent to the Nazi death camps, on the order of Tsar Boris III, but all the Jews from the Bulgarian-occupied territories of Thrace, Macedonia and Pirot were deported and killed.

Despina Staneva, CJWB President, explains: “As the next generations of survivors, we do not want to forget those innocent victims of the Holocaust, so we organized pilgrimages to the deportation assembly points, financed with our own personal funds.”

CJWB delegations travelled to Pazardzhik and Plovdiv in Bulgaria, Pirot and the Niš Concentration Camp in Serbia, Thessaloniki in Greece, and Skopje in Macedonia. At each destination, they met representatives of the Jewish community, learned new facts about their history and their current situations, visited Jewish places, laid wreaths at the memorials, and celebrated Shabbat together with the local Jewish communities.

The CJWB organizes annual events to mark Holocaust Memorial Day, and its volunteers go out to delete swastikas and anti-Semitic graffiti from the walls of buildings in Sofia.

**Talking about Genocide in South Africa**

*Bev Goldman explains how Holocaust Remembrance, Education and support for Survivors are combined under one roof in Johannesburg.*

The Holocaust Survivors Group was founded in 2008 in consultation with clinical psychologist Dr Tracey Farber at the Johannesburg Holocaust & Genocide Centre (JHGC). The Centre moved into its iconic new building in 2016 and is dedicated to Holocaust memory, education and lessons for humanity. It addresses not only the European genocide but also the African genocide in Rwanda, where an estimated 800,000 Tutsis were murdered in 1994.

The Survivors Group meets at the JHGC every month for a variety of stimulating and interesting activities, including film screenings, talks by specialists, celebrations of birthdays, and Jewish holidays. In this inclusive and friendly environment, they enjoy discussions on issues of mutual interest and concern, and workshops with psychologists. Many of the Survivors volunteer at the JHGC, sharing their testimony with visiting groups of school children and church groups. They interact with thousands of visitors every year.
Melita Švob, President of ICJW’s affiliate in Croatia, describes her work on Holocaust research, education, and support for Survivors.

During the Holocaust, approximately 80% of Croatia's 25,000 Jews were murdered and their property was stolen. The Croatian Nazis (Ustasha) committed unspeakable crimes, but the state now minimizes their role, the number of Jewish victims, and even the existence of death camps. Most Jews in Croatia never received restitution or compensation; Claims Conference funds were only available after the fall of the Berlin Wall.

After the fall of the Yugoslavian state, Croatia's new government elected me to the “Commission for Jews” and sent me to international Holocaust conferences, including the “Forum for Stolen Jewish Art”. I established and became president of the “Association of Holocaust Survivors in Croatia”. We joined the World Federation of Jewish Child Survivors of the Holocaust, where I am a member of the Executive and Governing Board, and I founded the European Association of Holocaust Survivors (EUAS) in Prague in 2002.

My work with Holocaust Survivors in Croatia is focused on several areas:

1. Collecting Documentation

From 1979, I was employed in Zagreb as a senior researcher at the “Institute for Migration and Nationalities”. There I collected documents and published a book entitled “Jews in Croatia”.

In 2000, after retirement, I founded the “Research and Documentation Centre for Holocaust Victims and Survivors” (CENDO) and I still work on the database of Holocaust victims, which today contains almost 20,000 names. CENDO organises exhibitions, conferences and research. It has published five books, as well as scientific articles and DVDs, and we provide educational information about the Holocaust to Croatian educators and students.

2. Obtaining Compensation

When the Swiss Fund was established in 1998 as first aid for “needy” Jews in Eastern Europe, I was named country director for Croatia. I was able to locate almost 1,000 survivors in Croatia - 90% of the Jews who survived. I became a director of the Claims Conference office in Croatia, where we received applications from and provided help to survivors (including refugees from Sarajevo) with the necessary documentation for getting compensation from Germany. We have helped some 600 survivors to obtain funds.

3. Organising Social Activities

The Association of Holocaust Survivors in Croatia works with the Claims Conference “Cafe Europe” fund to run cultural and recreational programs. These include a week-long vacation on the Adriatic coast, a computer school, pottery workshops, keep fit classes, and lectures on issues of health and diet. We collect Jewish recipes, Jewish humour and old photos and documents. We also provide news from the community and about Israel and anti-Semitism around the world on our web page www.preho.hr.
Alice Gruenfeld Vesela, President of ICJW Prague, describes efforts to help Survivors and their children in the Czech Republic.

The Federation of Jewish Communities in the Czech Republic has a comprehensive program for survivors and their families. Each community has its own program via social departments, including volunteers from the local community, Jews and non-Jews, Czechs, and foreigners, including from Germany. The Prague community runs two care homes to help and support Holocaust Survivors.

In Prague, we started to provide psychotherapy for the generations after Shoah as soon as the political freedom allowed us in the 1990s. A psychotherapeutic group for the generations after Shoah was set up in 1997 and is active until today, and individual therapy is offered as well.

Our founding member, Helena Klímová, seeks to address the intergenerational transmission of human pain and trauma analogy. It is a serious theoretical and practical problem. It is a fatal, unconscious, usually psychological condition, but sometimes biological transfer of suffering of ancestors affects the life of their offspring.

Her experiences have been collected under the title “Transgenerational Transfer of (not only) Trauma” which is being published by Irene Press Prague (the English translation hopefully will follow). We are trying to strengthen their mental health and to discover new phenomena concerning the relations between generations: now we are treating already the third generation.

In Prague we also have the Foundation for Holocaust Victims, the Terezin Initiative, Auschwitz Commission, Hidden Child, and EZRA. Czech CJW cooperates with all of them on the professional level.
Exploring Jewish Athens

ICJW President Penelope Conway reports on the 16th European Conference that took place in Athens from November 3-5, 2019, hosted by ICJW Greece, one of our newest affiliates.

55 women from all over Europe and beyond attended the 2-day conference in Greece, which was followed by an ICJW Executive Meeting. The opening dinner was held in a building in the centre of Athens that used to house the Jewish Museum. We were welcomed by the President of the Athens Jewish community and the Secretary-General of the Central Board of the Jewish communities in Greece. The main speaker was the Greek Government Minister in charge of Education and Religious Affairs. After dinner, we were entertained by a display of traditional Greek dances from different regions.

Next morning, we met at the Jewish community centre and heard a fascinating Dvar Torah on the importance of names. This was followed by a presentation on the role of Jewish women in the history of Greece. Our speakers continued despite a local power cut, which meant no microphones or presentations! We then heard from the Deputy Chief of Mission from the Embassy of Israel in Greece about bilateral and trilateral relations. Ms Sawson Hasson, from the Druze community in Israel, emphasised that relations were excellent, providing many opportunities for local cooperation. This was followed by a fascinating panel on new Jewish projects in post-Communist countries.

Our afternoon trip to the coast to view the Temple of Poseidon at Sounios was unfortunately spoilt by pouring rain. The following morning we visited the Athens Jewish Museum, the Holocaust Memorial and the Beth Shalom Synagogue, where the very enthusiastic Rabbi Gabriel Negrin regaled us with history and anecdotes.

Over lunch, back at the community centre, we heard from ICJW representatives to the United Nations, UNESCO and the Council of Europe, and about the ‘Every Women Treaty’. A panel on new projects and changing communications was presented by three incredible young women, who gave us all much to consider and made us feel positive about our future. The final presentation was about the Lauder School in Athens, which is the jewel in the crown of the community. The closing dinner was held at the Benaki Museum and was followed by enthusiastic Israeli dancing.

We enjoyed a truly wonderful few days, thanks to the members of ICJW Greece and our European Chair and Vice-Chair, who helped organize the venues, travel arrangements, speakers and, of course, the food!

Click here for the speeches and presentations.

DATES FOR FUTURE ICJW EVENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW64), New York</td>
<td>March 9-20, 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June Jacobs Memorial Lecture, London</td>
<td>March 25 (evening)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICJW Executive Meeting in Zurich, Switzerland</td>
<td>May 3-5, 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICJW Executive Meeting in Sofia, Bulgaria</td>
<td>November 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Herczeg Jerusalem Educational Seminar, Israel</td>
<td>May 2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICJW Executive Meeting, London</td>
<td>November 2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convention and Executive Meeting, Mexico City</td>
<td>May 2022</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>