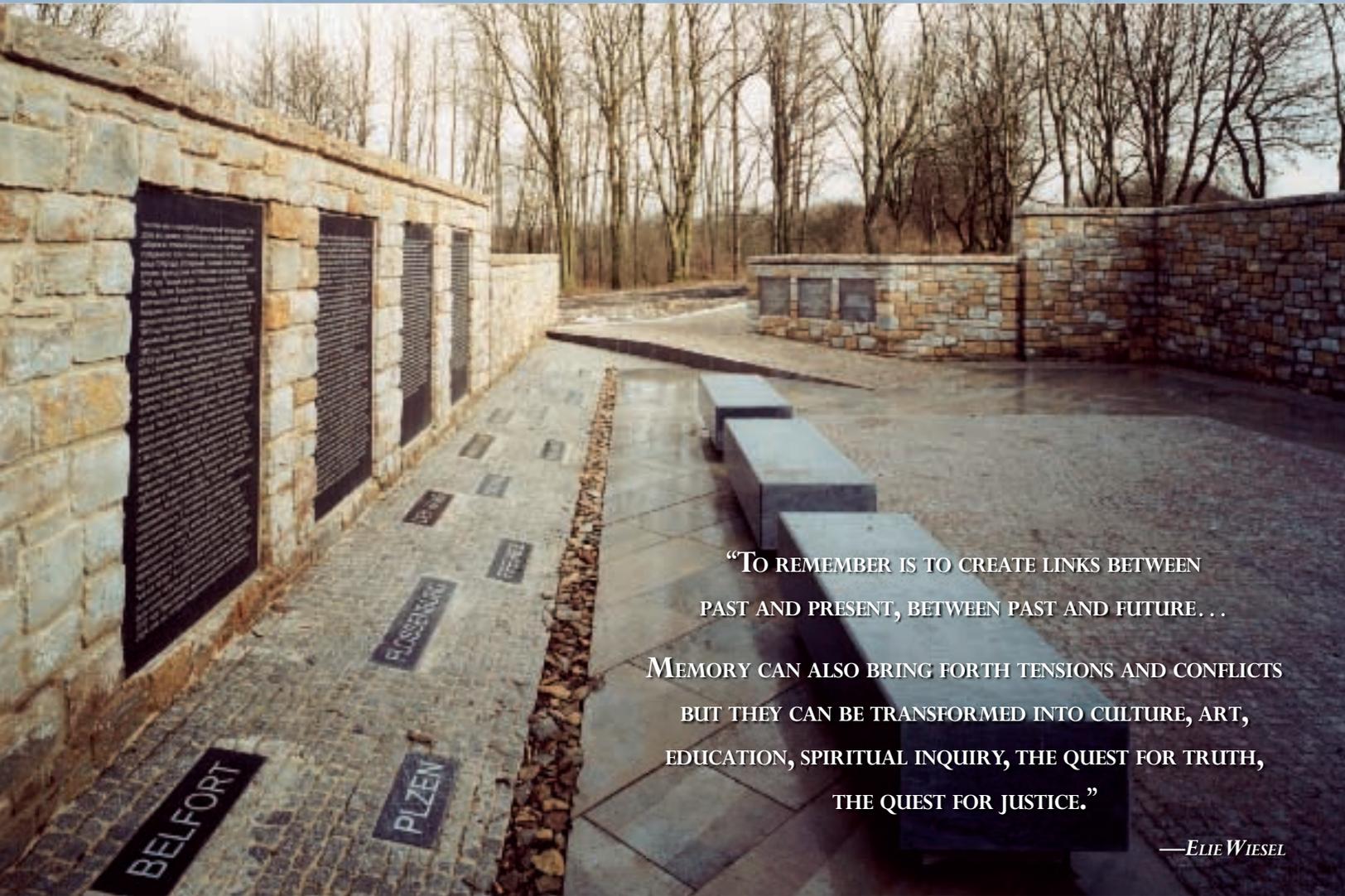


*Report to the Congress and the
President of the United States of America*



“TO REMEMBER IS TO CREATE LINKS BETWEEN
PAST AND PRESENT, BETWEEN PAST AND FUTURE . . .

MEMORY CAN ALSO BRING FORTH TENSIONS AND CONFLICTS
BUT THEY CAN BE TRANSFORMED INTO CULTURE, ART,
EDUCATION, SPIRITUAL INQUIRY, THE QUEST FOR TRUTH,
THE QUEST FOR JUSTICE.”

—ELIE WIESEL

Commission-sponsored memorial at the Nazis' Buchenwald Concentration Camp



U.S. COMMISSION FOR THE PRESERVATION OF AMERICA'S HERITAGE ABROAD

2004

COMMISSION MEMBERS

Warren L. Miller
Chairman
McLean, VA

Ned W. Bandler
Bridgewater, CT

Chaskel Besser
New York, NY

Amy S. Epstein
Pinellas Park, FL

Edgar Gluck
Brooklyn, NY

Phyllis Kaminsky
Potomac, MD

Zvi Kestenbaum
New York, NY

Daniel Lapin
Mercer Island, WA

Gary J. Lavine
Fayetteville, NY

Michael B. Levy
Washington, DC

Rachmiel Liberman
Brookline, MA

Laura Raybin Miller
Pembroke Pines, FL

Vincent Obsitnik
McLean, VA

August B. Pust
Euclid, OH

Menno Ratzker
Monsey, NY

Harriet Rotter
Bingham Farms, MI

Lee R. Seeman
Great Neck, NY

Steven E. Some
Skillman, NJ

Irving Stolberg
New Haven, CT

Ari Storch
Potomac, MD



Photo by Jocelyn Augustino

Commission Members with U.S. Supreme Court Associate Justice Anthony Kennedy after a swearing-in ceremony for Members, May 20, 2003. Also pictured are Executive Director Jeffrey L. Farrow and Program Manager Katrina A. Krzysztofciak.

Members of the Commission are appointed by the President of the United States for a term of three years. Seven of the 21 Members are appointed in consultation with the Speaker of the House of Representatives and seven are appointed in consultation with the President pro tempore of the Senate. All serve without compensation.

Secretary of State Colin L. Powell and Foreign Minister Ilinka Mitreva sign the Commission-negotiated Agreement on the Protection and Preservation of Certain Cultural Properties between the U.S. and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia in Washington, D.C. on December 10, 2002. Standing behind them are the Republic's Ambassador to the U.S., Nikola Dimitrov, left, and Commission Chairman Warren Miller, right.



Photo by Jocelyn Augustino

Contents

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Message from the Chairman | 4 |
| Identifying America's Heritage Abroad | 6 |
| Obtaining Preservation Assurances | 8 |
| Commission Preservation Projects | 14 |
| Commission Members Recognized | 28 |

“Anti-Semitism around the world is of profound concern and must be addressed on all fronts—including through the skillful and tenacious diplomacy of the U.S. Commission for the Preservation of America’s Heritage Abroad.”

Senator Christopher S. “Kit” Bond

One of the principal responsibilities of the Commission is to negotiate government-to-government agreements that commit the signatory countries to help protect and preserve cultural heritage sites, particularly sites of groups that were victims of genocide during World War II.

Bilateral Agreements on the Protection and Preservation of Certain Cultural Properties

| THE ADMINISTRATION OF PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH | | | |
|---|------------------------|--|---------------------|
| COUNTRY | DATE OF SIGNING | SIGNED BY | PLACE |
| Albania | July 12, 2004 | Commission Chairman Warren L. Miller and Foreign Minister Kastriot Islami with National Security Council Senior Director Daniel Fried and Ambassador Fatos Tarifa witnessing | Washington |
| Armenia | May 25, 2004 | Commission Chairman Warren L. Miller and Ambassador Arman Kirakossian with Under Secretary of State Marc Grossman witnessing | Washington |
| Poland | May 11, 2004 | Commission Chairman Warren L. Miller and Ambassador Przemyslaw Grudzinski with Deputy Secretary of State Richard L. Armitage witnessing | Washington |
| Hungary | April 15, 2004 | Commission Chairman Warren L. Miller and Minister of Culture Istvan Hiller | Budapest |
| Austria | April 13, 2004 | Commission Chairman Warren L. Miller and Deputy Secretary General for Foreign Affairs Hans Winkler with Foreign Policy Advisor to the Chancellor Ambassador Hans Peter Manz witnessing | Vienna |
| Germany | May 19, 2003 | Commission Chairman Warren L. Miller and Ambassador Wolfgang Ischinger | Washington |
| Czech Republic | March 3, 2003 | Commission Chairman Warren L. Miller and Deputy Foreign Minister Pavel Vosalik | Exchange of letters |
| Estonia | January 16, 2003 | Commission Chairman Warren L. Miller and Minister of Culture Margus Allikmaa | Tallinn |
| Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia | December 10, 2002 | Secretary of State Colin L. Powell and Foreign Minister Ilinka Mitreva with Commission Chairman Warren L. Miller and Ambassador Nikola Dimitrov witnessing | Washington |
| Bulgaria | December 5, 2002 | Commission Chairman Warren L. Miller and Ambassador Elena Poptodorova | Washington |
| Lithuania | October 15, 2002 | Commission Chairman Warren L. Miller and Minister of Culture Roma Dovydeniene | Vilnius |
| Latvia | October 7, 2002 | Commission Chairman Warren L. Miller and Minister of Culture Karina Petersone | Riga |
| Bosnia and Herzegovina | July 2, 2002 | Commission Chairman Warren L. Miller and Foreign Minister Zlatko Lagumdzija | Sarajevo |
| Moldova | June 20, 2001 | Secretary of State Colin L. Powell and Foreign Minister Nicolae Cernomaz | Washington |
| Slovak Republic | March 9, 2001 | Commission Chairman Michael Lewan and Minister of Culture Milan Knazko | Washington |
| THE ADMINISTRATION OF PRESIDENT WILLIAM J. CLINTON | | | |
| Slovenia | May 8, 1996 | Vice President Albert Gore and Prime Minister Janez Drnovsek | Washington |
| Ukraine | March 4, 1994 | Secretary of State Warren Christopher and Foreign Minister Anatoli Zlenko with Presidents William J. Clinton and Leonid Kravchuk witnessing | Washington |
| THE ADMINISTRATION OF PRESIDENT GEORGE H.W. BUSH | | | |
| Romania | July 8, 1992 | Commission Chairman Arthur Schneier and Foreign Minister Adrian Nastase | Bucharest |
| Czech and Slovak Republic | March 17, 1992 | Deputy Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger and Ambassador Rita Klimova with Commission Chairman Arthur Schneier witnessing | Washington |

NOTE: In addition to the Agreements listed above, the Commission negotiated Declarations of Cooperation and a Memorandum of Understanding with representatives of several governments. These documents expressed an intent to try to conclude the type of bilateral agreements listed above.



Official White House Photo

President and Mrs. George W. Bush at the site of the Nazis' Auschwitz-Birkenau death camp, Poland, May 2003.

“The Holocaust is defined as much by the courage of the lost as by the cruelty of the guilty. . . . When all the crimes were finished, the fears realized and the cries silenced, that was the hope that remained—to be remembered by the living, and raised up by the living God.”

President George W. Bush at the National Commemoration of the Days of Remembrance, U.S. Capitol Rotunda, April 19, 2001

Message from the Chairman

I am pleased to report that the Commission for the Preservation of America's Heritage Abroad is making unprecedented progress in attaining the goals envisioned by Congress and President Reagan when it was established by federal law in 1985.

We are fully engaged in protecting and preserving cemeteries, Holocaust sites, places of worship, archives, and other sites associated with the cultural heritage of American citizens in Central and Eastern

Europe and adjoining countries of the former Soviet Union.

The Commission has accelerated the pace of its diplomacy, vigorously pursuing government-to-government agreements to preserve America's heritage—the bellwether of our work. Since I became Chairman in June 2001, 14 bilateral agreements have been concluded, including agreements with Germany and Poland signed at the White House. By comparison, only five such agreements had previously been reached in the history of the Commission.

Additionally, we have used all means at our disposal to protect specific heritage sites threatened by criminal activity, desecrations and commercial development. Action has been taken in Germany, Hungary, Poland, Russia, Slovakia, Ukraine, and Belarus. Commission interventions support historic preservation, promote investigation and prosecution of “hate crimes”, and encourage governments to speak out against attacks on property and threats to cultural minorities. By bringing acts of disrespect and destruction to the attention of the highest levels of foreign governments

and insisting that intolerable situations be remedied, prompt attention is directed to these matters, often with successful results.

The Commission has recently developed a new and extensive Website regarding its activities. Survey work performed by or at the direction of the Commission is also in higher gear. We have completed and updated extensive surveys in many Eastern and Central European nations and initiated new surveys in several countries.

The Commission is also implementing more preservation projects than ever before. A substantial number of major projects were successfully completed during this reporting period. Examples include the Little Camp Memorial at the Buchenwald Concentration Camp site in Germany, which is featured on this report's cover.

In Bulgaria, we inaugurated a lecture and scholarship series at the American University to recall the contributions of American missionaries to Bulgaria's democratic development.

Cemetery and synagogue restorations were completed in several countries, and in Slovakia, we



Photo Courtesy of USHMM

Commission Chairman Miller delivers remarks during the Buchenwald Little Camp Memorial commemoration ceremony at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, March 13, 2002.

From right at a White House meeting:
National Security Council Director
Walter Andrusyszyn, Commission
Member Phyllis Kaminsky, Deputy
Secretary of the Cabinet Tevi Troy, and
Commission Chairman Warren Miller



are ready to commence restoration of an historic Greek Catholic wooden church.

In the forest of Rumbula, outside Riga, Latvia, the Commission co-sponsored construction of a monument to 25,000 Holocaust victims who were murdered there during two days in 1941. Insisting upon historical accuracy and truth, the Commission successfully intervened at a critical moment to ensure that the monument's inscription acknowledged Latvian complicity in the murders. A senior municipal official in Riga had sought to have those words omitted. In spite of the embarrassment or painful memories it may evoke, the Commission adheres to the tenet that historical truth cannot and will not be compromised.

It is worth noting that the Commission's work reinforces NATO and European Union expectations for nations aspiring to membership. Such criteria include equality in the treatment of ethnic and religious minorities. By helping emerging democracies confront their past, we also help them recognize the value of pluralism and, by extension, the

value of cultural sites important to minorities.

In particular, the Commission is vigorously fighting the resurgence of anti-Semitism in Europe.

I am very pleased to report that we have received unprecedented support from the White House and the Department of State. President Bush, Secretary Powell, officials at the National Security Council and the State Department, including ambassadors and their staffs across the region, have been of invaluable assistance in ensuring that the Commission's mandate is respected and fulfilled. President Bush has personally stressed to foreign leaders in the Oval Office the importance of confronting what happened during the Holocaust in their countries. When a joint statement was issued by President Bush and President Kwasniewski of Poland at the conclusion of a state visit to Washington, the importance of cultural heritage was emphasized by both leaders.

Much of the recent success at the Commission is attributable to the efforts of our capable staff, in particular Executive Director Jeffrey Farrow and Program

Manager Katrina Krzysztofiak. The Commission is also very appreciative of the support of the United States Congress in appropriating funding and in supporting the Commission's project implementation work.

For many in this nation of immigrants, the only remnants of their cultural heritage abroad are the places where their forebearers are buried.

Where unmarked mass gravesites related to the Holocaust are concerned, the cause of remembrance has never been more urgent—not just for the innocents who were murdered, but also for the survivors and communities left behind. The survivors and witnesses of those horrific events are all well advanced in age. In a few years, there will be no one left to personally attest to what happened or to show where these sites are located so they can be recognized for what they are, and be properly memorialized. We endeavor to bring dignity to the memory of the victims. In the pursuit of justice, it is the least we can do.

Warren L. Miller, Chairman
United States Commission for the
Preservation of America's Heritage Abroad

Identifying America's Heritage Abroad

Commission surveys of cultural sites in Central and Eastern Europe enable American families to connect with their past. They also provide a historical framework for Commission priorities and partnerships.

Surveys encompass: burial places, including cemeteries, mass graves and other Holocaust sites; historic buildings; and religious sites.

These reports, coordinated by Commission Research Director Samuel Gruber, have been called “landmark activities” because they frequently represent the only compilation of such information ever to have been done.

The information enables people in the United States to learn about the location and status of cultural sites associated with their ancestors and, if they so desire, work to restore sites.

The Commission is researching and documenting sites associated with cultural minorities that have been victimized by persecution or genocide. Examples include “Old Believer” Christians in Lithuania, Greek Catholics in Slovakia, Protestants and Muslims in Bulgaria, and Jewish and Roma communities in a number of countries.

Carved tombstone in Ukraine.
The inscription reads,
“She had trouble all her days
and did not have years.”



Photo by David Goberman

Recent achievements

Identifying sites of execution, labor camps, and mass graves associated with the Holocaust is an integral part of the Commission's current survey work. These sites hold the remains of unidentified victims and are often unmarked. There are hundreds of unmarked mass gravesites in Eastern Europe.

Documents often provide the key to why properties are important. The Commission seeks to preserve documents that are essential to understanding the historical background of sites and of actions affecting cultural heritage.

Since 2002, the Commission has completed a report on its survey of Jewish sites in Ukraine, updated and completed a report on Jewish sites in



Restored interior of the synagogue in Plovdiv, Bulgaria. The Commission sponsored the restoration project.

Slovenia, brought reports on the Roma and “Old Believer” communities in Lithuania to the final editing stages, and wrapped up field work on Jewish sites in Lithuania, Latvia and Romania. Preliminary reports on Jewish and Holocaust sites in Bosnia, Croatia, Serbia and Montenegro, and Slovakia have also been prepared.

In addition, field research began on sites associated with a variety of ethnicities in Latvia, Bulgaria, Estonia, and Moldova.

In every religion, people want to make pilgrimages to pay respect to their ancestors. For many Americans, ancestral graves are in other countries.

Long-term impact

The Commission has concentrated most of its survey work to date on Jewish cultural sites because the Holocaust’s annihilation of the Jewish population of the region left many of those sites

uncared for and unprotected. To date, some 5,000 distinct sites in 11 countries have been identified and their physical condition described. In Poland, for example, more than 300 buildings—some currently serving as libraries, cinemas, shops, warehouses, and even a municipal swimming pool—were all found to have once been synagogues.

Many formerly unknown places of worship, cemeteries, and mass gravesites have received official recognition as a result of Commission surveys. Survey results have been widely disseminated in published reports and via the Internet. The existence of the Commission’s data also has accelerated the process of legal protection for these sites—though much work in this area, and in transforming legal protection into real protection, remains to be done.

LIVES AND DEEDS OF FOREIGN-BORN HEROES OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

At the direction of the Appropriations Committees of the Congress, the Commission conducted and published a preliminary survey of sites abroad associated with the lives and deeds of foreign-born heroes of the American Revolution. Whether acting as idealists, intellectuals, or military men, thousands of foreign-born patriots fought side-by-side with—and otherwise supported—American colonists against England.

In issuing the directive, the congressional appropriators identified 10 heroes—John

Barry (Ireland), Comte D’Estaing (France), Comte de Grasse (France), John Paul Jones (Scotland, UK), Baron de Kalb (Germany), Thaddeus Kosciuszko (Belarus/Poland), Marquis de Lafayette (France), Count Pulaski (Poland), Comte de Rochambeau (France), and Frederick Wilhelm von Steuben (Germany).

The Commission’s research added 12 more—Anne Trotter Bailey (England, UK), Christian and Wilhelm von Forbach (Germany), Peter Francisco (Portugal),

Bernardo de Galvez (Spain), Armand Louis de Gontaut, Duc de Lauzun (France), Michael Kovats de Fabricy (Hungary), Phillip Mazzei (Italy), Robert Morris (England, UK), Francis Salvador (England, UK), Haym Solomon (Poland), and John Witherspoon (Scotland, UK).

While all of these heroes have been commemorated in the United States and some in their home countries, an inventory of commemorative sites abroad had not been compiled before.

Obtaining Preservation Assurances

One of the Commission's principal statutory mandates is to obtain assurances from Central and Eastern European governments that sites associated with the the cultural heritage of Americans will be protected and preserved.

These commitments are primarily secured through government-to-government agreements. The chairman of the Commission negotiates these agreements in consultation with the Department of State. Through the agreements, foreign governments commit to:

- Protect the cultural heritage sites of all national, religious, and ethnic groups, especially those that were victims of genocide during World War II.
- Assist in identifying and preserving cultural heritage properties (cemeteries, mass graves, monuments, historic sites, places of worship, and related archives), especially endangered sites which cultural minorities cannot preserve on their own.
- Ensure that all cultural groups are not discriminated against and have full access to their cultural sites under law.

Most agreements also establish a joint cultural heritage commission to oversee these efforts.

During the Bush Administration, the Commission has accelerated its efforts to obtain these agreements. Fifteen more bilateral agreements have been reached, bringing the total to 19 since the inception of the Commission. The chart on page 2 summarizes the progress to date.

These agreements often require lengthy negotiations and can involve a difficult



Photo by Ralph Alswang

Polish Ambassador Przemyslaw Grudzinski, left, and Commission Chairman Warren Miller, right, shake hands after signing the Agreement between the United States and Poland to Protect Certain Cultural Properties. The signing ceremony took place in the Indian Treaty Room in the White House complex on May 11, 2004. Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage, center, officially witnessed the signing and addressed the audience.

Continued on page 10



Foreign Minister Zlatko Lagumdžija, right, and Commission Chairman Warren Miller sign the Agreement on the Protection and Preservation of Certain Cultural Properties between the U.S. and Bosnia and Herzegovina in Sarajevo on July 2, 2002. U.S. Ambassador Clifford G. Bond is standing behind Chairman Miller.



AP Photo/Rick Bowmer

German Ambassador Wolfgang Ischinger, right, and Commission Chairman Warren Miller exchange copies of the Agreement between the U.S. and Germany on the Protection and Preservation of Places of Commemoration after signing the agreement at the White House, May 19, 2003.

Countries With Which The Commission Is Engaged





The Commission is assisted by the U.S. Department of State in obtaining international agreements for the protection and preservation of cultural sites, stopping desecrations, and implementing preservation projects. In these matters, the efforts of Heather Conley, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs, have been invaluable. Conley has responsibilities for nine of the 27 countries with which the Commission is engaged. Along with U.S. Ambassador Christopher Hill, she was particularly helpful in the Commission's successful effort to conclude a long sought cultural sites preservation agreement between the United States and Poland. Conley also played a key role in obtaining a similar agreement with the Government of Hungary.

Deputy Assistant Secretary of State
for European and Eurasian Affairs Heather Conley

approval process. In some instances, the agreements open a door to history and raise issues of the past that foreign governments might otherwise choose to keep closed.

During their regime, the Nazis and their collaborators sought to systematically destroy Jews, the Roma ("Gypsies"), and other minorities, as well as the physical places these groups held most sacred. In Eastern Europe, the destruction continued under Communist regimes. Religion, culture, and ethnic identity were repressed. Communal buildings and burial places were bulldozed to make way for urban development—or simply left to deteriorate. Tombstones became construction material for staircases, walls, and roads.

Commission Interventions Protect Heritage Sites

The struggle to recover and preserve America's cultural heritage in Eastern and Central Europe has many fronts.

In some cases, the enemy is still intolerance and persecution. At other times, a more general pattern of ignorance and disrespect prevails where there are few relatives or friends left to protect

these properties.

In Vidin, Bulgaria, graves are broken into by treasure hunters. With urbanization come competing uses for sacred sites. Parking garages encroach on a cemetery in Berdichev, Ukraine. In L'viv, Ukraine, a marketplace bustles atop a cemetery. In Rozalimas, Lithuania, a wooden synagogue that survived World War II and the destruction of historical buildings under the Communist regime is slated to be razed and the remnants reused as construction material.

In addition to negotiating country-wide agreements, the Commission works with officials at all levels of government and with concerned private citizens and organizations around the world to resolve specific site problems.

During the past three years, the Commission has intervened on behalf of endangered cultural heritage sites in Belarus, Germany, Hungary, Poland, Russia, Slovakia, and Ukraine. Examples follow.

In conjunction with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, in 2001 the Commission contributed to the marking of the graves of concentration camp victims in **Woebbelin, Germany**. In February 2002,

"The Commission's mandate is of great importance to the Jewish people. Its recent accomplishments are truly impressive. The American Jewish Committee looks forward to continuing to work together in the future."

*David A. Harris
Executive Director
American Jewish Committee*

neo-Nazis attacked the sandstone sculpture memorializing the Holocaust victims as well as the nearby Jewish cemetery. The sculpture was broken and painted with a swastika. Signs that read “Jew” and “Lies” were left at the cemetery along with the severed head of a pig.

The Commission gathered details of the case and brought it to the attention of German officials. In March 2002, a wreath was laid at the site in a ceremony attended by representatives of the U.S. embassy, German government officials, local residents, and schoolchildren. Also present were two survivors of the camp. The Commission’s intervention helped prompt the interior minister of Germany to form a special task force to investigate the incident.

As the resting place of three notable religious leaders, the preservation of the 600-year-old Jewish cemetery in **Slubice, Poland** is a priority for a New York-based group seeking to restore the site. By the end of 1999, it had secured all the necessary legal and zoning approvals from the owner of the land on which the cemetery was located and the municipality. However, the effort was derailed in 2000 when the property was sold without warning. Worse was yet to come when a motel constructed on the site was turned into a brothel.

When local authorities turned a deaf ear to private protests, the Commission appealed directly to Polish Prime Minister Leszek Miller. Commission Chairman



Photo by Shmuel Ben Eliezer

Miller followed up with meetings in Warsaw with high-level officials of the government and subsequent phone calls and letters. As a direct result of the Commission’s intervention, the brothel was removed from the premises. Efforts by the U.S. Department of State in conjunction with the Commission and Polish national officials led to an agreement under which the land has been purchased and has been given back to the Jewish Community.

Above: Commission Chairman Miller, center, and Member Chaskel Besser, left, discuss the situation at the Slubice Jewish cemetery with Poland’s Prime Minister, Leszek Miller. January 10, 2002

Below: Minister of Culture Istvan Hiller, left, and U.S. Ambassador to Hungary George Herbert Walker III, center, with Commission Chairman Miller after signing the U.S.-Hungary Cultural Properties Agreement in Budapest, Hungary on April 15, 2004.



Photo by Gordon Eszter, Budapest, Hungary

CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEE COMMENDS COMMISSION

IN July 2003 and again in July 2004, the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Appropriations commended the Commission for its “recent progress in protecting and preserving endangered cultural sites in Eastern and Central Europe important to the heritage of U.S. citizens, including cemeteries, monuments, and historic

buildings.” The Committee reports explained that one of the Commission’s “primary tasks is to obtain protection and preservation assurances from the governments of the region. Although it began operations during FY 1990, more than two-thirds of the 17 government-to-government agreements it has negotiated have been entered

into since 2001.” The Committee also noted the signing of landmark agreements with Germany and Poland in 2003 and 2004 “to protect sites associated with victims of genocide during World War II. The Commission has also accelerated efforts to identify and support a growing number of site preservation projects.”



Ukraine Prime Minister Victor Yanukovich listens during a meeting in Washington, D.C. on October 8, 2003, as Commission Chairman Miller discusses cemetery desecrations, anti-Semitism, and a newly enacted law in Ukraine.



Commission Member Irving Stolberg, center, Deputy Culture Minister Leonid Novokhatko, left, and Ukraine Director of the Union of Councils of Jews in the Former Soviet Union Meylakh Sheykhet at a meeting of the U.S.-Ukraine Joint Cultural Heritage Commission on October 30, 2001 in Washington D.C.



Photo by Mark Abraham

From left: Commission Member Ari Storch, U.S. Under Secretary of State Marc Grossman, Armenian Ambassador Arman Kirakossian, Commission Chairman Miller, and Commission Member Gary Lavine after Ambassador Kirakossian and Chairman Miller signed the U.S.-Armenia Cultural Properties Agreement at the State Department's Treaty Room on May 25, 2004.

In June 2003, the Commission contacted Belarus' Ambassador to the U.S., Mikhail Khvostov, concerning news reports confirmed by U.S. citizens that the remains of people buried in the Jewish cemetery in **Grodno, Belarus** had been dug up and removed to expand a stadium. Some of the remains were reportedly disturbed by animals.

The desecrating excavations continued even after a representative of the U.S. Embassy in Minsk and delegations of American and British citizens joined Grodno's Jewish leaders in asking the regional governor to stop the excavation and ensure proper reburial of unearthened remains. After further intervention by the Commission along with Members of Congress and others, the excavated remains were reburied under the supervision of a rabbi and a protective agreement was entered into regarding completion of the stadium project. Construction, however, is continuing to unearth human remains.

In **Hungary**, the Commission sought assurances from Prime Minister Peter Medgyessy that a March 2003 hate crime in **Szigetvar** be investigated and prosecuted. The Associated Press reported that looters broke into tombs, knocked over headstones, painted the Jewish star on graves, and burned a wooden crucifix on the site.

The Commission and the U.S. embassy in **Ukraine** have also pressed the country's government to halt construction of apartment buildings on a Jewish cemetery in the town of **Volodymyr-Volynski**. Local officials have defied repeated court decisions supporting claims by the Union of Councils for Jews in the Former Soviet Union to stop the complex from being built on the site. After a series of

favorable rulings by various appellate courts, Meylakh Sheykhet, Union of Councils of Jews in the Former Soviet Union Ukraine Director, said that "...we would have zero" without intervention by the Commission.

Also in **Ukraine**, the Commission has been urging senior officials of the government to resolve a controversy over the Jewish cemetery in **Sambor**. The cemetery (pictured below) is all that is left of a Jewish community that lived in Sambor for more than 500 years before it was annihilated during the Holocaust. Twelve hundred Jews killed in 1943 are buried in a mass grave at the cemetery in addition to generations of other Jews. Jack Gardner of New York, a U.S. citizen originally from the area, spent much of



Human remains recently unearthed at the Jewish cemetery in Grodno, Belarus, during the expansion of a soccer stadium. Despite protests by the Commission, Members of Congress, and others, the construction continues.

his life's savings to restore the cemetery.

When the restoration was 70 percent complete, a mob of Ukrainian nationalists erected three large crosses on mounds at the cemetery and threatened anyone who removed the crosses. The municipality then halted the restoration.

Jewish Cemetery in Sambor, Ukraine



Photo by Jack Gardner

Commission Preservation Projects

A major component of the Commission's work is to undertake projects that preserve cultural sites or memorialize important places. Members raise funds from the private sector and oversee the implementation of specific projects, which are coordinated by Commission Program Manager Katrina Krzysztofiak. Recent projects are highlighted here.

The Little Camp at Buchenwald Germany

Each year, 700,000 people visit the site of the infamous Nazi concentration camp at Buchenwald, Germany. But only recently—thanks to the Commission's intervention—have they had the opportunity to fully comprehend what happened in Buchenwald's "Little Camp."

Its inmates—mostly Jews, including hundreds of children—were subjected to particularly inhumane and barbaric conditions that resulted in thousands of deaths. The Little Camp had a powerful

effect on American soldiers, including General Dwight D. Eisenhower, who led the liberation of Buchenwald in April 1945. The horrors that they witnessed there provided the first images to the world of the evidence and scope of the Holocaust. Later, although the main camp was preserved and the East German government erected an elaborate monument at the site to honor the victims of fascism, the Little Camp and its history were ignored and the site where it was located was totally obliterated.



Above: Elie Wiesel, later Nobel Peace Prize Winner, with other inmates shortly after liberation in a barrack at the Buchenwald Little Camp, April 1945. Wiesel is in the bottom row, indicated by a circle.

Photo by H. Miller, USHMM, Courtesy of National Archives

Legendary CBS news correspondent Edward R. Murrow went to Buchenwald shortly after its liberation. Many of the details of his famous report were based on what he saw at the Little Camp.



Edward R. Murrow

At the conclusion of the broadcast he said, "I pray you to believe what I have said about Buchenwald. I reported what I saw and heard, but only part of it. For most of it, I have no words. If I have offended you by this rather mild account of Buchenwald, I'm not in the least sorry...."

(April 15, 1945)

“The Little Camp memorial is a solemn tribute to the courage and suffering of the inmates of Buchenwald. As you reflect on the memorial’s meaning to present and future generations, I commend all those who worked hard to create and complete it. These distinguished individuals include Buchenwald survivor and memorial architect Stephen Jacobs and Commission Chairman Warren L. Miller... By joining together in this vital endeavor and increasing awareness of the history of the Little Camp at Buchenwald, you have helped to ensure that the horrors of the Holocaust will never happen again.”

*President George W. Bush
February 26, 2002*

Commission Member (now Chairman) Warren Miller proposed a memorial, raised the funds for it, coordinated the project’s implementation, and wrote the text inscribed on the wall of the memorial in six languages (see page 16). The Federal Republic of Germany and its Free State of Thuringia co-sponsored the memorial. Dr. Volkhard Knigge, Director of the Buchenwald and Mittelbau-Dora Memorials Foundation, coordinated the approval process and helped foster a consensus among all parties. American architect Stephen Jacobs, a Buchenwald survivor—age five at liberation—designed the memorial.

More than a thousand people—including survivors from 24 countries—attended the April 2002 dedication at the site. A March 2002 U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum program in Washington, D.C., commemorating the opening was attended by over 400 people, including survivors, liberators, Members of Congress, most European ambassadors, the Israeli ambassador, and senior aides to President Bush.

Major donors to the memorial, in addition to the Buchenwald and Mittelbau-Dora Memorials Foundation were: Robert H. Book; the Hammerman and Fisch Foundation; Helen and Jeffrey Horowitz; Stephen and Andi Jacobs; Jerry and Judy Klinger; Merrill Lynch & Co., Inc.; Lewis C. Pell; Jack and Elizabeth Rosenthal and Family; Richard I. Solomon; and Chairman Miller.

Letter from Little Camp survivor Elie Wiesel to Commission Chairman Miller

Dear Warren -

I so wish I could be with you today and take part in the ceremony in Buchenwald. I am sure it will be a meaningful event; it corrects an injustice. It also brings back memories. April 11 remains with me—but where was I three days later? On a hospital bed, hanging between life and death.

I remember my first return to Buchenwald in the early nineties. The “big camp” seemed intact, clean, silent: a museum. A thick forest of trees replaced the “small camp” where thousands of Jews perished of hunger, disease and cruel violence.

I voiced my anguish as well as my anger to the curators who accompanied me on a “tour” of the camp site.

But then I wanted to be alone.

I leaned against a tree, closed my eyes and looked for my father.

My sick father, tormented and humiliated before my eyes. His feverish whispers. His pain. His helplessness and mine. My father, dying. My father, dead. He entered darkness without leaving a trace.

But he left a scar.

On my whole being.

As ever, yours:

Elie Wiesel

“On behalf of the President, I want to commend the United States Commission for the Preservation of America’s Heritage Abroad for its vision and hard work in putting together the extraordinary memorial to the Little Camp at Buchenwald.”

Joshua Bolten, Deputy Chief of Staff to President Bush at the Washington, D.C. ceremony commemorating the opening of the Buchenwald Little Camp Memorial, March 13, 2002.



U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council Chairman Fred Zeidman, right, confers with Commission Chairman Warren Miller, left, and Deputy Chief of Staff to President Bush Joshua Bolten, (now Director of the President’s Office of Management and Budget), at the Little Camp Memorial dedication ceremony in Washington.

Inscription on the Buchenwald Little Camp Memorial

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. Begun in late 1942, its first inmates were Polish, Russian, French and Dutch prisoners. By January 1945, the Little Camp became known as the Jewish Camp because most of its prisoners were Jews, including children whose parents had been murdered by the Nazis. Most of the Jews were transferred here from Auschwitz and other concentration camps in Eastern Europe. In 1945 a large percentage of the deaths at Buchenwald occurred in the Little Camp, which imprisoned as many as 20,000 inmates at a time. Conditions were barbaric. Windowless stables with dirt floors intended to house 50 horses at times contained nearly 2000 people. There was no running water, no sanitation, and virtually no heat in the stables. Some inmates lived in tents. Thick mud was everywhere. Rations were only a percentage of those given inmates in the Main Camp. Drinking water was often not provided. With only one latrine, many inmates were forced to use their food bowls as night latrines. By 1945, an ever present stench of human excrement pervaded the site. Corpses lay about in the open as the death toll increased daily. The Little Camp was a place of deepest despair for those left there to be forgotten and to die from cold, starvation, dehydration, debilitating labor, torture and rampant epidemics of diseases that went untreated. In the last days before liberation, more than half of those selected for the death marches and railway transports that resulted in tens of thousands of deaths were inmates from the Little Camp. After liberation, although the main camp was preserved and various memorials established, the Little Camp was totally obliterated and allowed to be overgrown with trees and brush. The site was neglected by the East German authorities until 1990. Some of the survivors eventually settled in the United States; they and their descendants supported the creation of this memorial.



Rumbula Holocaust Memorial, Latvia

Rumbula Holocaust Memorial Latvia

The small forest of Rumbula is located less than 10 kilometers from Riga, the capital of Latvia. More than 25,000 Jews—mostly women, children, and elderly men—were marched from Riga to this site during two days in 1941. All were systematically forced to strip, run a gauntlet, and shot to death at a rate of 1,000 per hour.

As a condition of its co-sponsorship, the Commission insisted that the wording of the monument's inscription correctly represent Rumbula's history, including Latvian complicity in the massacre. As a November 2002 BBC news report noted, "Until recently, the Latvian authorities avoided acknowledging the atrocities that took place during the war, especially the role played by local collaborators."

Some municipal officials attempted to delete any mention of Latvian complicity from the monument's inscription. At the insistence of the Commission, reinforced by strong diplomatic efforts of U.S.

"The story of Rumbula must be told and retold to the children of Latvia, and to their children's children. It must be told truthfully and factually. It will be painful and embarrassing because some Latvians—at least 1,000—participated in the massacres. If proof can be acquired, those perpetrators who are still alive should be prosecuted. To date, none have been. Many Latvian citizens do not know or do not want to believe what happened. But it is imperative in a free and democratic nation that history is dealt with accurately and truthfully. Those killed at Rumbula were not killed for anything they had done. They were killed simply because of the religion into which they had been born. They deserve the recognition and dignity that this memorial creates."

*Message from Commission Chairman Warren Miller
read at the dedication of the Rumbula Memorial*

Ambassador Brian E. Carlson—and the personal intervention of the president and the prime minister of Latvia—the inscription accurately states the facts.

During the November 29, 2002 dedication of the memorial, Latvia’s president, Vaira Vike-Freiberga, called it “a day of mourning for all of Latvia because this crime happened on our soil and our people took part in it.” She continued, “It is a sad and black day in the history of Latvia.”

The Commission sponsored the memorial at the suggestion of Member Joseph Halfon. It created the memorial in partnership with Latvian-American survivors of the Holocaust, the municipality of Riga, a German government foundation, and the Embassy of Israel in Riga. Chairman Miller, with the assistance of Member Chaskel Besser, raised the necessary funds to enable completion of the project. Major donors were Seth Gerszberg and the Mrs. Estee Lauder Philanthropic Fund. The Albert and Ethel Hertzstein Foundation also made a contribution.

Greek Catholic Wooden Churches

Slovak Republic

Picturesque, handcrafted log churches once dotted most villages in the Carpathian Mountains. Just over two dozen of these churches, dating from the 17th and 18th centuries, remain in Slovakia, and all but three still hold religious services. The natural elements have taken their toll on these structures, and few skilled craftspeople are available to maintain the churches. A significant element of the cultural heritage of Slovak-Americans is disappearing.

Under the leadership of Commission Member Vincent Obsitnik, the Commission helped the Greek Catholic Diocese of Presov, Slovakia obtain a grant in 2002 from the World Monuments Fund



Photo Courtesy of Vincent Obsitnik

Commission Member Vincent Obsitnik, right, with architect Steve Kelly at a restored wooden church in Slovakia.

St. Nicholas Greek Catholic Church in Bodruzal, Slovakia built in 1658.



Photo by Juraj Mueller, Bratislava, Slovakia

Photo Courtesy of Rose and Henry S. Baum



The Hidden Synagogue at the Nazi's Jewish ghetto in Terezin, Czech Republic is visited in May 2002 by Rose Baum, daughter of the artist who painted the inscriptions on the walls. Baum's father was killed at Auschwitz.

(WMF)/Samuel H. Kress Foundation to survey 28 churches in Slovakia and four in Poland. An architect and engineer who is an expert in the restoration of this type of structure inspected the churches. An additional grant in 2003 funded a conference in Slovakia to develop a master plan for the churches' restoration.

In 2003, the WMF included three of the Slovak churches in its *2004 Watch List of 100 Most Endangered Sites*. Due to Mr. Obsitnik's efforts, funding has been secured for the restoration of one of the churches, St. Nicholas in Bodruzal, Slovakia. Major contributors are the Slovak Government, the First Catholic Slovak Ladies Association of Cleveland, Ohio, and U.S. Steel Kosice, s.r.o., a subsidiary of U.S. Steel Corporation.

Terezin's Hidden Synagogue Czech Republic

Devastating floods that ravaged Central Europe in August 2002 brought havoc to the historic Czech town of Terezin, site of the infamous Theresienstadt ghetto and concentration camp near Prague. Theresienstadt gained notoriety when the Nazis, with great fanfare, portrayed it as a "model ghetto." The grim reality of the place was much different than what was shown to a delegation of the International Red Cross on a tour led by Adolph Eichmann. 33,000 Jews died there. The ghetto was also used to collect and transport 88,000 Jews to their deaths at Auschwitz.



Commission Member Amy S. Epstein and Terezin Memorial Director Jan Munk, September 26, 2003



“In addition to founding important educational institutions, in the late 1800s, Congregationalist and Methodist missionaries started one of the first international human rights movements in Turkish-occupied Bulgaria. They promoted American values of democracy and freedom, and were brutally persecuted for their efforts. The Dimitrov Scholarships will help Bulgarians remember these heroic missionaries and the values they helped instill in Bulgarian society.”

*Commission Member
Ned W. Bandler*

Cilja Laud, President of the Jewish Community of Estonia, left, shows a monument to Commission Members Lee Seeman and Gary Lavine, center, during a September 2003 visit to Estonia.

Among buildings damaged in the flood was one containing Terezin’s “Hidden Synagogue,” which was discovered during the 1990’s.

Jews were forbidden to worship in the ghetto. However, they secretly created a synagogue in a storeroom in the back of a private residence.

The synagogue walls feature Hebrew liturgical inscriptions and drawings of Jewish symbols.

The Commission and the American Joint Distribution Committee have raised funds to repair the structure’s extensive water damage and re-open the site to visitors. Commission Member Amy S. Epstein led the Commission’s funding efforts. Major donations to the Commission for this project were made by Amy and Bruce Epstein, Seth Gerszberg, and Edie and Walter Loebenberg.

Dimitrov Program Bulgaria

In 2002, the Commission, led by Commission Member Ned W. Bandler, established the Ambassador Philip Dimitrov Distinguished Lecturer and Tuition Awards at the American

University in Bulgaria with privately donated funds. Bandler has helped lead Commission efforts in Bulgaria for several years. Dimitrov is a former Bulgarian ambassador to the U.S.

The awards, a four-year series of annual scholarships, and the lectures recognize the “outstanding contributions” by Protestant missionaries “to the creation of a democratic government and stable civil society in Bulgaria.” The lectures focus on American contributions that helped shape Bulgaria’s democratic institutions. The program also awards scholarships to student essayists who demonstrate the best understanding of these contributions. In 2003, the program additionally purchased selected works by American authors for the university’s American Studies Program.

Holocaust Markers Estonia

Commission Members Gary J. Lavine and Lee R. Seeman are leading a Commission initiative in partnership with a British organization, the Holocaust Education Trust, to memorialize the sites of 22 Nazi concentration and labor camps



and mass graves in Estonia. While some sites have markers, the markers do not accurately describe what happened at the sites.

With the Soviet occupation of Estonia in the summer of 1940, all Jewish organizations and businesses were closed. In June 1941, several hundred Jews were deported. After the German occupation later that year, all of the Jews who had failed to flee—some 1,000—were murdered. The Nazis then transported tens of thousands of Jews from other European countries to Estonian camps.

In addition to having raised the necessary funds, Lavine and Seeman are working closely with the leaders of the Jewish Community of Estonia to implement the project. They are also seeking information from survivors and relatives of those who were murdered in order to ensure that the plaques accurately reflect the history of the Holocaust in Estonia. It is expected that several markers will be in place in time for the 60th anniversary of the mass executions that were carried out at the Lagedi and Klooga camps in September 1944.

Plovdiv Synagogue Bulgaria

Jews have lived in Plovdiv, Bulgaria's second largest city, since Roman times. A mosaic floor and panels depicting menorahs from a synagogue dating to 290 A.D. were found in the city's Roman ruins. In a small courtyard where once a large Jewish quarter bustled stands Plovdiv's 19th century Zion synagogue. On the outside, the modest building is non-descript, but inside it is one of the best examples of Ottoman-style synagogues in the Balkans. Through the fundraising efforts of Commission Member Michael B. Levy, the Commission restored the synagogue with a donation from the Bennett and Geraldine Lebow Foundation that was matched by the Hanadiv Charitable Foundation.



Uzupis Jewish Cemetery Lithuania

Before World War II, Vilnius (Lithuania's capital) was home to approximately 100,000 Jews. Today, only 4,000 live there. Commission Members Steven E. Some and Harriet Rotter are leading efforts to restore what was the largest Jewish cemetery in the country. It dates to the sixteenth century.

During the Communist era, most of the headstones were taken from the cemetery and used as steps on a government building in Vilnius, and as paving stones on some of the city's streets. The cemetery is now an unmarked area overgrown with brush, and the headstones are stored in a pile outside of Vilnius.

The first phase of the project will enclose a part of the cemetery with a fence and gate, reinstall some of the headstones, and erect a memorial. The Commission has requested that Lithuanian authorities provide half the needed funds. Half is being raised from private American donors.

From left: Emanuelis Zingeris of the Lithuanian commission on crimes perpetrated during the Nazi and Soviet occupations; Commission Members Harriet Rotter and Steven E. Some; and Yusef Levinson, chairman of Lithuania's commission for Jewish cemeteries and massacre sites

Commission Members Michael Levy, left, and Ned Bandler in front of a plaque acknowledging the Commission and other contributors to the restoration of the interior of the Plovdiv Synagogue, Bulgaria.





Jacob Finci, head of the Jewish Community of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Commission Chairman Warren Miller at the entrance of the pre-burial house at the Jewish cemetery in Sarajevo. The restoration of the building and cemetery was a joint Commission–Community project.

Sarajevo Jewish Cemetery and Pre-Burial House

Bosnia and Herzegovina

In Sarajevo, a city associated with war, genocide, and ethnic strife in recent years, the Commission has helped restore a symbol of religious tolerance and peaceful co-existence that dates to the 17th century.

Sarajevo’s 370-year-old Jewish cemetery is one of the oldest intact religious burial grounds in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Built by Sephardic Jews who fled Spain, this national treasure had symbolized for centuries the good relations among Jews, Christians, and Muslims.

During the 1992–1995 War in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Jewish community was viewed as neutral. But when the shooting started, the cemetery was caught in the crossfire. Its ornate pre-burial house, a Sarajevo landmark substantially restored just a few years earlier—was consumed by fire. By war’s end, with much of its grounds riddled with land mines, the cemetery became a no-man’s land.

The government of Bosnia and Herzegovina requested the Commission’s help. Commission Member Phyllis Kaminsky led the Commission in adopting the project. The U.S. Congress appropriated \$100,000 of the almost \$300,000 that was raised for the restoration. The balance of the funds were raised by the Commission from the Hanadiv Charitable Foundation, local Sarajevo authorities, and an anonymous American organization.

The de-mining of the cemetery was undertaken by a team of Norwegian experts, in cooperation with the U. S. Department of Defense. (Commission Member Rachmiel Liberman contacted Members of Congress who helped arrange for the removal of the mines.)

Daugavpils Synagogue

Latvia

Working with the Commission, and with the assistance of U.S. Ambassador to Latvia, Brian E. Carlson, the family of the late, world-renowned artist Mark Rothko has agreed to fund the restoration of a synagogue in Daugavpils, Latvia. It is one of only two functioning synagogues in the country, and the only one left in Daugavpils out of an estimated 70 prior to World War II.

Rothko was born in Daugavpils (then Dvinsk, Russia). His family immigrated to the United States in the early 1900’s.

Synagogue in Daugavpils, Latvia being restored by the children of the late Mark Rothko, the world-renowned artist, in conjunction with the Commission.

Photo Courtesy of R.B. Management, Riga, Latvia



U.S. AMBASSADOR RONALD WEISER WORKS TO PRESERVE CULTURAL PROPERTIES



The Commission often works with U.S. embassies on projects to restore cultural heritage properties important to U.S. citizens.

U.S. Ambassador to the Slovak Republic Ronald Weiser has not only helped the Commission assist Americans with cultural site restoration projects through official means, he has personally initiated and contributed to preservation efforts.

He is presently restoring the Jewish cemetery in Zakopane, Poland, a town where his ancestors lived.

Working with the Jewish Community of Kosice, Slovakia, Ambassador Weiser also helped raise and provide funds needed to restore the city's Jewish cemetery after its 135 tombstones were vandalized in 2002.

Additionally, at the personal request of Slovakia's president, Weiser is playing a key role in the restoration of one of Slovakia's most cherished historic sites, the medieval Trencin Castle. He is contributing the funds necessary to provide lighting at the site.

The Commission assisted Weiser with all of these projects.

Auschwitz Judeo-Spanish Plaque Poland

On March 24, 2003, the Commission co-sponsored the installation and dedication of a memorial plaque in the Judeo-Spanish language at the Auschwitz memorial. It recognizes the tens of thousands of Judeo-Spanish speaking inmates who were killed on the site—many of them from the city of Salonika, Greece. The inscription is the same that appears on plaques that were already installed in the 20 other languages of victims of the killing center.

Photo Courtesy of AJAA, Paris, France



Memorial plaque at the Auschwitz Memorial written in the Judeo-Spanish language. The text reads, "Forever let this be a cry of despair and a warning to humanity where the Nazis murdered about one and a half million men, women, and children, mainly Jews from various countries of Europe, Auschwitz-Birkenau 1940-1945"



National University of Ostroh Academy Archives Ukraine

Bilateral cooperation with Ukraine has helped preserve Ukrainian cultural heritage. In October 2002, the Commission helped implement a program to send materials from the Ukrainian Museum-Archives in Cleveland, Ohio to the National University of Ostroh Academy in Ukraine for its new Institute of Diaspora Studies. These materials include copies of Ukrainian language publications produced over the past 75 years in Europe and the United States that were not previously available in Ukraine.

This special initiative was supported by congressional appropriators led by Representative Marcy Kaptur (D-Ohio).

From left: Commission Chairman Warren Miller, former Michigan Governor John Engler, Slovakia's President, Rudolf Schuster, and U.S. Ambassador Ronald Weiser



Tomasz Tomaszewski/National Geographic Image Collection

Dog digging for human bones in the Jewish Cemetery in Karczew, Poland. This picture is from a 1986 *National Geographic* magazine report that helped bring the plight of Poland's Jewish cemeteries to the world's attention.

Karczew Jewish Cemetery Poland

The Commission has been working to restore the historic Jewish cemetery in Karczew, Poland. With its broken tombstones and human bones protruding from the ground, Karczew is a moving visual representation of the Nazis' destruction of Jewish life throughout the country.

Until the outbreak of World War II, Poland was the largest concentration of Jewish culture and spiritual life in Europe. A majority of American Jews trace their ancestry to Poland. Before the Holocaust, 3.3 million Jews lived in Poland; today, there are only a few thousand.

In cooperation with the Chief Rabbi of Warsaw and Lodz, American Michael Schudrich, the Commission, encouraged by Member Chaskel Besser and others, raised the funds to enclose the cemetery with a new wall. Karczew's municipal government contributed labor and equipment. Dr. Norman Weinberg made significant contributions that enabled the wall to be completed.

Commission Member Laura Raybin Miller is leading the Commission in raising funds and coordinating the final phase of the work. It will restore the grounds and stabilize the shifting sands of the cemetery.



Commission Member
Laura Raybin Miller

The city of Karczew is again donating labor and equipment for the restoration.

Auschwitz Treatise Poland

The maintenance of archival materials is an important aspect of the preservation of cultural heritage properties. Auschwitz was the largest of the Nazi killing centers and its name is synonymous with the Holocaust. Commission Member (now Chairman) Warren Miller raised the funds to translate *Auschwitz 1940-1945*—a five-volume work that took historians twenty years to compile—from Polish into English. Eyewitness accounts, rare photographs, lists of prisoners, and even detailed plans for constructing gas chambers and crematories are contained in the book's 1,799 pages.

The project was undertaken at the request of the director of the Auschwitz Memorial Museum. The translation adds important Russian archival material not contained in earlier Polish and German editions of the work. *The New York Times*



“This year is the 60th anniversary of the brutal killing of 3,000 Jewish people by the Nazi Germans... 50 of them were from my husband’s family. The monument that was originally built for this massacre in 1950 is now fully destroyed...The purpose of my life right now is to have this monument restored, and to remember all those innocent people...”

Maria Lerner, wife of Holocaust survivor Joseph Lerner, a native of Brailov, Ukraine.

labeled the treatise “the most complete and authoritative history of the vast killing center.”

The books are now being translated into French. At the request of the Commission, the Paris, France Fondation pour la Memoire de la Shoah has agreed to finance the translation of the work into French.

Brailov Holocaust Memorial Ukraine

In 2002, the Commission assisted in the restoration of a monument remembering 3,000 Jews killed by the Nazis on February 12, 1942 in the town of Brailov, Ukraine.

After fifty years, a postwar monument and a wall at the site were in need of restoration. American survivors, led by Maria and Joseph Lerner of Massachusetts, raised half the cost of the restoration and then appealed to the Commission for help. Commission Member Ari Storch undertook the project and raised the funds necessary to complete the memorial. At the dedication ceremony of the monument, Storch said, “We are working with our Ukrainian counterparts in the government and in Jewish communities to help all remember—Ukrainians and Americans—and to teach those who do not know.”

Commission Member Ari Storch stands to left of Israel’s ambassador to Ukraine (below the Israeli flag) at the restored Holocaust memorial dedication ceremony in Brailov, Ukraine. October 6, 2002.

Brody and Berdichev Jewish Cemeteries Ukraine

In 2002, the Commission obtained funds from the Hanadiv Charitable Foundation to restore a Jewish cemetery in Brody, Ukraine. In the early 19th century, Jews comprised almost 90 percent of Brody’s population. Over 3,000 inscribed and decorated gravestones remain in the cemetery, many of them six feet tall. Hundreds of trees and bushes have taken root among the stones.

Unrestricted access to the cemetery led to the removal and toppling of gravestones, the disturbance of the ground by farm machinery, and the cultivation of one portion of it as well as natural erosion. The cemetery has also been threatened by road building and other construction. The project is being implemented through the Union

Photo Courtesy of Maria and Joseph Lerner



Yankel and Vikl Perkel, who were killed by the Nazis in Brailov in February of 1942 together with 48 other members of the family. The Perkels were the parents of Joseph Lerner with whom the Commission worked to restore the memorial.

Photo Courtesy of Maria and Joseph Lerner





The Jewish cemetery in Brody, Ukraine. Trees and brush have been cleared as part of a Commission project to restore the cemetery.

of Councils for Jews in the Former Soviet Union. It is anticipated that the project will be completed by fall 2004.

The Commission is also assisting an ambitious, multi-year project to restore the historic Jewish cemetery in Berdichev, Ukraine, with more than 5,000 tombstones, some dating to the 18th century. A grant from the Hanadiv Foundation is being used to research the cemetery's true boundaries and to clear away trees and shrubs that currently make the site impenetrable.

Mittelbau-Dora Holocaust Memorial Germany

In partnership with the Buchenwald and Mittelbau-Dora Memorials Foundation, the Commission is co-sponsoring a large,

outdoor model of the Nazis' infamous Mittelbau-Dora Concentration Camp. The model will be placed at the entrance to a new, multi-million dollar museum under construction on the campsite by the German government.

Under the supervision of German scientist Wernher von Braun, prisoners at Mittelbau-Dora were used as slave laborers to construct V-2 rockets in cold, dark tunnels deep inside the Harz Mountains near Nordhausen, Germany. Many prisoners were also forced to live inside the mountains for weeks at a time under unspeakable conditions. Prisoners breathed dust-filled air from the ongoing explosives used to create the system of tunnels and endured round-the-clock explosions.

Tens of thousands died. The death toll was so high that a special crematorium was built at the camp to dispose of the bodies. Mittelbau-Dora had the highest mortality rate of any camp in Germany.

Commission Member Amy S. Epstein and her husband, Bruce, have funded the model, with matching funds provided by the Buchenwald and Mittelbau-Dora Memorials Foundation. The new museum and documentation center is to be dedicated in April 2005, on the 60th anniversary of the camp's liberation by the Third U.S. Army.



Photo by Jürgen Maria Pietsch

Crematorium at the Mittelbau-Dora Concentration Camp in Germany



Photo Courtesy of Norman Weinberg

New wall around the Jewish cemetery in Ozarow, Poland

Ozarow Jewish Cemetery Poland

The Commission facilitated contributions from American Jews and others from around the world to restore a cemetery in Ozarow, Poland that dates back over 350 years. Most of the Jews of Ozarow were deported to Treblinka and murdered by the Nazis in October 1942. The cemetery was rededicated in October 2001. The restoration was led by Dr. Norman Weinberg of the Polish Jewish Cemetery Restoration Project.

Butrimonys Cemetery and Mass Grave Site Lithuania

The Jewish community of Butrimonys was one of the earliest established in what is now Lithuania. A substantial part of the community's cemetery survived World War II and the Holocaust, with many large stones still standing. The Jews of the town did not. Historian Martin Gilbert wrote, "At Butrimonys...976 Jews were murdered (and) the Germans organized a 'spectacle,' placing benches at the execution site so that local Lithuanians could have a 'good view.'"

In the fall of 2002, the Commission began assisting American descendants of Jews from Butrimonys with the restoration of the cemetery and the construction of a Holocaust memorial. Americans Stephen Grafman and Olga Zabludoff led a successful fundraising effort. It received substantial assistance from U.S. Ambassador to Lithuania John F. Tefft and his staff.

Jewish Cemeteries Preservation Initiative

The Commission is cooperating with the New York-based Heritage Foundation for Preservation of Jewish Cemeteries. Under the leadership of Jacob Gutman, Calman Lieberman, and Chaim Ferencz, the Foundation has successfully completed projects to protect and preserve 15 cemeteries in Hungary, Ukraine, Slovakia, Romania, and Serbia. It is currently involved in the preservation of an additional 30 cemeteries in Eastern Europe. The Foundation works with Commission Member Zvi Kestenbaum.



Monument dedicated in October 2001 in memory of 120 people killed by the Nazis in Ozarow. The inscription in part reads, "Their blood has been spilled as water ... and alas not buried' Psalms 79:3".



Commission Member
Zvi Kestenbaum

Commission Members Recognized



Poland's Senate President, Longin Pastusiak, congratulating Commission Chairman Miller after presenting him with his country's high honor. Ambassador Przemyslaw Grudzinski is at left.

In April 2003, President Aleksander Kwasniewski of Poland awarded Commission Chairman **Warren Miller** Poland's Commander's Cross of the Order of Merit for "outstanding achievements" in the area of Polish-Jewish reconciliation and for his work in advancing Holocaust remembrance.

The medal was presented to Miller by Longin Pastusiak, the President of Poland's Senate, in a July 2003 ceremony at the Polish Embassy in Washington, D.C. attended by 125

people. Among the notables present were Israel's Ambassador to the U.S., Daniel Ayalon, and Costa Rica's Ambassador, Jaime Daremblum, whose family is from Poland.

In his speech accepting the award, Miller said that the medal was a tribute to the work of the Commission and a statement of respect to the millions who perished in the Holocaust. He also recognized the Polish Government's efforts against anti-Semitism.

In 2002, Miller was selected by Secretary of State Colin Powell to co-chair a delegation representing the United States at an international conference in Warsaw. During his visit to Poland, Miller also gave a speech at the ceremony commemorating the 59th anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising.

Commission Member **Phyllis Kaminsky** served on the U.S. delegation to the Spring 2003 Session of the United Nations Human Rights Commission, meeting in Geneva, Switzerland. Kaminsky had previously served as the U.N. Secretary General's representative in Washington, D.C. from 1983 to 1988 as Director of the United

Nations Information Center.

She was deeply troubled when the Human Rights Commission, with the support of a majority of its U.N. member countries, including some European Union states, refused to support a resolution condemning the recent rise in anti-Semitism around the world. More recently, the U.N. General Assembly continued to oppose passage of a resolution condemning anti-Semitism.



Commission Member Phyllis Kaminsky

Commission Member **August B. Pust** received Slovenia's Freedom Medal from its president, Milan Kucan, for his efforts to protect cultural heritage sites and promote good relations between the Slovenian and American peoples. The medal was presented at the Presidential Palace in Ljubljana in June 2002.



Commission Member August Pust following the unveiling of Michael Kovats de Fabricy statue in Washington D.C. Kovats is one of the heroes whom the Commission identified as part of a survey of foreign-born heroes of the American Revolution.

Excerpt of a Message from President Bush to the Attendees of a Dinner Honoring Commission Member Chaskel Besser January 23, 2003

"As a Member of United States Commission for the Preservation of America's Heritage Abroad, Rabbi Besser has dedicated countless hours to reviving Jewish life in Poland and other countries in Eastern and Central Europe. He has played a leading role in helping to build numerous Jewish day schools, summer camps, and senior citizens centers. Furthermore, he has led important efforts to help save historic Jewish cemeteries throughout Europe."

Public Law 99-83 established the United States Commission for the Preservation of America's Heritage Abroad. It states in part that:

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.

The Commission is charged with identifying and reporting on these cultural properties in Central and Eastern Europe and seeking assurances from the governments of the region that the properties will be protected and preserved.



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

888 17th Street, NW, Suite 1160

Washington, DC 20006

Telephone: 202/254-3824

Fax: 202/254-3934

Email: uscommission@heritageabroad.gov

Website: www.heritageabroad.gov