PASSPORTS FOR LIFE.
PROJECT OF THE PILECKI INSTITUTE
ABOUT THE ŁADOŚ LIST.

HISTORICAL DIORAMA FROM THE LITZMANNSTADT GHETTO

STORIES OF LOST CHILDHOOD. ABOUT THE BOOK BY JOANNA BEATA MICHLIC.

IF THIS IS A MAN? EXCLUSIONS IN THE MODERN WORLD.

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Passports for Life. A Project of Pilecki Institute

"If This Is a Man
- Exclusions in the Modern World". International Conference.

“We Forgive, But We Do Not Forget”: Commemorating the 78th Anniversary of the Deportation of Macedonian Jews
We invite all of you to work closely with us. We would be grateful to receive information about events, projects, publications, exhibitions, conferences or research that we should share with our readers. We also accept proposals for articles.

Paweł Sawicki, Editor-in-Chief

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The personal items of Holocaust victims are unique testimonies of the period of the crime. They should be regarded as “depositories of memory” – bearing witness to their owners’ fate or the times in which they were created/functioned. They should be considered “depositories of memory” – testifying to their owners’ fate or the period they were created or operated. These include, among other things, objects created in ghettos and concentration camps as substitutes for what was taken from the prisoners (a variety of jewellery was created in the Lodz ghetto – brooches, rings, cigarette cases, as well as toys such as castanets). Works that are unique in both historical and formal terms and that can be regarded as works of art – paintings, sculptures and puppets – have survived to the present day.

One of such creations is a diorama created in the Litzmannstadt Ghetto.

The model, measuring 36 x 110 x 34 cm, portrays a genre scene. In the foreground are figures forming three compact groups: four men around a sleigh, nine people riding on a horse-drawn cart and striding alongside, and twelve people walking around a man-drawn cart with an older man lying on it. One person breaks out of the three groups presented above – it is a female figure with an umbrella looking in the opposite direction, standing in a courtyard separated from the foreground by a dilapidated wall. The background is made up of low-rise single-storey or wooden buildings, creating a typical suburban landscape. The overwhelming snow, melting mud indicate that the depicted scene is set in late winter.

We do not know the exact date the model was created. However, it is beyond doubt that it was created in the Łódź Ghetto. Its author also remains anonymous – no signature has been found on the object. The materials used in its creation: plywood, hardboard, wood, metal sheet, and above all oil and tempera paints, indicate its creator's access to concessionary and scarcely accessible materials in the ghetto. They were distributed solely among the employees of the Jewish ghetto administration – employed, among others, in the Statistics and Science Departments. The creator of the model was likely involved in the activities of the latter. The Faculty of Science was established in May 1942 at the behest of the German authorities. Rabbi Emanuel Hirszberg was appointed its head. The German Ghetto Board commissioned the unit to prepare a museum presenting the life of Eastern European Jews. The exhibits gathered in the premises intended for the museum at 25 Łagiewnicka Street were to constitute a travelling exhibition used by the Nazis for propaganda purposes – illustrating Jewish folklore. A group of prominent Łódź artists incarcerated in the ghetto were recruited to work in the Department: Henryk Szylis, Icchak (Vincent) Brauner and Israel Lejzerowicz. As part of the creation of the museum's collection in the ghetto site, several volumes of books were collected, religious objects acquired, and genre scenes were created using specially prepared puppets – “Hasidic wedding in Poland”, “Friday evening in a town in Volhynia”, “Lighting of candles in a Jewish home”, “Monday in bejt ha-midrash”, “A scene from everyday life in the Litzmannstadt ghetto”. Oskar Rosenfeld devoted a fragment to them in the Encyclopaedia he compiled in the ghetto: “The scenes mostly convey a grotesque impression, mainly because of the exaggerated realism. They profoundly lack the beauty and...
European Jewish life. One often feels that such a figural presentation was deliberately presented here to justify or even demand the destruction of this folk-art curious world”. He later included information on how the Department’s activities were perceived: “The Ghetto residents consciously distanced themselves from the Department because they felt the figurines in the display cabinets did not serve artistic or cultural-historical purposes but were otherwise contrary to Jewish interests”. Nevertheless, it is also possible that the diorama in question was created in secret, independent of official initiatives. The lack of preserved or discovered documentation does not allow one to draw any definite conclusions. The story of its creation is still waiting to be uncovered.

The model in question has at least two interpretations of the historical event it captures. The first one, accepted by historians and museum workers, assumes that it is a scene of forced resettlement of Łódż Jews to the ghetto in early 1940. Several elements point to this. The first of these is the season depicted on the model. The establishment of the ghetto was announced on 8 February 1940; the forced organised resettlements continued until the first half of March of the same year, while the ghetto borders were finally closed on 30 April 1940. The season is also reflected in the sledges used by the resettlers to transport their belongings. Similar scenes of the transport of objects and residential equipment are known from photographs depicting the moment of resettlement, when hundreds of people were dragged towards the Old Town and Baluty, the location of the ghetto.

A thorough examination of the details gives cause to question the first interpretation. At the centre of the model, the artist placed the figure of a law enforcement officer (Ordnungsdienst) assisting with the resettlement. The man sitting on the cart is wearing a blue cap with a yellow band and a yellow and white armband with a blue Star of David, characteristic of the Jewish group in the Łódż ghetto. The group was established in late
February 1940; however, surviving documentation indicates that its uniforms did not contain the above-mentioned characteristic elements at the beginning of its existence, as they appeared after the closing of the ghetto borders. Furthermore, no accounts are known of this form of assistance – travelling on a cart together with displaced persons. During the creation of the ghetto, the role of the police was to refer groups of people to meeting points and ensure the smooth flow of subsequent displaced persons. However, the argument of incompatibility of uniforms to the time shown cannot prejudge a different interpretation as to the time of the presented scene. It is conceivable that the author of the diorama did not know what the uniforms of the Law Enforcement Service looked like at its inception or did not witness the resettlements in the winter of 1940. Nevertheless, the doubts are compounded by another detail and the landscape in which the scene is set. The landscape depicted in the diorama, as mentioned above, portrays a characteristic suburban building development – wooden houses and one- and two-storey tenement houses were mainly found in the northern and north-eastern part of the ghetto – in Marysin. Furthermore, it is worth noting the direction in which the group of people shown on the diorama is travelling and its comparison with the buildings discussed above. The resettlers leave the developed area with taller two- and three-storey brick tenements and head through an area developed with wooden single-storey buildings. It may suggest that the group is heading from the central part of the ghetto through Marysin, i.e., towards Radegast Station. Accordingly, the model may illustrate the relocations from the ghetto in early 1942. In that year, 10,003 persons were deported from the ghetto to Chelmno nad Nerem (Chelmno on the Ner) from 16 to 29 January, and another 34,073 during the second wave of deportations from 22 February to 2 April. The authors find it
challenging to decide which of the interpretations indicated above may be considered the appropriate one. Unfortunately, no accounts or documents have survived that could confirm the proposed chronology of the depicted events. Just as the history of the building’s creation is undiscovered, it is also baffling how the fragile work survived the war. No information is available in this regard – some of the ghetto museum's exhibits likely survived in the area of the liquidated "closed Jewish destrict". Following the end of the war, the object became part of the Central Jewish Historical Commission's collection, then operating in Łódź – to Department VI of the Museum. Then, in 1947, to Warsaw and transformed from the Commission to the Jewish Historical Institute. The only image of the model from this period comes from the publication A Year's Work of the Central Jewish Historical Commission, published in 1946. It must also have been damaged at the time. Two small buildings are missing, located at the right edge of the model. This fascinating object was only presented for the first time in 2020 in Łódź, at the site of its creation. Thanks to the cooperation of three institutions: The E. Ringelblum Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw, the Centre for Jewish Studies at the University of Łódź and the Museum of Independence Traditions in Łódź, where it is currently on temporary display – in the Radegast Station Branch. However, this significant event was curtailed by the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic. The museum's temporary closure and subsequent restrictions on its availability affected the number of visitors who would have had the chance to see this unique object. It is all the more pleasing that its exposition will be extended until February 2022.

All contemporary photographs of the diorama come from the E. Ringelblum Jewish Historical Institute's collection in Warsaw, pic. Grzegorz Kwolek JHI.
‘A WOUNDED LANDSCAPE
- BEARING WITNESS TO THE
HOLOCAUST’

Waiting for 15 years until he had found the right visual language to give justice to these stories, since May 2015, the British / Swiss photographer Marc Wilson has been making the work ‘A Wounded Landscape - bearing witness to the Holocaust’. A work made up of 22 stories of individuals who survived or were murdered in the Holocaust.

There are nearly 40,000 sites, in Germany and in countries which the Germans occupied between 1939 and 1945. There, the Nazis and their collaborators systematically murdered nearly six million Jews as well as a huge number of people from other groups considered by the Nazis to be inferior, racially or for ideological or political reasons. These groups included Roma, homosexuals, the mentally and physically disabled, Jehovah’s Witnesses, Communists, and more than three million Soviet prisoners of war.

These sites persist today throughout these countries. Together they formed a pathway to genocide: destroyed communities and ghettos, internment camps, transit camps, labour camps, sub camps, concentration camps, extermination camps and displacement camps. They are connected by the landscapes that surround them, and the forced journeys made between them. At these sites, individual killings and slaughter on a mass scale took place, the numbers involved almost beyond our understanding. These are sites where literal life or death decisions were made, but they are also sites of hope, survival and memory.

“I sat for hours listening to Rita, Harry, Lillian and others share their stories with me. I listened to stories of their parents and grandparents, their brothers and sisters, sons and daughters. I have listened to stories in English, French, Hebrew, Polish, Dutch and Russian.

After these long conversation I would make the portraits and then I would travel to over 130 locations in 20 countries making the work. My aim being to share these stories as they were shared with me, stories of an individual and reflected in a thousand other individuals, a million other stories. To help the viewer understand how we could so easily have been, or could become, these stories. We children, parents, grandparents, brother and sisters.

“The Wiener Library has numerous opportunities to see artistic responses to the Holocaust, and I can state unambiguously that Marc’s work is among the finest and most sensitive that we have seen in many years” - Ben Barkow, Former Director, The Wiener Holocaust Library.

I never searched for a particular story, never wanting to highlight one part of this history over another, each individual as important as the other.

The first was that of Aaron Ianco and his family from Romania, my great grandfather and the journey that ended in the smoke and ashes of Auschwitz, via Drancy in Paris. The next came from there and onwards for 6 years.”

Now the work is complete and being made into a book - 750 pages, 350 photographs, the story transcriptions, text and maps.
“In April 1945 they ordered us out of the camp. There was no train or bus, we were on foot. The Death March. We came to the sea and there were barges. Ronit (Rita’s daughter): 'They put my mother and the others in five or six barges and pulled them out to sea. The barges had no motor and after 2 days they left them at sea with no water, no food, nothing. They were like skeletons.'

We waited to die in the sea. A barge with prisoners from Norway, Poland, Greece...After one day and one night we did not know what to do. One man said we must begin to swim. We did not know where we were, which country, which sea, we just wanted to swim so we did. We could die in the sea or we could die on the boat. I had to survive, I had to stay alive because I had to tell, must tell, what happened”.
Rita Weiss. Tel Aviv, Israel, December 4th, 2017
“The most famous images of small children trying to support their families in the Warsaw ghetto are those representing little smugglers of food. The children begged for food on the Arian side, risking their own lives”. In spite of such representations that entered into collective memory and popular culture, only fragments of the fate that Jewish children experienced during WW2 are available. Before 1939, among the Jewish community of Poland represented by ca. 3.5 million individuals, there were several hundred thousand children. In 1945, the Central Committee of Polish Jews registered only 5 thousand Jewish children, Survivors of the Shoah. Next to senior Jews and the ill, children would often be the first victims of the Nazi. For this reason, the accounts of the youngest Survivors of the Shoah are rare and these individuals, usually born in the 1930s or during WW2, are nowadays among the last who remember the Shoah.

Joanna Beata Michlic, historian at the Institute of Advanced Studies, University College London, in her book “Piętno Zagłady” provides the analysis and interpretation of the accounts by the children of the Holocaust – those who were little kids or maximum teenagers when the Germans and their supporters forced them to hide in the forests, get falsified christening certificates, pretend to be Polish, conceal their Jewish identity. She usually refers to the accounts and examples from occupied Poland. Using source documents, written testimonies (among others from ŻIH Archives), recordings and interviews with Survivors the author presents the reality of those for whom childhood had been marked by the necessity to hide, escape, by experiencing the death of their dear ones, losing identity.

The image of children-Survivors does not fit the stereotype of stories with “happy ending”, appearing from time to time in connection with “simple, fortifying public presentations of these children as “carefree young people beginning their new lives” immediately after the Shoah”. Apart from the accounts of Jewish children, Michlic interprets “the accounts and letters dating back to the same period and prepared by a group of Christian Poles devotedly rescuing Jewish children”. She describes in details the tragedies which stand in contradiction to stereotypes and break clear classifications. The book begins with the story of Lena Atlas, a girl maltreated by the Poles who used to hide her. After WW2 Lena found herself under the custody of Mina Halberstadt-Kapłan, Jewish guardian at the orphanage who, inspired by the papers by Janusz Korczak, supported the girl in her recovery and in adapting to the presence of other children:
Chana Grynberg, in turn, even if she had been mistreated by Józefa, a Polish woman who had given her shelter, after many years applied for the her being awarded with the title of the Righteous among the Nations. The stories of Survivors’ lives consist of many contrasting episodes – from the examples of the Poles who would rescue the children of their Jewish friends with devotion and sympathy, to those who used to hide the Jews motivated only by material profits and after WW2 would even claim to be rewarded for this.

Michlic collects these and other stories, from which emerges the nearly unknown fate of Jewish children trying to survive on their own in the non-Jewish environment “where it was hard to distinguish friends from enemies”. She emphasized, quoting Laurence Langer, that “conventional historians deceived the victims by privileging the perpetrators, as the Nazi regime used to produce official archive documents. According to this position it can be stated that the youngest Victims and Survivors were deceived to the greatest extent by being refused not only their causative skills, but also a proper position as subjects of historical research”.

(... in June 1945 Mina Halberstadt-Kaplan considered Lena to be a shrewd and sharp-witted kid, but difficult and restless, full of anger and behaving in an arrogant way. But she assumed that Lena, originating from Lublin just as herself, had experienced in her young life so much hardship and pain and she needs rehabilitation of both her body and soul. (...) She made her responsible for a younger child in the group and appointed supervisor of hygiene among her mates. Halberstadt-Kaplan noticed that within the period of three months, Lena underwent visible emotional and psychological transformation. From a boisterous and quarrelsome girl she transformed into a kind, sympathetic and caring child, willing to start school in September 1945.
After WW2, children-Survivors would usually find themselves in orphanages. Among the most important facilities of this kind there were the Orphanage in Otwock near Warsaw, Orphanage in Śródborów (a district of Otwock) as well as Jewish Orphanages in Lublin and in Petrolesie in the Lower Silesia region (Pieszyce since 1947). The children were waiting there for their relatives who were searching for them – both Survivors of the Shoah as well as members of more distant family arriving for example from the USA. Search actions were also conducted by Jewish organizations.

Parents leaving their hiding places on the Arian side or freed from concentration camps often would not be in possession of any documents to prove that they were biological parents of a given child and they did not know Arian names and surnames of their children. Some of them would manage to recognize their children by a nevus or another physical characteristic. The identification of this kind was considered a sufficient proof of parenthood in Jewish orphanages.

Having left their hideouts, the children were often weak, ill and lousy. Those who used to hide in wardrobes would often suffer from rickets. Some of the children did not tell about their suffering for the next decades, as it was the case with Jewish girls raped by those who abused their vulnerability. They all needed to be cared of, and for a vast majority of them it was necessary to find a way to cope with their experiences, traumatizing for strong adults.

Sometimes the children would not recognize their siblings with whom they reunited after wartime separation. There were also other problems – some children would keep their Catholic faith, practiced during the war and pretend to be Christians, which resulted in tensions within the families tied to Judaism. There were also the situations when couples who had lost a child in the Shoah would adopt Jewish orphans, sometimes establishing new and happy families.

Nevertheless, a lot of tragedies used to emerge at this stage. For example Sara Warszawiak found herself in the orphanage in Cracow already in 1943. She was adopted by a couple without their own children, Jan and Julia Pilch, who had not known that she was Jewish. After the war, uncle Simcha and grandfather Awram Grinapel found the girl having come back from USSR. For several years, when court proceedings concerning her situation were in progress, the girl remained in an orphanage, from where she escaped several times to join her foster parents. Finally, her grandfather took her by force and transported to Israel, where she became Sara Avinum. In turn, in 1947 as many as three relatives – from Palestine, Paris and New York – tried to adopt Wiktor Barański (Awigdor Baranowicz), a 10-year-old boy.

Children would often move abroad with their relatives – to Sweden, France, Australia or the USA. Domestication in the new country was not always successful due to a different language, environment and it was sometimes impossible to restore the relationship with their parents that they had not seen for years. Many of them had to face the experience of rootlessness. As Michlic writes, “some of the children, who due to their age had completely forgotten their Jewish identity or had not known about it at all and who had still been raised as Christians by their saviours, were to discover their lost childhood, original ethnical and cultural identity and biological parents as late as in the 1980s and 1990s”.

"The children would miss the lost years of school education and their loving, strong and stable families”, Michlic writes. “(...) for many of them the Shoah together with its atrocious experience was the only reality that they knew –it was the only reality of their childhood and teenage years as they had not remembered the other". For this reason the accounts of the youngest Survivors of all genocides, not only of the Shoah, need to form part of collective memory of these events that should never repeat themselves.

See the book Piętno Zagłady at the ŻIH Publishing House
Portrait of a boy, Orphanage in Śródborów, 1945 (1947?), Julia Pirotte, ŻIH Collections sygn.. ZIH-02-A-00437
The Pilecki Institute is a scientific institution specializing in the documentation and research of 20th-century history, including various projects focused on the Second World War. One issue of interest to the Institute is the passport operation carried out during the war in Bern by the so-called Ładoś Group.

The aim of this project – implemented in cooperation with the former Polish Ambassador to Switzerland and current Polish Ambassador to Turkey, Dr. Jakub Kumoch, and the Counselor of the Polish Embassy in Bern, Jędrzej Uszyński – was to reconstruct and recreate a list of people who may have acquired one of the forged documents of Paraguay, Honduras, Haiti or Peru that were issued in Switzerland in the years 1940–43. The research team at the Pilecki Institute also seeks to determine the approximate number of people who were saved by this operation, as well as to analyze the effectiveness of the entire passport campaign and the role played by both the Polish Legation in Bern and individual members of the Ładoś Group. Attempts are also made to determine the fate of each person in whose name a document was issued.

As part of the project, enquiries were carried out in archives located in Poland, the United States, Argentina, Switzerland, Great Britain and Israel in an attempt to find as many passports or citizenship certificates of Paraguay, Haiti, Honduras and Peru as possible. Research also included a detailed analysis of the private archives of the individuals who cooperated with the Polish Legation in Bern, in which handwritten notes and correspondence confirming the production of illegal identity cards were found. One valuable discovery included lists of people from individual internment camps who had proof of Latin American citizenship, drawn up by the German administration in 1943–45.

The archival material mentioned above became the basis for a list of individuals who were issued Latin and Central American passports from Bern during the Second World War. This list is not only a source of scientific knowledge, but also a testimony to the struggle for survival, as it bears witness to the fate of thousands of Europe’s Jews. The list would be impossible to compile without cooperation from the Institute of National Remembrance – Commission for the Prosecution of Crimes against the Polish Nation, the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum and the Jewish Historical Institute.

The research results appeared in the monograph Lista Ładosia. Spis osób, na których nazwiska w okresie II wojny światowej zostały wystawione paszporty latynoamerykańskie przez Poselstwo RP i organizacje żydowskie w Szwajcarii, published by the Pilecki Institute in December 2019. This publication is both a list of persons who came into possession of the illegally issued passports, as well as the history of the painstaking work which accompanied the reconstruction of the said list.

Thanks to the publication of Lista Ładosia, we have come into contact with families who were in possession of false Latin American passports and discovered new sources, which made it possible to update some data in the English edition that was published in February 2020 under the patronage of the World Jewish Congress – The Ładoś List: An index of people to whom the Polish Legation and Jewish organizations in Switzerland issued Latin American passports during the Second World War, (transl. by J. Niedzielko, I. Stephenson).

The activities of the Ładoś Group have met with immense interest. It is our great pleasure that since 2018, we have been promoting knowledge about a campaign to rescue people
people of Jewish origin from across Europe that was organized by the Polish diplomats. The “Passports” exhibition prepared by the Pilecki Institute has already been displayed in Switzerland, Israel, the Czech Republic and Slovenia.

The accompanying meetings with representatives of the families of those saved thanks to the passports have provided an opportunity to understand their personal experiences. The promotion of The Ładoś List was an occasion to present the campaign undertaken by the Polish diplomats and Swiss activists in such places as London, New York, Connecticut and Berlin, as well as to exchange knowledge and information with journalists, scholars and descendants of passport holders. We continue to hold debates, conferences, seminars and meetings devoted to the operation carried out by the Ładoś Group. We kindly invite you to familiarize yourself with reports on the events, interviews and speeches.

The website’s partner is the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum, which has held the Chaim Eiss collection – an archive which represents one of the fundamental sources of knowledge on the passport campaign – since August 2018.

passportsforlife.pl
The experience of Auschwitz and the Shoah has had a significant impact on people who survived. Many appealed already at the end of the war that their fate should become a warning for the next generations. Primo Levi, an Auschwitz survivor, has entitled one of his books about the Shoah "If this is a man". His words are extremely accurate in the contemporary world, which is why they are a part of the conference title," said Andrzej Kacorzyk, the director of the ICEAH.

Words of another Auschwitz survivor Marian Turski became a motto of the conference. On January 27, 2020, during the commemoration of the 75th anniversary of the liberation of the German Nazi Auschwitz concentration and extermination camp, he said, "Keep the commandment. The 11th commandment: thou shalt not be indifferent. Unless you do so, in the blink of an eye, another Auschwitz will suddenly fall from the sky."

"Millions of people around the world are persecuted because of their religion, skin color, gender, or sexual orientation. Our history shows that we still haven't learned the lesson of the past. It is a disgrace that today, almost 80 years after the Shoah, public antisemitic speeches, gestures or offensive attacks very often go completely unpunished. It is therefore absolutely imperative to raise awareness about our contemporary responsibility and the impact that our behavior or attitudes have on the process that can lead to a disaster," said the director of the Auschwitz Memorial, Dr. Piotr M. A. Cywiński.

The conference will bring together people who have experienced persecution because of their religious or cultural affiliation, gender or sexual orientation. They will be joined by representatives of various religious groups, minorities, activists of both international and local organizations, who in their work raise awareness about exclusions in the modern world and provide real aid and support to those who have become victims of persecution.

There are three open-call sessions planned within the conference programme. We want to invite people engaged in combating exclusions based on different grounds and actively involved in various projects on this subject to participate. It is significant for us to show good practice on the micro-level – school, town, or community, to stress the importance of grassroots initiatives. Each speech should be based on a multimedia presentation and take up to 20 minutes.

The languages of the conference are Polish and English.

To take part in the recruitment please fill in the online application form. You can register until 30 April 2021. We will inform about the recruitment results until 10 May 2021.

In any additional questions please contact: conference2021@auschwitz.org
IF THIS IS A MAN - EXCLUSIONS IN THE MODERN WORLD

INTERNATIONAL EDUCATIONAL CONFERENCE

JULY 7-8, 2021

International Center for Education about Auschwitz and the Holocaust

Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum
WE FORGIVE, BUT WE DO NOT FORGET: COMMEMORATING THE 78TH ANNIVERSARY OF DEPORTATION OF MACEDONIAN JEWS

11 March marks the day 7,144 Macedonian Jews were deported to the death camp Treblinka in 1943. In commemoration, numerous events and activities were held throughout the Republic of North Macedonia, including in Skopje, Bitola and Shtip on 10 and 11 March 2021.

Online commemorations for the victims and survivors of the Holocaust
The main commemorative online ceremony was organized jointly by the Jewish Community in North Macedonia and the Embassy of Italy in Skopje with addresses by the President of the Republic of North Macedonia Stevo Pendarovski, the President of the Jewish Community Berta Romano – Nikolik and the Italian Ambassador Andrea Silvestri. President Pendarovski underlined that “The Holocaust is a logical consequence of the moral vacuum in which everything was allowed, including the devaluation of human life and its inherent dignity. This absolute evil must be condemned absolutely. We must not allow the truth about the Holocaust to be relativized and forgotten. It is our duty to remember so that it never happens again.” The event included conversation with E. Merlo, director of the Italian documentary film “70072: la bambina che non sapeva odiara” and the main film protagonist Lidia Maksymowitz, a Holocaust survivor from Auschwitz-Birkenau.

Planting seedlings in commemoration
President Pendarovski, prior to this event, planted a Macedonian oak tree and inaugurated a memorial plaque with the message “We forgive, but we do not forget” in the Presidential Office garden. At the same time, on his behalf, and in cooperation with the Embassy of Israel, a tree was planted in Jerusalem, in the Peace Forest Amandav. President Pendarovski emphasized that the seedlings are an expression of respect for the small but extremely important Jewish community in North Macedonia that for centuries has been a fruitful tree on Macedonian soil.

Joining in commemoration – both online and offline
Prime Minister of the Republic of North Macedonia Zoran Zaev posted via his Facebook account that the Holocaust was the largest crime in contemporary history and that remembrance would remain our eternal duty. He noted it served as a warning and a lesson that calls upon us to prevent all forms of evil and danger that may be a threat to our common future and to the building of an equal society for all.

Government delegations led by the Minister of Justice Bojan Maricic and the Minister of Culture Irena Stefoska, representatives of the Assembly, of the Cabinet of the President of the Republic and the local authorities laid flowers and wreaths in front of the Monument of the deported Macedonian Jews in the former “Monopol” tobacco factory, at the Skopje and Shtip Jewish Cemeteries.

In memory of the Bitola Holocaust Jews victims, city Mayor Natasha Petrovska addressed the commemorative event held in front of the Holocaust memorial where a tree was planted and flowers placed. Israeli Ambassador to North Macedonia Dan Oryan joined the event with an online address. The NGO ARHAN also planted trees in nine kindergartens as part of the international
action “Plant a tree for each of our citizens who perished in the Holocaust fires.” The commemorative events also included the promotion of two books: the trilingual (Macedonian, Albanian and English) “The Basic Antisemitic Legislation of the Kingdom of Bulgaria” in Skopje and “The last album, guardian of the memories of the Bitola Jewish religious municipality,” as well as the opening of the exhibition “Testimonies of Bitola Jews in the photography work of the Brothers Manaki” in Bitola.