

A Tribute to
Dr. Efraim Zuroff

The Last Nazi Hunter



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Commemorating Four Decades of Tireless
Pursuit of Justice
A Life Devoted to Memory, Truth,
Courage and Action

24 April 2025
כ"ו ניסן תשפ"ה



Message From **PAULINKA KREISBERG**



Not unlike my late father, Simon Wiesenthal, Dr. Zuroff, had a goal in life: to bring the perpetrators to court and hope that true justice would prevail.

While remembrance of the Holocaust and keeping the memory of the victims alive is an important issue, Dr. Zuroff, like my father, put the emphasis on finding the murderers.

That is why I always appreciated Dr. Zuroff's mission and felt that he was the one who continued my father's work.

With warm regards,
Paulinka

Paulinka Kreisberg - Wiesenthal
Simon Wiesenthal's daughter

INTRODUCTION

By Dr. Efraim Zuroff

I am deeply grateful for this opportunity to extend my heartfelt appreciation to the colleagues, supporters, and esteemed professors who have guided and encouraged me throughout my journey in Holocaust research and the pursuit of justice. Their wisdom, dedication, and unwavering commitment have played an integral role in shaping my career and the work I have undertaken over the past four decades.

First and foremost, I owe an immeasurable debt of gratitude to Simon Wiesenthal, the legendary Nazi-hunter whose life's mission was to find, expose, and bring to justice hundreds of Holocaust perpetrators. My first encounter with him at Yad Vashem in 1978, just months before assuming my role as the inaugural (academic) Director of the newly established Simon Wiesenthal Center in Los Angeles, left an indelible mark on me. Though he was initially dismayed by my lack of fluency in German, he recognized my deep knowledge of Holocaust history and as time went on, my relentless determination to pursue Nazi criminals. This foundation led to a lasting professional relationship, and I frequently invoked his poignant stories to emphasize the critical importance of our mission.

Simon chose not to return to his career as an architect in the aftermath of the war, despite Europe lying in ruins. Instead, he dedicated his life to ensuring that the memory of the victims remained alive and their honor preserved. As he profoundly stated, "I am not an observant Jew, but I believe in the world to come, and I believe that when the survivors pass away, they will meet the victims in Heaven. And the first question the victims will ask the survivors will be: 'You were the lucky ones. What did you do with your lives?' So one will reply, 'I was a lawyer.' Another will say that he smuggled American cigarettes. I will say, 'I did not forget you.'"

Two towering intellectual figures inspired my academic pursuit of Holocaust studies. Rabbi Dr. Yitz Greenberg instilled in me an understanding of the historical and religious significance of the Holocaust, profoundly influencing my perspective during my studies at Yeshiva University. My academic journey continued under the mentorship of Professor Yehuda Bauer at the Hebrew University, who supervised both my M.A. and Ph.D. His unparalleled expertise and charisma captivated generations of students, many of whom dedicated their careers to Holocaust studies. Yehuda's impact was profound, and his recent passing is deeply mourned by all who had the privilege of learning from him.

His support extended beyond academia, as evidenced by his endorsements of two of my books, which are included in this tribute.

Throughout my career, I have been fortunate to receive unwavering support—both financial and logistical—from exceptional friends and colleagues, whose contributions were instrumental in our achievements. I extend my deepest appreciation to Aryeh Rubin, founder and director of the Targum Shlishi Foundation, who not only conceived the idea for "Operation Last Chance," our final campaign to identify and prosecute Holocaust perpetrators, but also provided the necessary funding for its logistics and the rewards promised for crucial information. Significant support for this initiative was also generously provided by Steve Mizel and Peter Steinlauf.

The success of our mission was further bolstered by the dedicated staff of the Simon Wiesenthal Center's Israel Office. Over more than three decades, Talma Horowitz, Fran Schnall, and Bonita Reich provided outstanding logistical support, ensuring that our operations ran smoothly and effectively.

Additionally, I was privileged to work with Dr. Stefan Klemp, who joined our team through a special German government initiative aimed at identifying individuals who had received special war pensions despite having "violated the norms of humanity." Stefan's meticulous research resulted in the compilation of lists containing 70,000 Nazi perpetrators, which we submitted to the German authorities. As a result, the pensions of dozens of former Nazis were revoked. Stefan has since published several important works on Holocaust history and remains a steadfast ally in our ongoing efforts.

Over the years, our work relied on the indispensable support of legal professionals, Jewish community leaders, and dedicated activists in various countries. Among them, German lawyers Thomas Walther and Kirsten Goetze played a pivotal role in reshaping Germany's prosecution policies, which facilitated the recent convictions of seven former concentration camp guards. Similarly, we found invaluable allies in leaders such as British MP Greville Janner, who was supported by Philip Rubenstein and former Home Secretary Merlyn Rees; Australian advocate Colin Rubenstein, executive director of AIJAC; and our late Canadian director, Sol Littman, whose efforts were complemented by David Matas of B'nai Brith Canada and Bernie Faber of the Canadian Jewish Congress.

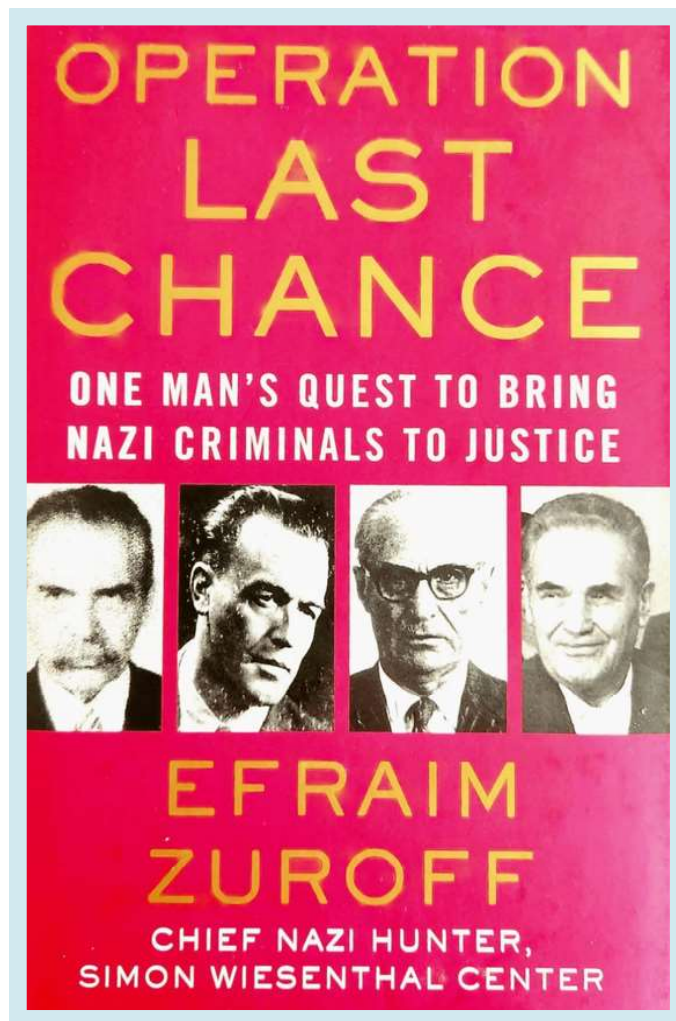
Our mission would not have been possible without the dedication of investigative journalists who assisted us in exposing and locating Nazi war criminals. Brian Flynn of the British tabloid The Sun was instrumental in pressuring Hungarian prosecutors to indict Laszlo Csatory, the brutal commander of the Kosice ghetto, responsible for sending 15,000 Jews to Auschwitz in 1944.

Scottish journalist Michael Tierney played a key role in uncovering the whereabouts of Hungarian gendarmerie officer Sandor Kepiro, who participated in the 1942 Novi Sad massacre. Australian reporter Paul Daley was crucial in tracing Hungarian soldier Charles Zentai, who murdered a Jewish teenager for failing to wear a yellow star. In Croatia, journalist Tomislav Jakic, a media advisor to President Stjepan Mesic, provided invaluable assistance in our pursuit of justice.

The willingness of local political leaders and media outlets to support our cause was a clear indicator of a society's stance on prosecuting Holocaust criminals. While Serbia demonstrated genuine appreciation for our efforts—largely due to our role in bringing to justice perpetrators of atrocities against Serbs—our work in the Baltic states faced significant resistance. Despite the deportation and trial of three Lithuanian collaborators from the United States, not a single Baltic Nazi collaborator was convicted and punished in their home countries.

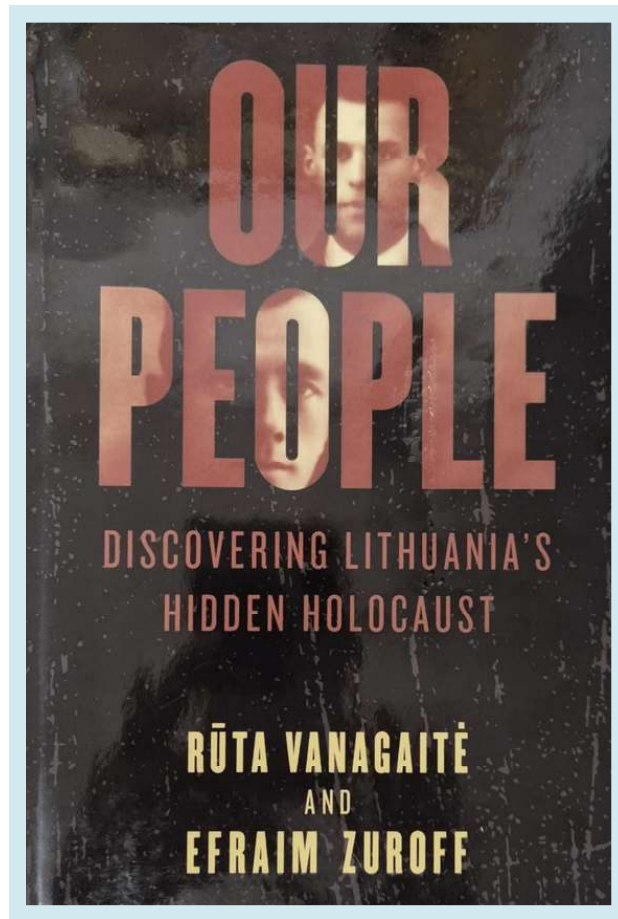
Lastly, I must acknowledge the unwavering support of the Hungarian Faith Church, led by Pastor Sandor Nemeth. Members of the congregation, including Szilvia Dittel and Tibor Pecsí, provided critical assistance, from translating Hungarian documents to standing in solidarity during trials. Their commitment was evident when, during Sandor Kepiro's libel suit against me, students from the Faith Church attended every court session and later when Kepiro was put on trial for his crimes, they gathered in large numbers with placards, ensuring that the truth of his crimes was never forgotten. Witnessing their support firsthand was one of the most moving experiences of my life and reinforced my hope for a future free of anti-Semitism.

As I reflect on these past four decades, I am humbled by the dedication, courage, and generosity of those who stood alongside me in this mission. Their contributions have been essential in our relentless pursuit of justice and in preserving the historical truth of the Holocaust. To each of them, I extend my deepest gratitude and respect.



**Quote from Professor Yehuda Bauer –
"Operation Last Chance"**

"A fascinating book written from the heart. Zuroff knows what he is writing about. He has researched his topic very carefully, and is courageous in fighting all murderers. Whether these people get prison sentences or not, does not matter. Zuroff is doing his best, and the work he does will leave a permanent mark." Yehuda Bauer, Academic Head of the International Task Force on Holocaust Education.



**Quote from Professor Yehuda Bauer –
"Our People; Discovering Lithuania's Hidden
Holocaust"**

"Our People" is an immensely valuable addition to our knowledge about the genocidal murder of Lithuanian Jews. The authors' remarkable investigation has brought to light the active role played by Lithuanian citizens, often with minimal oversight by Nazi occupiers, at hundreds of killing sites. It will serve as a powerful wake-up call for grappling with the complicit legacy of World War II. Yehuda Bauer, Academic Head of the International Task Force on Holocaust Education.



MENACHEM BEGIN
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An Audience with Dr. Efraim Zuroff

A look back on the life and career
of a Nazi-hunter



Thursday 24.4 // Reception 17:45 // Program 18:30



MESSAGE FROM ALEKSANDER NIKOLIC

Four decades of uncompromising struggle to document and preserve the accurate narrative of an unprecedented tragedy of a unique historical event, against all odds. The undertaking assumed by the Simon Wiesenthal Center, the creation of his unique legacy, discovery of precious archival materials and contribution to the struggle not only against Holocaust denial, but also against its distortion – Dr. Efraim Zuroff.

Dr. Zuroff's extensive religious and secular education provided a solid foundation for his painstaking work. From Nazi war criminals and their collaborators hiding in South America and the Middle East, through the post-Soviet period to the legislatures of Anglo-Saxon countries vis-à-vis refugees under false identities and narratives, have been a formidable challenge. Efraim Zuroff exposed himself not only to inconveniences, but also to dangers. He certainly did not compromise with foreign policy needs. Certainly, among the most difficult was dealing with local officials who did not deny the Holocaust, but exclusively attributed the crimes to foreigners, all at a time when Nazi collaborators were being rehabilitated and celebrated in their own countries for “their fight against the occupiers”.

In addition to his complete commitment to historical truth, Efraim Zuroff also possesses a measure of humanity that does not separate victims according to their national or religious affiliation. In the crucial years of his work, when Nazi war criminals and their collaborators were still alive, Serbs were largely still preoccupied with the idea of Yugoslavism, avoiding sensitive inter-ethnic issues from the period of World War II.

The definition of communist Yugoslavia, even though it was not part of the Warsaw Pact, was - victims of fascism. Who, why and by whom? Dr. Zuroff's exalted accomplishment was the extradition and prosecution of Dinko Šakić, a commander of the Jasenovac concentration camp, established and operated by the Independent State of Croatia, a Nazi puppet regime infamous for the brutality of its guards towards Serbs, Jews, Roma, and antifascists of various nationalities.

The extradition and trial of Dinko Šakić, commander of the Jasenovac camp, is an example of the results he achieved, an achievement that forever etched the name of Dr. Efraim Zuroff in the collective memory of Serbs. Not only as an action that was, finally, completely successfully, but also because of the meaning of Jasenovac, the cruelest, genocidal execution ground for Serbs, Jews and Roma, along with anti-fascists of other nations and faiths. The horrors of the Independent State of Croatia, one of the two creations of Nazi Germany during World War II, were covered up in Tito's Yugoslavia, in order to build brotherhood and unity between Serbs and Croats, but also all other peoples of socialist Yugoslavia. Outside the borders of Tito's Yugoslavia, except in groups that specifically dealt with the subject, the Ustasha crimes were completely unknown.

As the transition from avoidance and disinterest in historical events throughout the Independent State of Croatia overnight became not only a field of general interest for Serbs, but in certain cases also the subject of concern for those who are incompetent and have personal promotion as their agenda, Efraim Zuroff's role was that of a beacon. He helped Serbs to protect themselves from themselves.

From a completely clear situation, in which the Serbs were one of the heaviest victims of World War II, through manipulative actions, maliciously barely welcomed by their enemies, they were introduced into a controversy that will relativize the suffering of Jadovno, Prebilovci, Stari Brod, and so on, in a tragic and unfinished list of sites throughout the Independent State of Croatia.

Despite his professional approach, in which there is no room for pathos or emotional interference in multi-disciplinary rational cruelty, Efraim Zuroff, when talking about Ponary, Babi Yar or the Staro Sajmište, would speak with a tear in his eye, his voice trembling. With his entire being, Efraim Zuroff lives for the maximum effect of bringing Nazi murderers to justice, but also for the necessity of fighting against the distortion of the Holocaust. That is his life's mission. Therefore, unfinished projects, like the one about Sándor Képíró, left Ephraim Zuroff with a deep sadness.

Remembering Ženi Lebl (Jenny Lebl), who contributed like no other to the historiography of Yugoslav Jews, herself a survivor of the Holocaust, who stood like a granite rock against all attempts to revise history, where nothing can compensate, let alone console, in the hopelessness of the unique crime in the history of humanity - the Holocaust

Dr. Efraim Zuroff is an example of that action, that it is up to us to do everything, absolutely everything, that is within our power, having a historical responsibility not only towards future generations, but also towards those who were so cruelly liquidated.

The most thoughtful way to end this year's Holocaust and Heroism Remembrance Day at the Menachem Begin Heritage Center in Jerusalem is with an evening dedicated to the achievements of Dr. Efraim Zuroff.

I am privileged to be able to call Efraim Zuroff a friend, and now to wish him good health, quality time with his grandchildren, success for the Hapoel Jerusalem basketball club, and certainly the continuation of the successful sacred work that he has done!

–ALEKSANDAR NIKOLIĆ
Honorary Consul of the Republic of Serbia
to the State of Israel

MESSAGE FROM ALEKSANDAR VUCIC

I was appreciative to learn that a memorial would be held on Holocaust Memorial Day at the Menachem Begin Heritage Centre in Jerusalem, acknowledging the efforts of my friend Dr. Efraim Zuroff over four decades in prosecuting Nazi war criminals and collaborators. His contributions to the objectives and reputation of the Simon Wiesenthal Centre are outstanding.

On this solemn occasion of Holocaust Memorial Day, people will gather to honour a distinguished scholar and a dedicated advocate for truth and justice. Over the past four decades, Dr. Zuroff has profoundly impacted Holocaust research and remembrance, earning recognition for his unwavering commitment to uncovering the horrors of the past.

Dr. Zuroff's dedication extends beyond the Jewish community; his work to reveal the truth about the atrocities committed at Jasenovac serves as a bridge between the Jewish and Serbian experiences during World War II. This shared history of suffering has forged a unique bond between our communities, highlighting the importance of remembrance and solidarity in the face of historical injustices.

In Serbia, we have a particular admiration for Dr. Zuroff, who did not differentiate among the nationalities of the victims of Nazi collaborators that he assisted in bringing to justice. His paramount accomplishment was the extradition and prosecution of Dinko Šakić, a commander of the Jasenovac concentration camp, established and operated by the Independent State of Croatia, a Nazi puppet regime infamous for the brutality of its guards towards Serbs, Jews, Roma, and antifascists of various nationalities. His arrest and subsequent sentence was a significant milestone, being the only successful prosecution of a Nazi collaborator in post-communist Eastern Europe.

Through his tireless efforts, Dr. Zuroff has not only played a crucial role in the documentation of Holocaust history but has also worked diligently to address the crimes suffered by the Serbian people during the war. His passion for truth transcends borders and fear, fostering dialogue and understanding among those who have endured unimaginable losses.

Efraim Zuroff's efforts to maintain the veracity of the historical account of Nazi crimes are demonstrably significant, particularly in Serbia. As a genuine friend of Serbia and a distinguished Holocaust historian, he effectively preserved the accuracy of the historical account on the intricate and somewhat obscure aspects of Serbian suffering during World War II. Dr. Zuroff consistently advocated for the recognition of the Serbs' suffering during the Nazis and has safeguarded the historical truths of that era, a duty sometimes deemed inconvenient on a worldwide scale. His preventative measures, shown by the instance of Albanian Nazi collaborator Xhafer Deva's residence in Kosovska Mitrovica, were consistently prompt, instructive, and effective.

Efraim Zuroff's legacy offered insights into the serious enquiries posed in the book *Götz and Meyer* by David Albahari, a renowned Serbian author of Sephardic descent.

As we reflect on Dr. Zuroff's achievements and the lessons of our past, let us stand together in remembrance, honouring all victims of hatred and violence. May this tribute remind us of our shared responsibility to ensure that the horrors of history are never forgotten and that justice prevails for all communities affected by these dark chapters.



Let us take this moment to express our gratitude to Dr. Efraim Zuroff for his remarkable contributions and to reaffirm our commitment to preserving the memory of those who suffered.

Together, we can ensure that the lessons learned inspire hope for a more just and compassionate future.

–ALEKSANDAR VUČIĆ

President of Serbia

MESSAGE FROM CARLOS FLORES

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LEER LA PUBLICACIÓN (page 36 to 43)

This is the digitalized edition of the magazine where I published in 2004, the case that brought me and Zuroff together and sparked a friendship that has lasted to this day. It's in Spanish, but maybe you can extract some photos. The case involved the Estonian Nazi collaborator, Harry Mannil, responsible for the extermination of all the Jews in Estonia. At the time, he was part of the Watch List.

While Zuroff waged his international public battle, I had to try to corner Mannil , pressure his family for an interview (he had never given one). Afraid that I would only publish what Zuroff had told me about him, they agreed to the interview. I'll never forget that day. Have you ever felt evil, I mean true evil, right in front of you?

I know it sounds crazy. This man only conveyed something... death. Anyway, I'm trying to summarize what was a life-changing experience that led me to ask... what kind of man chooses a life to chase monsters like this one, who almost ended mine? The answer: A hero, a real one, a human one. One of the few human beings I respect.

—CARLOS FLORES

Venezuelan Journalist

The year was 2004. I was about to turn 30. I had published my first book and was working at Exceso, the most prestigious magazine in Venezuela. Something like a Vanity Fair... of the Third World. The magazine's owner was a foul-mouthed man, but from whom I learned a lot. Ben Ami Fihman was Jewish, but we never spoke of it during the years I was there. I was arrogant; an outlaw journalist.

Ben assigned me all the dangerous cases. One morning, he handed me a dossier. He only said one sentence: "This story will change your life. I hope you're ready." I sat down and opened the enormous folder. The man I was investigating was Harry Mannil. I knew who. All the rich people in the country, including that monster named Hugo Chávez, knew him. Mannil was a tycoon, a socialite. His wife belonged to one of the most powerful families in the country. I didn't know what the story was or what I was supposed to do, until I came across a document from the Simon Wiesenthal Center. Harry Mannil, the man who threw the most ostentatious parties in the country... was wanted as a war criminal, a Nazi collaborator, responsible for the extermination of all the Jews... in his own country, Estonia. I ran to Ben's office and asked if it was true.

He didn't answer anything except, "You need to contact Zuroff, the Wiesenthal Center's Nazi Hunter." Oh? A Nazi hunter? A lot of information in a very short time. My problem was this... And it's a widespread problem. Although I've always prided myself on reading everything there is to read, Russian, English, American literature... Honestly, the Holocaust was something I'd seen in movies. Yes, I knew about the Nazi atrocities, but knowing that one of them was living as if nothing had happened in my country was a major insult. And that ignorance, that lack of education... Thinking that the past is past is the great mistake that has led us to a present filled with hatred and terror.

That same day, I spoke on the phone for the first time with Dr. Efraim Zuroff.

We had a long conversation. He explained to me what had happened in Estonia, while I took notes. I never would have imagined that later, after so many years, we would have many memorable conversations.

I didn't sleep that night. I already knew my task: to unmask Harry Mannil in Venezuela (no one knew about his past), to expose him, and my mission was to get an interview with him. I wanted to confront him. Meanwhile, Dr. Zuroff had arranged for his US visa to be revoked, and this had Mannil... let's just say he wasn't happy. Harry Mannil was untouchable; he was a member of the board of the MoMA in New York; a Knight of the Order of Malta, a member of the Trilateral Commission; a National Hero of Estonia. He had friends like Kissinger, although Zuroff was responsible for ending that friendship. He was also the largest collector of pre-Hispanic art in Venezuela (after his death, it was discovered that for years he had run a network of smuggling and selling these priceless works on the black market).

From that day on, Zuroff and I became a team. I told him about my difficult investigation: the Mannil family tried day after day to convince me that their patriarch was innocent. It was frustrating. Helmi, his eldest daughter and something of a spokesperson for the family, was very sweet; she wanted me to believe their story. They called me constantly, only to remind me that "the Jews, especially Zuroff," were only seeking personal fame at the expense of victims like her father. She didn't want her father to give me the interview. In the midst of all this, the pressure, the protection that Hugo Chávez's government had over Mannil, I often asked myself... How is it possible for a man to dedicate his life to this? I spent the worst months dealing with the Mannils. I think Zuroff thought I wouldn't get the interview. And I don't blame him; dealing with and confronting these monsters face to face is so difficult. I simply told Helmi: I'll publish the story with everything Efraim Zuroff told me; his father has the opportunity to tell his version.

They accepted. Efraim was impressed. I remember him saying something like: Prepare to hear lie after lie. I've already gone on too long. I got the interview. It wasn't an interview, it was a duel. That monster had no remorse. Nothing. He was an iceberg. But that's how they all are. They have no remorse. As I left his office, after two hours in front of the most evil human being I've ever had, he said to me: "You're a puppet of the Jews. I'm a hero."

"What do you think an inferior being like you and that Nazi hunter can do against me?" He smiles. "The only thing you don't want us to do: tell everything you did. Let people know about you, mister hero. That's enough."

After the story was published, I was pressured by Mannil's lawyer, by his daughter, by everyone. The commotion was such that Harry Mannil fled Venezuela and took refuge on his ranch in Costa Rica, where he died.

One morning, Efraim called me. "Our enemy is dead," he said.

Finally, I understood Zuroff's struggle. Why he had dedicated his life to something that brings more problems and frustrations than success. And the reason is simple: someone has to do it. To honor the victims, their families. Efraim Zuroff's voice and actions have led him on an odyssey against evil in pursuit of justice. Today, as I feel honored to call myself his friend, I can only refer to Dr. Efraim Zuroff as what he is... a hero. Life has taught me that respect is earned, for I have the utmost respect and admiration for Efraim Zuroff. What I suffered during those months, he has suffered for decades. I don't know another human being with such a level of integrity and dedication, strength and devotion to a cause, the greatest cause of all: honor and justice.

Ben Fihman was right; that report was more than that; it opened my eyes to an issue that no one can or should remain silent about. Meeting Efraim Zuroff changed my life. He is an example to follow. There are so many things I would like to write, but I'll limit myself to the basics: Thank you, Dr. Zuroff. Thank you on behalf of all of us who inhabit this planet. And a heartfelt greeting to the families and descendants of the Holocaust victims, from someone who was not born Jewish... but who feels I am one of you in my heart. Thank you, Dr. Zuroff for doing the right thing.

CARLOS FLORES
(VALENCIA, VENEZUELA, 1975)

He has been editor-in-chief of half a dozen newspapers in Venezuela. He was Country Manager of Newsweek en Espanol and wrote for The Huffington Post, Forbes Latam, Panam Post, Book and Film Globe, and the California Globe. He has been a victim of the dictatorial Chavista regime; he faced two trials for publishing the truth and was tortured. He is currently trying to sell series to streaming platforms to escape the prison that is Venezuela.

MESSAGE FROM STEVE LINDE

Dr. Efraim Zuroff is a good friend, a wise gentleman, and a great historian and scholar, particularly of the Holocaust and antisemitism. When I served as editor of The Jerusalem Report and The Jerusalem Post, he wrote numerous articles, op-eds and book reviews, all of which are still interesting to read. I particularly liked an opinion piece he wrote in January this year, titled "Beware of symbols used by Hamas." In it, he refers to a recent performance of The Nutcracker in Belgrade, in which several members of the cast demonstrated their support for Hamas by showing the audience symbols used by the terrorist organization, in this case gloved hands painted red.

"Such a demonstration exhibits either crass ignorance of the symbols used by Hamas or a totally misplaced sympathy for a vicious terror organization, which committed horrific crimes on October 7th, such as the murder of innocent civilians, sexually assaulting dozens of Israeli women and girls, and burning alive civilian men, women and children," he wrote.

A real hero who for decades served as a Nazi hunter for the Simon Wiesenthal Center, Zuroff is never afraid to stand up and speak (or write) the truth, eloquently and persuasively in his signature New York Jewish accent and style. I join his other friends and supporters in wishing him well! May he continue until 120!

Best wishes,

-STEVE LINDE
JNS Features Editor

MESSAGE FROM KAREN POLLOCK

Dr Efraim Zuroff is an incredible activist, an inspirational speaker, and is absolutely dedicated to the fight for justice for the 6 million Jewish men, women and children murdered in the Holocaust. He has helped to shape how the Holocaust is thought about and talked about, and in exposing the truth of the crimes of the Holocaust has helped to ensure that its victims will always be remembered.

Efraim worked tirelessly alongside colleagues in the UK to try to ensure that war criminals who settled here after the war knew that the UK would not be a safe haven. He has spoken to British school students and teachers during their visits to Yad Vashem and has come to the UK to give lectures, opening the eyes of British people to the appalling way that war criminals were able to escape justice. His passion and absolute conviction in his work is palpable and I know that every time he speaks his audience leaves not only more informed, but also more inspired to learn more and to speak out about the need for justice for victims of the Holocaust.

Efraim has dedicated his life to his mission. He is a galvanising force, encouraging us all to keep working to ensure that the horrors of the past are never forgotten; that the perpetrators are never allowed to rest easy; and that the victims of the Nazis and their collaborators are always remembered. Thank you Efraim for your lifetime's work. Its impact has been – and continues to be – immeasurable.

With best wishes,

–KAREN POLLOCK

**Chief Executive
Holocaust Educational Trust**



MESSAGE FROM MARTON ROSTA

The "Cold Days"—this is how history and Hungarian public opinion remember the massacre in Novi Sad, then part of historical Hungary (now in Serbia), in January 1942. Ostensibly, the raid began as an effort to suppress partisan resistance. However, after recapturing the area in the spring of 1941, Hungarian occupational authorities and military units launched attacks throughout the region, committing ethnically motivated mass murder in Bačka (Novi Sad and its surroundings). During the raid, approximately 3,300 to 3,800 civilians were killed—primarily Serbs and Jews, but also Hungarians.

Dr. Sándor Képíró, born in 1914, was originally a lawyer. He participated in the Novi Sad raid as a gendarmerie instructor officer (a captain). After the war, Képíró settled in Argentina but returned to Budapest in 1996. The Simon Wiesenthal Center—where Sándor Képíró was ranked third on a list of suspected war criminals—became aware of his whereabouts and filed a complaint with the Hungarian judiciary. At the request of Dr. Efraim Zuroff, I became involved in the case as a lawyer and legal representative of the Federation of Hungarian Jewish Communities, as well as a third-generation Holocaust survivor.

The legal proceedings had two key aspects:

- The Hungarian prosecutor's office charged Képíró with war crimes, in which I represented the Simon Wiesenthal Center as an advocate for the victims.
- Képíró, in turn, filed a defamation lawsuit against Dr. Zuroff personally, after the director of the Simon Wiesenthal Center referred to him as a war criminal in the Hungarian press.

The legal proceedings concluded with the following results:

- In the first instance, the judge acquitted Dr. Efraim Zuroff of defamation. According to the ruling, regardless of the outcome of the criminal case against Képíró, Dr. Zuroff had the right to express his opinion. The judge added, "Zuroff's goal was clearly to uncover the truth."
- In the summer of 2011, the Military Court of the Metropolitan Court of Budapest acquitted Sándor Képíró of war crimes due to a lack of evidence in the first instance. The prosecution appealed the acquittal, while Képíró appealed the defamation ruling.
- However, before a final decision could be reached, Sándor Képíró passed away on September 3, 2011. As a result, both legal proceedings were terminated without a definitive ruling, leaving the final judgment to history.

During this time, I hope that Efraim Zuroff and I developed a mutual and genuine friendship. Our lengthy consultations left a lasting impression on me, as I came to see him as a dedicated historian determined to uncover the full truth of Nazi crimes and bring all responsible parties to justice. I am very proud of having worked with him.

-DR. MÁRTON ROSTA

Advocate representing Dr. Zuroff and the Simon Wiesenthal Center in the Libel Trial in Hungary

MESSAGE FROM MARK AARONS

Thank you so much for the opportunity to add my puny accolades to the many who will be sending their congratulations to Efraim on the occasion of this well-deserved Tribute, recognizing a lifetime spent in the pursuit of justice - or at the very least - historical truth.

On this latter point please tell him that as an investigative reporter I always thought my job was to expose the facts and then leave justice to others. But the experience of the SIU also made me acutely aware of the need to at least attempt justice, however unsatisfactory it might turn out to be.

In the end, however, the truth counts - perhaps even more so - and he has put it out there big time!!!!

I attach my contribution which I tried very hard to keep within your guideline but perhaps I've failed? If so please let me know ASAP and I'll try to make it shorter, even though it's way too short at this length!

Warmest wishes to you and, of course, to the man of the hour.

Mark



Tribute to Efraim Zuroff

If I had only one word to describe Efraim it would be 'indefatigable'. Through Operation Last Chance he almost singlehandedly kept alive the fight for justice for the perpetrators of Nazi genocide.

I have just finished the final editing of a history of the Special Investigations Unit. Created by Prime Minister Bob Hawke in 1987 in the wake of my five-part radio series *Nazis in Australia*, the SIU investigated over 800 cases of alleged war criminals, many of whom had actively participated in the Nazis' genocide of European Jewry. Three were charged under the War Crimes Act 1988.

While none was convicted the Unit did extraordinary work until betrayed by Hawke's successor, Paul Keating, who abandoned the search for justice in 1992. This left the SIU's most important case unresolved: Karlis Ozols, a senior member of the Latvian Arajs Kommando had the blood of thousands on his hands but the powerful case against him never saw the light of day. Efraim actively assisted the SIU, supplying numerous lists of suspects. He joined the chorus of outrage at Australia's abandonment of justice, criticising the politicians who had 'closed down the Special Investigations Unit ... long before it should have'.

Despite the indifference of both left and right-wing governments, however, he continued his campaign to force Australia to bring to justice at least some of the numerous war criminals living here. Efraim gave us our very own 'last chance'. In 2004 he discovered Károly (Charles) Zentai living in Perth, Western Australia, and persuaded the Hungarian government to request his extradition on a murder charge.

Zentai's extradition was initially ordered but eventually the High Court overturned its earlier decision. Efraim commented that this 'marked the end of the Australian effort to bring Holocaust perpetrators to justice, which can be categorized as a total failure ... since the Australian judiciary failed to take successful legal action against a single Nazi war criminal'.

It is a stain on our reputation, effectively making Australia a pariah among our closest Western allies: America, Canada and Britain have all succeeded where Australia simply caved in.

But this tragic outcome was not for want of Efraim Zuroff's indefatigable efforts.

—MARK AARONS

Journalist



MESSAGE FROM DR. STEFAN KLEMP

When I wanted to start working for the Simon Wiesenthal Center in 1998 I did not know that it was based in Jerusalem. So I called the Dokumentationszentrum of Simon Wiesenthal at Vienna and spoke to him. He explained to me that I should talk to Efraim Zuroff. From an article in Der Spiegel I had learned that the Wiesenthal Center that was going to co-operate with the German Labor Ministry in a certain project is based in Jerusalem.

With an idea for the implementation I called Efraim to apply for a job. Thanks to Efraim the application was successful. It was the beginning of a 15 years co-operation. Our common project: The new German War Victim's Assistance act was going to achieve justice by cancellations of war disability benefits for people who violated the norms of humanity during the Third Reich. We closely worked together, shared thoughts and opinions and traveled together across Germany to attend trials against Nazi Criminals or to discuss the war pensions matters. It was not only productive but also successful.

We made history alive though compelling stories. This is how people can be interested in history today. Powerful stories arouse interest. That is how we worked together as historians and that is one reason why we enjoyed working together very much. The project ended in 2013. Teaching history and preserving historical truth is our task for the future.

–DR. STEFAN KLEMP

**German Historian of the Nazi era
Worked with Efraim for more than a decade**



Buenos Aires in 2007 at the house of the Justice Minister of Argentina.
(Rather in the garden)



Holocaust Museum, Buenos Aires, 2007



Me and Efraim in 2003 with the director of the Zentrale Stelle of Ludwigsburg, Kurt Schrimm in the middle. (After a meeting)



During a visit of the Villa ten Hompel at Muenster with the director of the villa, Christoph Spieker, right, during a visit of the exhibition at the Villa

MESSAGE FROM DAVID SCHONBERG

I had the privilege of being involved with Efraim in certain initiatives, one that was particularly memorable was the pursuit - trying to bring about the extradition to Holland (or trial in Germany) of a convicted Dutch Nazi war criminal (Klaas Carel Faber) who had fled prison from Holland to Germany- and had lived unnoticed for decades in Germany. Working with Efraim was an experience - continuous ideas, plans, media, contacts- and a learning experience. A holocaust scholar, who, in his work seeks not only to research and uncover the history of events but also, pursues whatever justice & redress can remain, in the face of such unfathomable evil of the holocaust and its perpetrators.

Since then (and before) I have appreciated his friendship, his learning and especially his outlook- he stands up for the Jewish people, a scholar-fighter, leading Nazi-hunter, a scholar at the forefront of Holocaust research and a prolific writer on our post Holocaust world: on antisemitism, Holocaust denial and distortion, and the blight of moral equivalence. With a lifetime of devotion to fighting these battles that we face even more acutely perhaps in recent times while the Holocaust fades into history and living witnesses are ever fewer, Efraim is a true Jewish hero of our people.

-DAVID SCHONBERG,
Advocate, Jerusalem

MESSAGE FROM ELI ROSENBAUM

I first encountered Efraim Zuroff in 1978, when I was a student at Harvard Law School (HLS) and he was a young professional working out of the Los Angeles headquarters of the Simon Wiesenthal Center (SWC), an organization that was just a year old at the time. At HLS, I had launched and was leading an effort that secured the signatures of hundreds of American law professors imploring the West German legislature to block the impending running of the statute of limitations on prosecuting Nazi murderers.

Effie (as I and so many others came to know him), was helping to direct the SWC's own efforts to persuade (read: embarrass) German legislators into acting to preserve German prosecutors' ability to charge Nazi perpetrators (though, in truth, there was scandalously little interest among them to bring Nazi cases). In those pre-internet days, our transcontinental interactions occurred solely by telephone.

From the time of our earliest phone conversations, I was struck by Effie's deep passion for justice and especially for avenging through legal processes the deaths of the six million Jewish victims of the Hitler regime. Ultimately, West Germany's statute of limitations was abolished, a result that, I believe, represented the first victory in securing a measure of justice for victims of the Shoah in which either of us played a role. It paved the way for the ensuing decades of our collaboration.

In 1980, upon graduating from law school, I joined the U.S. Justice Department's fledgling Office of Special Investigations (OSI), which had been created the previous year to identify, investigate, and take legal action in U.S. courts against Nazi criminals who had found refuge in the United States – a law enforcement program that ultimately became, by far, the most successful one of its kind in the world.

Effie was living by then in Jerusalem and OSI hired him for several years to conduct investigative research at Yad Vashem. In that capacity, he made important contributions to our work, especially in locating relevant survivor testimonies.

I finally met him in person in January 1982, during my first official visit to Israel as a prosecutor. Two colleagues and I spent several weeks at the Israel Police war crimes unit, in Jaffo, where each of us interviewed multiple survivors each day. Reliving the horrors that they had somehow endured was, of course, a deeply painful experience for these brave survivors, and we were very fortunate that Effie accompanied some of them and even interpreted for them, marshaling his deep compassion and his vast knowledge to help the survivors get through those difficult sessions. For this in particular, I will always be abidingly grateful.

Over the ensuing decades, Effie became a truly indefatigable pursuer of Nazi criminals, identifying suspects in numerous countries and, in particular, tirelessly pressing the often disinterested (or worse!) governments of those countries to investigate and prosecute. He weathered all manner of hateful propaganda, emanating from east European officials in particular, but he never, ever gave up. He soon became the worldwide face of the Wiesenthal Center's efforts to bring Nazi criminals to justice – the mission that was surely the top priority of most of their supporters and benefactors but on which Effie was actually the sole person doing the work full-time.

Effie traveled extensively in pursuit of justice, including to countries, such as the Baltic states, in which he was made to feel decidedly unwelcome not least because, through careful research and targeted media engagements, he cast a disquieting spotlight on the role that many of their nationals played in helping to carry out the Nazi regime's genocidal designs on their Jewish fellow citizens.

Effie was particularly vigorous in fighting ugly efforts in those and some other former republics of the USSR to “equate” Soviet oppression of their peoples (with the participation, they pointedly emphasized, of some Jewish Soviet officials) to what the Nazis and their collaborators had done to the Jews.

I will always cherish the memory of partnering with Effie on various important projects, especially after I became OSI's Director in 1995 – most notably the Aleksandras Lileikis case, in which he helped ensure that a Massachusetts resident whom OSI had proved in U.S. federal court shared responsibility for the deaths of some 50,000 Lithuanian Jews in the area of Vilnius (Vilna), actually ended up in post-Soviet Lithuania and stood trial there.

Dr. Efraim Zuroff's noble life's work has inspired countless people around the world and merits both praise and thanks. I am delighted to be able to participate in this assembling of encomiums for my good friend of so many years!

–ELI M. ROSENBAUM

**Former Director
Office of Special Investigations
US Justice Department**



MESSAGE FROM ANTHONY HUBBARD

I first spoke with Efraim Zuroff in early 1990. I was interested as a Kiwi journalist in rumours that he was preparing a list of Nazi war criminals who had escaped to New Zealand after the war. In that phone call, Efraim came across as both combative and cautious. Combative (perhaps by nature - he was a New Yorker!); Nazi-hunters have a heartbreakingly hard task and never get anywhere unless they are ready to fight. But also cautious. He confirmed that he was preparing a list to send to the New Zealand government but refused to give me the names.

During many intense conversations in the following years I learned just how hard his job was. Very few New Zealand politicians were interested in pursuing old Nazis. There were no votes in the issue. Most New Zealanders were indifferent or hostile. "Why bother about old men?" Efraim's answer, expressed more or less colourfully according to circumstances, was: "Because of what they did when they were young men."

New Zealand did appoint two policemen to investigate the list, which grew over the years to 46 names. The cop who did the main work, Wayne Stringer, was an outspoken supporter of Efraim's campaign. Efraim also became less cautious about sharing his information with a journalist: in time we became friends. But the inquiry ended in tears.

The main suspect, Jonas Pukas of Auckland, had belonged to the notorious 12th Lithuanian Police Battalion, which massacred tens of thousands of Jews in Lithuania and Belorussia. Pukas said Jews "screamed like geese" as they were murdered - but claimed he had only heard about this, not witnessed it or taken part in it.

The battalion is one of the best-documented murder squads of the war, but no witnesses could be found to testify against Jonas Pukas. The New Zealand government was clearly relieved to be told by officials that no prosecution was likely to succeed.

Efraim said that New Zealand, by “simply walking away from the issue, insulted the victims, their families and those who sacrificed their lives to defeat the Third Reich.” The government could have expelled Pukas for lying at the time he was allowed into New Zealand about his membership of a Nazi death squad. But this option was never seriously discussed by the politicians. I agree with Efraim. New Zealand walked away from its duty.

Far-right nationalists now rule in the United States, Russia, India and many other countries, including Israel; a new kind of fascism is on the march. Perhaps that will help us appreciate the grandeur and the urgency of Efraim Zuroff’s fight to bring old Nazi killers to justice.

—ANTHONY HUBBARD

New Zealand Journalist



MESSAGE FROM ARYEH RUBIN

Tribute to Dr. Efraim Zuroff

I am honored to be part of this tribute to Dr. Efraim Zuroff, recognizing his lifetime of dedication to the Jewish people, his relentless pursuit of justice, his efforts in hunting Nazis worldwide, and his unwavering commitment to combatting antisemitism in Europe.

I have known Efraim for over half a century, We first met at Yeshiva University when I was a sophomore and he was a senior. Our paths crossed again in 1979-80 when Jewish Living published an article about his journey to the death sites with students from California. During a visit to Los Angeles, we had dinner at the Milky Way, Steven Spielberg's mother's restaurant. It was then that I realized Efraim would make a significant contribution to our people. His dedication to the cause was palpable, even if I didn't know where, when or how.

In the early 90's, while I was in business in New York, Efraim and I began working on projects together. Initially, it was a letter-writing campaign, but soon I accompanied Efraim to Iceland and Costa Rica in pursuit of notorious Nazis. Moved by his dedication, I proposed funding an initiative to bring more Nazis to justice with significant publicity. Effie named the project Operation Last Chance. He directed it, developed a website, strategized and used his connections to launch the hunt. I accompanied him to 11 countries in Europe, where we announced Operation Last Chance, seeking leads and offering a \$10,000 reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of individuals involved in the murder of Jews. I observed firsthand his unwavering commitment, integrity and single-minded focus. Effie has authored numerous books, written hundreds of articles and columns and given thousands of interviews, all aimed at bringing justice to the Jewish people.

Despite many obstacles, including limited budgets, organizational red tape, government opposition and a small staff, his leadership was visionary. He charmed, cajoled and, when necessary, bullied his way forward to get the job done. He was selfless. Other than his family and perhaps his obsession with professional basketball, he was completely dedicated to the cause.

He lived, breathed and focused his entire life on ensuring that what happened in his parents' lifetime would not happen in his descendants' lifetime. He met with dignitaries, presidents, prime ministers and the common man, treating all with the same direct interaction and no-nonsense approach. They knew where they stood with Effie, which I believe accounted for much of his success.

His impact was felt worldwide, both in the Jewish and non-Jewish communities. I witnessed this personally. Effie, through a series of interviews and meetings with the leadership of a country in transition, was responsible for giving Croatia a conscience and a sense of historical responsibility. Croatia developed on a different path due to his vision and moral leadership.

On behalf of the Jewish people worldwide, the survivors moved by your actions to bring justice to their murdered families and future generations, I thank you for your service and dedication to the Jewish people. We wish you a well-deserved retirement, a long life with good health and may you continue to contribute to the well-being of the house of Israel in your remaining years.

I will close with a quote by Simon Wiesenthal that Effie often mentioned in lectures and interviews.



When asked why he continued his work instead of pursuing a career as an architect, Wiesenthal responded, "When we come to the other world and meet the millions of Jews who died in the camps and they ask us, 'What have you done?', there will be many answers. One will say, 'I became a jeweler'.

Another will say, 'I smuggled coffee and American cigarettes. 'Another will say, 'I built houses' But I will say, 'I didn't forget you'.

Effie you did not forget either!

Your legacy will live on and inspire the next generation to continue the fight against antisemitism, another Holocaust and another October 7th.

–ARYEH RUBIN

Found and Director of the Targum Shlishi Foundation

MESSAGE FROM STJEPAN MESIC'

Sometime early in the second year of my presidential term, my foreign policy advisor, Tomislav Jakić, reported to me that he had spoken with the director of the Simon Wiesenthal Center in Jerusalem, Efraim Zuroff. Zuroff had never wanted to meet with my predecessor, President Tuđman, reproaching him for his insufficient level of sensitivity when it came to relativizing the very character of the quisling Independent State of Croatia, as well as the even greater crimes committed by the Ustashas.

Now, however, advisor Jakić conveyed to me Mr. Zuroff's wish to meet with me and to openly discuss what disturbed me and him the most. At that time, I embarked on an action to restore anti-fascism to the place it belonged to in Croatian history. I was opposed to the fact that the younger generations were not given a full insight into the facts from school textbooks, and indeed that they were served the "processed" truth, which I did not hesitate to call the grossest historical falsifications. I concluded that Mr. Zuroff had received some information that told him that Croatia, under my leadership, was slowly but steadily changing its political course and that it was trying to return to the fold of those countries that had not only verbally but also actually embraced anti-fascism as one of the fundamental values embedded in their foundations.

My first conversation with Mr. Zuroff went exactly as I had expected. We spoke openly, amicably, but never losing sight of the ultimate goal, which is the reaffirmation of anti-fascism with a persistent effort to bring to justice the increasingly few living Nazi criminals. In certain cases, Mr. Zuroff's activity also concentrated on some criminals from the Second World War in Croatia. Needless to say, in such cases my office was ready to cooperate with Mr. Zuroff to the maximum.

Since those early days in 2002, I have met with Efraim Zuroff several times, both in Croatia and in Israel. We have repeatedly returned to the topic of the ever-present historical revisionism and the need to spare the younger generations from manipulation that would ultimately result in a completely distorted picture of the Second World War, a picture that I used to call the transformation of historical losers and criminals into patriots while simultaneously demoting anti-fascist fighters to the level of criminals and those who did not bring freedom to Croatia in 1945, but occupation.

It seems to me that it is particularly important today for the Simon Wiesenthal Center to continue its activities, because - while it is true that the number of living Nazi criminals from the Second World War is decreasing - we are faced with a world in which the need for a ruthless fight against crimes and those under whose auspices they are carried out is increasing.

As an institution that has the slogan Never Again! written on its flag, with the additional message that no criminal should go unpunished, the Simon Wiesenthal Center is more needed today than ever before.

-STJEPAN MESIĆ

President of the Republic of Croatia 2000-2010.



MESSAGE FROM TOMISLAV JAKIC'

I came across the name Efraim Zuroff in the mid-1990s. At the time, I was the PR of the Civic committee for Human Rights, and Zuroff came to visit Croatia to see for himself how strong the tradition of anti-fascism still was. I must remind you that this was the period after the almost ten-year rule of the first Croatian president, Franjo Tuđman, who - partly out of calculation and partly by succumbing to nationalism - opened the door to the quiet, and then no longer just the quiet, rehabilitation of that Croatia that stood on the wrong side of history during World War II.

Zuroff came to Croatia after a stay in several Baltic countries and was appalled by what he saw in those countries, and at the same time delighted by the fact that in Croatia, despite the aforementioned rehabilitation of the Ustasha of the Independent State of Croatia, there were still forces alive and present that resisted historical revisionism and worked to ensure that anti-fascism was given the place it deserved on the social scene of an Croatian state.

In the moments when I was talking to Zuroff, I recalled my journalistic days when, in the mid-1970s, I interviewed the world-famous "Nazi hunter" Simon Wiesentahl in his Vienna office. He spoke to me about the need for the crimes of Nazi-fascism to never be forgotten, as well as the need, which was still not understood equally in some countries, for Nazi war criminals to be brought to justice. In those moments, I was led to Wiesentahl by the realization that historical revisionism was once again raising its head and that double standards were not so rarely applied to Nazi war criminals. During the time of Yugoslavia, when I worked as a journalist on Television Zagreb, broadcasting an interview with Wiesentahl was in a way opening a window to the world beyond the borders of the existing state.

In Yugoslavia, historical revisionism with the exception of a certain “dressing up” of the victorious side in World War II, had no chance. We thought about it, and sometimes even talked about it, with our eyes fixed on other countries.

Many years later, I watched the recording of that interview with Wiesenthal and concluded that much of what seemed distant and unattainable at the time had in the meantime become present in the society we live in. Given the circumstances that prevailed in Croatia in the mid-1990s, I began to follow with particular interest the work of the Jerusalem center Simon Wiesenthal, led by Efraim Zuroff. We established contact then, which has not been interrupted to this day. Occasionally, I would draw Zuroff’s attention to some phenomena that were also recorded by the Croatian media, and which gave a lot of reason to be concerned about the general state of society. In doing so, I have in mind the education system, the media, but also to the statements of not-so-insignificant politicians, all of which could be classified in the common category of “rewriting history.”

In the period from 2001 to 2010, when I was the foreign policy advisor to the then Croatian President Stjepan Mesić, my contacts with Efraim Zuroff became even closer in the context of President Mesić's proclaimed policy in which anti-fascism occupied a prominent place. After all, Zuroff himself wrote about this in his book *Operation Last Chance* (2008).

I believed, and increasingly I still believe, that the work of the Jerusalem Simon Wiesenthal Center, headed by Efraim Zuroff, is the last barrier to the increasingly aggressive outbreak of historical revisionism, the relativization of the crimes of Nazi-fascism in a world in which not all established principles on which international relations were based have been definitively disrupted. The Simon Wiesenthal Center and Efraim Zuroff are the last and insurmountable barrier that prevents the world from being ruled by a huge lie that will push historical truth out of the minds of younger generations.

–TOMISLAV JAKIĆ

**Advisor for Foreign Affairs to President Stjepan Mesić
President of the Republic of Croatia 2000–2010.**

MESSAGE FROM SZILVIA PETO-DITTEL

In the fall of 2004, I first met Efraim Zuroff at a teacher training seminar for educators from Hungary at Yad Vashem. I was already familiar with the life and mission of Simon Wiesenthal, having read his book "Sunflower" and watched the film "Murderers Among Us" about his life. Wiesenthal's story left a profound impact on my thinking and personal development, and I eagerly anticipated hearing from his spiritual and professional successor.

As I was also tasked with interviewing Dr. Zuroff for the news weekly of Faith Church Hungary (the biggest Christian-Zionist church in the country) we had the opportunity to converse, marking the beginning of an extraordinary journey. Who could have imagined where this meeting would lead over the next 20 years? The connection endured, and with a few Nazi war criminals identified and investigated in Hungary (as part of Operation Last Chance), I was privileged to assist him with the practicalities of these cases (mainly of the two most significant ones, that of Charles Zentai and Sándor Képíró.)

Even though in the end none of the cases ended in de facto legal success (due to acquittal, death, etc.) in many ways Operation Last Chance was more than successful in Hungary, and for me personally. The two high-profile cases have contributed to Zuroff's mission to preserve the memory of the victims, to carry it forward in Hungary. It was also good to know and see that certain crimes cannot be committed without consequences. Even if not legal, but certainly with moral and spiritual consequences for the perpetrators and their families when these cases were made public. The Jewish community in Hungary and their supporters must have realized that the passage of time alone is not a cure-all. There are cases that need to be brought to light, justice needs to be served, even after all this time, for the cure to take effect.



It is a matter of infinite sadness that now, in 2025, standing up for the Jewish cause has once again become more important than ever, and without role models like Efraim, it would be much more difficult to do so today. His personal commitment, passion, sense of justice and tireless, unstinting dedication to his calling can only be described in one word: exemplary.

Finally, let me also talk about the personal impact of this unique acquaintance. As Efraim describes how he was personally inspired in his work, in his mission, by Professor Yehuda Bauer, and later by Simon Wiesenthal and Rabbi Marvin Hier, I think that is exactly how Efraim passed on this "fire" not only to me personally, but to so many others. My greatest wish as a teacher, as an educator, is to be able to pass on this fire to others in my lifetime, so that not only the memory of the victims of the Holocaust will remain alive as long as it depends on us, but also the fire that must always burn to make the world a brighter place. But it would be unfair to single out Efraim's example only in the professional field: his person is at least as much a treasure in human, family and friendly terms: his intelligence, humor, values, sincerity and authenticity are quite unparalleled. To sum up, I feel very fortunate to have had the privilege of calling him a close friend and I wish that in his post-retirement phase he may continue to be at least as much of a blessing to his close circle and to all of us! Mazl tov bis 120! God bless you, dear dear Effie!

–SZILVIA PETŐ–DITTEL

Hungarian Holocaust Educator

MESSAGE FROM THOMAS WALTHER

Textvorschlag für Ehrung von Efraim Zuroff

Es ist an der Zeit, über einen Mann zu sprechen, mit dem ich sehr oft im Verlauf von mehr als 15 nach der Anklage der Staatsanwaltschaft München gegen John Demjanjuk aus dem Jahr 2009 Jahren gesprochen habe.

Über Shoa und Holocaust haben wir als umfassendes Vernichtungsereignis niemals gesprochen. Oder wir haben ausschließlich davon und über nichts anderes gesprochen?

Können wir denn überhaupt mit Worten erklären, was da von Menschenhand geschah?

Oder trifft mein Empfinden zu, dass es keine Worte in keiner Sprache der Welt gibt, um mit Worten - oder mit einem einzigen Wort – das Geschehen zu erfassen?

Wir sprachen immer wieder über vor deutschen Gerichten angeklagten zu Greisen mutierten SS-Männer, die in den einer Wortfindung sich entziehenden Gesamtereignissen, „als SS-Männer vorwärtstrieben, Juden ins Gas; die ihre Peitschen schwangen, Juden in den Steinbruch; die mit der Faust Gesichter blutig schlugen, weil Juden zur Ehrerbietung die Kappe nicht vom Kopf rissen.“

Wir sprachen über Angeklagte, die nicht sprachen, nicht erinnerten und dennoch dem Juden als Zeugen im Gericht mit leerem Blick aufmerksam folgten, als sie im Birkenwäldchen am Krematorium wegen Andrang auf den Tod warteten.

Wir sprachen nie darüber, warum in keiner Sprache der Welt es ein Wort für das Ganze gibt und wir nur als „pars pro toto“ über Abspaltungen reden müssen, um uns gegenseitig bestärken zu können.



Photo with THOMAS WALTHER

standing from left to right

i) Dr. Efraim Zuroff ii) Emil Farkas, Holocaust survivor who testified in the trial of an S.S. guard who served in Sachsenhausen concentration camp. iii) Felix Klein, German Commissioner for Jewish life and the fight against antisemitism. iv) Thomas Walther, Adv. - attorney representing the Holocaust survivors and, together with Kirsten Goetze, convinced the German government to change its prosecution policy for Nazi war criminals.

Ich bin zutiefst davon überzeugt, dass vor einem deutschen Gericht allein Überlebende mit den Worten aus ihrem Erleben die Überzeugung vermitteln können, dass der Entschluss im Januar 1942 auf der Wannseekonferenz ein ganzes Volk und auch die Erinnerung an dieses Volk zu vernichten, mit allen Kräften umgesetzt wurde.

Efraim Zuroff hat mir in Israel und aller Welt für die verschiedenen Orte der Vernichtung die Kontakte zu Überlebenden vermittelt, die es ermöglichten das Maß an Empfinden und Verständnis für die Ereignisse in Auschwitz, Stutthof, Sachsenhausen und anderen Lagern bei den beteiligten Richtern zu wecken, um die detaillierten Momente der Überlebenden am Rande des Todes zu dem „Gesamtereignis“ werden zu lassen, für das mir inzwischen das einzig passende Wort fehlt. Die Inflation des Missbrauchs von „Holocaust“ und „Shoa“ in den Machtkämpfen auf nahezu allen Bühnen veröffentlichter Meinungen lassen mich in meinen Gedanken an Auschwitz hilflos zurück.

Es ist Zeit, Efraim aus tiefstem Herzen zu danken. Dieser Dank an Efraim ist ein sehr unvollkommenes Wort für mein Empfinden gegenüber einem eminent wichtigen Mann auf dem Weg zu später Gerechtigkeit, der mir zum guten Freund wurde.

Text translation for the honor of Efraim Zuroff

It is time to talk about a man I have spoken to very often over the course of more than 15 years since the Munich public prosecutor's indictment of John Demjanjuk in 2009.

We have never spoken about Shoa and the Holocaust as a comprehensive event of annihilation. Or did we only talk about that and nothing else?

Can we even explain in words what was done by human hands?

Or am I right in thinking that there are no words in any language in the world with which we can grasp in words – or in a single word – what happened?

We repeatedly spoke about the SS men who had been accused before German courts and who had mutated into old men, who, in the overall events that defy description, "as SS men, drove Jews forward into the gas; who swung their whips, Jews into the quarry; who beat faces bloody with their fists because Jews did not remove their caps out of respect."

We talked about defendants who did not speak, did not remember, and yet followed the Jew as a witness in court with a blank look on their face as they waited for death in the birch grove at the crematorium.

We never talked about why there is no word in any language in the world for the whole and we can only talk about divisions as "pars pro toto" in order to strengthen each other.

I am deeply convinced that only survivors who appear before a German court and speak of their experiences can convey the conviction that the decision taken at the Wannsee Conference in January 1942 to destroy an entire nation and the memory of that nation was implemented with all available means.

Efraim Zuroff put me in touch with survivors in Israel and all over the world for the various places of extermination, which made it possible to awaken the level of feeling and understanding for the events in Auschwitz, Stutthof, Sachsenhausen and other camps in the participating judges, in order to let the detailed moments of the survivors on the brink of death become the "overall event" for which I now lack the only appropriate word.

The inflation of the misuse of "Holocaust" and "Shoa" in the power struggles on almost all stages of published opinions leave me helpless in my thoughts of Auschwitz.

It is time to thank Efraim from the bottom of my heart. These words of thanks to Efraim are a very imperfect expression of my feelings towards an eminently important man on the road to belated justice, who has become a good friend of mine.

–THOMAS WALTHER

**Former Judge (Richter außer Dienst), Advocate (Rechtsanwalt im
Ruhestand) and German Federal Prosecutor in the German
Central Office for the clarification of Nazi War Crimes**

MESSAGE FROM SERGIO WIDDER

Dr. Efraim Zuroff embodies Menachem Begin's famous stance on refusing to be a Jew with trembling knees. For nearly 50 years, he has dedicated his life to bringing notorious Nazi war criminals to justice, while also confronting governments with the uncomfortable truths about their countries' roles during the Holocaust.

His tireless work uncovered the postwar escape routes used by thousands of suspected Nazi war criminals, enabling the prosecution of many perpetrators of the Holocaust. By following in the footsteps of Simon Wiesenthal, Zuroff has brought comfort and reparation to countless victims who endured unimaginable atrocities.

A major milestone in his career was his pivotal role in the exposure, arrest, extradition, and prosecution of Dinko Sakic, the former commandant of the Croatian concentration camp Jasenovac, known as the "Auschwitz of the Balkans." Sakic's trial was the first of its kind in a post-Communist country.

Zuroff's persistence has been unwavering, guided by a simple truth: giving up is not an option. His "Operation Last Chance" initiative has been a final, relentless effort to bring to court those who had evaded justice for decades.

In 2007 and 2008, I had the privilege of working closely with Dr. Zuroff during the launch and immediate follow-up of "Operation Last Chance" in four South American countries—Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and Uruguay. During this time, he was tracking down the infamous Nazi criminal Aribert Heim. Although Heim was never found, Zuroff's efforts shone a light on the role these countries played as safe havens for Nazi refugees, including notorious war criminals like Adolf Eichmann and Josef Mengele.

I have known Efraim for over three decades, dating back to my tenure as Director for Latin America at the Simon Wiesenthal Center from 1992 to 2015. During this time, I had the privilege of collaborating with him and witnessing firsthand many of his significant achievements on behalf of the Jewish people. Today, I am honored that our relationship has evolved beyond colleagues to a lasting friendship.



It is a privilege to contribute to this tribute to Dr. Efraim Zuroff, recognizing his exceptional efforts and tireless dedication to securing justice for the victims of Nazi crimes. I do not doubt that he will continue to live up to his steadfast commitment to restore and preserve the dignity of the Jewish people.

–SERGIO WIDDER M.A.

**Regional Director, JOINT Distribution Committee,
Latin & South America**

MESSAGE FROM ARNOLD KARSKENS

Dear friend Efraim,

Together we walked across the grounds of Durchgangslager Westerbork in the eastern Netherlands in September 2011. At this concentration camp, more than 100,000 Dutch Jews were put on a train to their extermination, and there the Dutch SS officer Klaas Carel Faber was part of an execution squad.

It was a beautiful summer day and his victims' family members were walking around us. They came to you with their last hope for justice. That month, Faber's name was number 1 on your SWC-list of Most Wanted fugitive war criminals from World War II. Gestapo-man Klaas Carel Faber was notorious for his participation in dozens of murders and tortures in SD-Aussenstelle Groningen. Sentenced to life imprisonment, Faber escaped to West-Germany in December 1952.

It was due to your support that Faber's (1922-2012) last years were unpleasant. It was that same support that put pressure on the German authorities to finally take action. You helped by personally addressing Dutch politicians in The Hague, writing letters of support and giving the victims their well-deserved attention.

You helped in the trial of SS officer Heinrich Boere (1921-2013), who was sentenced to life imprisonment in March 2010. While the Dutch and German authorities had not given priority to the prosecution of the greatest criminals in human history, you continued to fight tirelessly for justice. I was happy to help you. It made me feel good when you told me that you were not approached with hostility in the Netherlands. Chasing war criminals takes a lot of energy and causes a lot of frustration: you are looking for a needle in a haystack; you often miss because of bad luck; emotionally you go through deep valleys; there is political opposition at the highest level; the legal mills grind slowly and every time you have to answer the question: '

'What is the point of punishment? The war was so long ago.'

But you never stopped.

The success of your work cannot be fully described. It is great. No doubt about that. Your dedication gave survivors a warm feeling of solidarity, the idea that they were not alone in their struggle.

Your work reached far. Very far, to the houses where the murderers lived. They knew that as long as you were searching, there could always be that knock on the door. People like Klaas Carel Faber spent his last years fearfully hidden, afraid of arrest.

Dear Efraim, dear friend, the belief in justice is our greatest shared asset. Be proud of your life's work and as we both always say: the file only closes when the cell door slams shut behind the perpetrator.

You are my hero!

–ARNOLD KARSKENS

(Beemster, 1954) is a Dutch war reporter and chairman of the Foundation Investigation War Crimes. He hunts Dutch war criminals from the Second World War to the present.



MESSAGE FROM PHILIP RUBENSTEIN

It's been my pleasure and privilege to have known Efraim for 40 years. We first met in the mid-1980s when his research produced the shocking discovery that the UK was home to a number of people who'd committed war crimes under the Nazis. I was a young aide at the time, supporting the group of MPs and Lords that was created to lobby the British government on the back of Efraim's work.

It took another five years before the government finally changed the law to prosecute Nazi war criminals who had left their countries of origin after WW2 ended and found a haven in the UK (in doing so, Efraim had persuaded prime minister Margaret Thatcher to change her mind, and very few people can honestly say they've done that). During those five years, Efraim was both tireless and fearless as a campaigner, using his skills as a historian and advocate to press the case for justice at every opportunity.

I always took heart from our regular calls - Efraim was (and still is) a tidal wave of energy, passion and outrage - and his example always inspired me to do better, to work harder for our cause. Efraim is big in every way: big in mind, big in heart and big in neshama. I am proud to call him my friend.

***All the best
Philip***

–PHILIP RUBENSTEIN
Advocate

MESSAGE FROM NAOMI RAGEN

Inspired by Dr. Zuroff's work, I wrote my novel: "The Enemy Beside Me" dealing with present day Holocaust distortion in Lithuania. It was published in 2024 by St. Martin's Press, and by Zmora-Bitan in Israel in 2025 and will hopefully bring this little known subject to the attention of a wider audience. In the writing of this work, Dr. Zuroff was an invaluable and generous mentor, sharing his insights and reviewing the manuscript to ensure its factual accuracy.

Dr. Zuroff's tireless efforts to expose the truth of Lithuania's Nazi collaboration and participation in the Holocaust has been the bulwark against Lithuania's cynical and sinister attempts to rewrite its history, exonerate itself, and in so doing destroy decades of Holocaust education in Europe. His fearless resolve has withstood decades of Eastern European bullying and attempts to silence him. For that the Jewish people must be forever grateful.

—NAOMI RAGEN
Popular Author

MESSAGE FROM MICHAEL BERENBAUM

In Tribute to Efraim Zuroff

More than 30 years ago, Efraim Zuroff wrote the first of his several memoirs, *Occupation Nazi-Hunter*. Yet Nazi hunter was not his occupation but his vocation, a call from the world of darkness to a post-Holocaust Jew, an act of deep faith not only in the pursuit of justice, but also in its possibility. He has been touched by the call of the victims: "Do not forget us!" It moved him the core of his being.

The task of pursuing these perpetrators required the instincts of a detective, the discipline of a scholar, the political resources of a social activist, and the restraint of a diplomat. Guided by a passion for justice, Zuroff abundantly displayed all of these talents. Of course, one may not quite say with a straight face that Zuroff ever was truly restrained. His work made others squirm for he demonstrated how little was done to bring these men to justice by such seemingly enlightened western democracies as Great Britain, Australia and Canada, yet alone in the European countries, especially those that lived under Soviet domination.

Now more than three score and ten. Zuroff remains an activist by temperament as well as by conviction. As he confronts evil, he seeks to undo it, to transform the evil more than to understand or to penetrate it into its core. In 1995, Zuroff and I attended a conference in Rwanda, shortly after the Genocide. I watched as Zuroff raged -- his target, the perpetrators. He would have wanted to bring every one of the 56,000 then incarcerated to trial, weighing the evidence, convicting and punishing the guilty, exonerating the innocent. Justice was his most central pursuit – justice, as rabbinic commentators and as his spiritual mentor Simon Wiesenthal taught, by just means.

He began his encounter with the Holocaust as a scholar; describing the efforts of American Orthodox Jews to rescue their fellow Jews and their willingness to bypass the niceties of legalities to accomplish their goal. And he remained a scholar even in this activist work. His discoveries were not made in the courtroom or on the witness chair. They were found in libraries and archives in a detailed reading of documents which he reads not only with an eye toward understanding the event but identifying its perpetrators.

His passion for his existential home Israel is deep but not uncritical.

He has been an irritant raising some important questions as to the depth and the seriousness of Israel's commitment to prosecuting Nazi war criminals. He documented and wrote op-eds and books calling attention to instance after instance in which the government of Israel -- Likud or Labor -- preferred that other countries extradite an accused war criminal or where Israel tarried hoping that the problem would go away because of the age and medical condition of the alleged perpetrator. He showed where Israel was reluctant to pursue some war criminals for reasons of state -- fearing that it might endanger their relations with friendly countries.

He also demonstrated how little interest there was in the Israeli academic community studying the Holocaust, in the question of who were the perpetrators. The concerns of Israeli scholars were otherwise. They investigated instances of resistance -- large and small -- but did inquire as to who was the mayor of a town whose Jews were deported, who was the police chief who supervised the deportation or the Einsatzgruppen action. Israeli scholars were uninterested and consequently, Israel was unprepared to fully participate in documenting the cases of Nazi war criminals.

Zuroff did his work in three distinct eras. He began his work well after the Nuremberg trials of the 1940s, after the Eichmann trial of 1961, and after the Frankfurt Auschwitz trial of the 1970s. He began during the Cold War, during Communism.

He then worked during an era where there were newly emerging democratic countries who were willing, some of the first time, to consider their own histories, within limits, even truthfully. And in recent years he worked when nationalistic fervor in some countries where making heroes of national leaders regardless of their record regarding Jews during World War II, encountering clashes between nationalistic memories and historical reality.

His book *Our People*, written with Ruta Vanagate about their journey to sites of the Holocaust by Bullets in Lithuania is but one example. Her fate: her books were banned, her colleagues abandoned her, scorned her. And his fate: he is now the most hated man in Lithuania. A wonderful novel has been written, disguising his character but not the hatred that came his way.

I first met Effie not in the Library or the classroom but on the basketball court where, given his size and his skill he would grab a rebound and charge down the center of the court. His goal was to score a basket and heaven help those who stood in his way. Let's tell the truth, Effie would have given it all up except for his religious observance if only he could have played for the New York Nets, who were then homeless, often hapless and underrated, just like Yeshiva University's basketball team then coached by the legendary, brilliant, albeit abusive Red Sarachek.

He has conducted his professional life as he played basketball with the same zest, the same courage, the same drive, and the same passion. He remained a dogged activist whose mastery of historical knowledge and contemporary media were central to his vocation – the pursuit of justice.

He was the true heir of Simon Wiesenthal.

It is one of the great privileges of my life to have accompanied him on his journey as a haver. I am proud to call him my friend.

–MICHAEL BERENBAUM

**Distinguished Professor of Jewish Studies
Director of the Sigi Ziering Institute
American Jewish University**

MESSAGE FROM PAUL ALSTER

As a journalist we get to meet many people from very different walks of life. Occasionally we allow ourselves to secretly admire people from afar. More often than not, when actually meeting those people we find ourselves disappointed, sometimes in the extreme. For me, one of the few exceptions to that gloomy trend is Dr. Efraim Zuroff, someone whose work I long admired and who turned out to be even more inspirational in person.

Doubtless others will rightly speak of his many achievements in keeping the focus on, and pursuing those who attempted to escape justice after the horrors they committed during the Holocaust. His more recent mission to redress the rewriting of the Holocaust narrative is no less important, indeed maybe even more important now that so many seem to have forgotten – or choose to ignore – the essential lessons of recent history. Zuroff's life's work is the stuff of legend. I'd just like to say how much fun we had discussing not only his very public role, but also the man behind the public face. The failure to fulfil his childhood dream of becoming an NBA basketball star might have been hard for him to take at the time, but it has certainly proved of immeasurable benefit to the world of Nazi hunting!

Best regards,

–PAUL ALSTER

Broadcast Journalist

Website: <https://www.paulalster.net>



MESSAGE FROM PER ANDERS RUDLING

As I have changed computers and email addresses over the years, my records are incomplete, but my collaboration with Efraim must date back to the years when I was still a graduate student at the University of Alberta, and working on the Katriuk case and Nazi war crimes in Belarus. Over time, inquiries about materials became into historiographical discussions, into telephone sessions of bouncing ideas, exchanging experiences and brainstorming.

Over time, Efraim became something of a mentor. More than that, he became a dear friend. Studying morbidly brutal historical events is often difficult, if not outright depressing. The very topic, and the environment it is carried out by necessity has a somber character. And how could it be otherwise? It may come across as counterintuitive, perhaps even inappropriate, that collaborating with Efraim on topics, almost incomprehensibly grim was connected to a certain gratification.

But that is what it was; not only in regard to some breakthroughs in regards addressing atrocities of the past, but also to work for greater archival access, and some modest success in move the needle on issues of accountability and historical justice.



Some of the issues of historical revisionism, misrepresentation and Holocaust distortion we deal with are so outlandish that they are, literally laughable. Such as the hate crime division at a local Canadian police district investigated as “hate crime” the vandalism of a taxpayer funded memorial to Nazi collaborators. Efraim never himself choose the headlines for his own opinion pieces.

I remember he told me he made one exception: a commentary on Canada’s failure to bring Holocaust perpetrators to justice. “Oy, Canada!” was the title Efraim insisted on. After a long work-related conversation in my office at the department of history, my colleagues asked me what was so funny; they could hear me laugh so loud on the phone that they heard it the corridor. I had to come up with an white lie. I could not really tell my colleagues I was discussing war criminality with the Jerusalem office of the Wiesenthal Center! But that is how it was. Perhaps, for a person dedicating his life to reconstruct and uncover some of the darkest episodes in human history, personal warmth, kindness and humor is inadmissible, and part of the explanation to Efraim could go on, year after year.

And become an inspiration to new generation of researchers. Efraim leaves a legacy rivalled by few, save Simon Wiesenthal himself. We are many that are grateful for his work for historical justice. But also as a friend, mentor, and inspiration. Thank you for all your important work. But also for the humor and laughter. Biz 120!

—PER ANDERS RUDLING

**Associate Professor of History and Wallenberg Academy Fellow
at the Department of History at Lund University, Sweden.**

MESSAGE FROM KAREN SHAWN

Soon after Dr. Zuroff and I first met, in the fall of 1989, he became not only a mentor but a dear friend to me. He has remained both throughout these past 36 years. He helped me to understand the pernicious undermining of the veracity of the Holocaust by those who deny and, currently, distort, the truth of the watershed. Through vivid stories, he taught me about the Nazi war criminals he helped to uncover and bring to justice, and about the rationale for and the validity of his tireless search.

His books have guided me as I teach, ensuring historical accuracy. He became a valued advisory board member of the Yeshiva University publication PRISM: An Interdisciplinary Journal for Holocaust Educators that I founded and edit, and he contributed both an invaluable essay on Nazi-hunting and ongoing advice concerning the journal's content and commitment to offering accuracy in the historical narrative. This past summer he graciously agreed to speak to a group of my graduate students from Yeshiva University's Emil A. and Jenny Fish Center whom I had brought to Israel to discuss with museum educators how they were teaching about the Shoah in light of October 7th.

My teaching in the field of Holocaust education has been immeasurably enriched and enhanced by the valuable and cherished relationship I have had the good fortune to maintain with this remarkable man. May he go from strength to strength.

Sincerely,

–KAREN SHAWN, PH.D.

**Director of Educational Outreach, Fish Center For Holocaust and
Genocide Studies**

**Program Director, Advanced Certificate in Holocaust Education
Founding Editor, PRISM: An Interdisciplinary Journal for
Holocaust Educators , Yeshiva University, NY, NY 10033**

MESSAGE FROM KIRSTEN GOETZE

I met Efraim Zuroff for the first time when he visited the Central Office of the State Justice Administrations for the Investigation of National Socialist Crimes in Germany, Ludwigsburg. As a successful Nazi hunter, Efraim wanted to discuss with the then-director how he could realize his "Last Chance" campaign to track down Nazi perpetrators together with the Central Office. I was not involved in this conversation and was quite surprised when he suddenly stood in my office asking how "we" had done it with Demjanjuk. Efraim was very positive about the Central Office's successful efforts to bring John Demjanjuk to trial.

In particular, he communicated to a broad public the legal opinion I had formulated and presented in the Central Office's final report, according to which participating in crimes that caused death at the Aktion Reinhard extermination camps does not require proof of a specific act of killing to establish criminal liability. Many people died in these camps due to the excesses of the SS and the guards, but when deportation trains arrived, everyone on board was destined for a gruesome death in the gas chambers.

This meeting was the beginning of great mutual support. In the cases I worked on, in particular an Auschwitz trial against a member of the SS camp guards, which unfortunately had to be dropped because of the slow functioning of the responsible authorities in Bavaria after the death of the accused, Efraim was crucial in the search for survivors who were willing to testify in a German court about their horrific experiences in Auschwitz-Birkenau. Efraim's support was always unbureaucratic and focused. We both believe in the importance of witnesses helping to make the victims' agony visible to a broad public. claims that so much time has passed that the criminal proceedings can now be closed for. This is the only way to refute the increasing good.

The survivors and their families still suffer to this day from the unimaginable atrocities they endured. Efraim and the Wiesenthal Center have consistently stressed the need to learn from the survivors. As a result, not only is the history of the Holocaust victims known thanks to Efraim's tireless work, but countless perpetrators were also brought to justice.

Unfortunately, a trial we jointly pursued against a member of the Einsatzgruppen, who had also been in Babi Yar in 1941, failed because of the German justice system.

I wish Efraim all the best for the future. His voice is needed more than ever in a world of growing anti-Semitism. Never again is now.

–KIRSTEN GOETZE

Former judge and district attorney, attached to the Central State Office Ludwigsburg from 2008 to 2012 and German Federal Prosecutor in the German Central Office for the clarification of Nazi War Crimes

MESSAGE FROM JUDY BAUMEL-SCHWARTZ

Effie and I go back many, many decades, from the day he walked into the Institute of Holocaust Research at Bar Ilan University around 1980 where I was a very young researcher (and he was a very young Nazi Hunter) to look for information in our files about various Nazi criminals.

We talked, we clicked and from then on our friendship was cemented. We were both from the same tiny town on the American upper east coast (think: NYC), had studied in the same religious Jewish school system (think: Yeshiva University), new all the same people, and had the same Holocaust-related goals, although Effie had decided to go about it using a very different and practical path of actually DOING something and not just writing or teaching, both of which he ultimately did as well, in different ways. From the onset I admired his determination to hunt down every living Nazi criminal and bring them to justice, something he has managed to do successfully for almost five decades, not letting the world forget that someone who harms a Jew will be called to pay for it in the future, even if it is a very distant future.

It is always better to be successful, but even just knowing that if one harms a Jew one is liable to pay, somewhere, sometime, no matter how old they are or how sick they might be, is something that Effie has successfully introduced into the world's consciousness for almost half a century.

The world needs more people who remember and not just talk, but do. It needs more people who care enough to devote their lives to the Jewish people. It needs more Effie Zuroffs. But he is a one and only, which is why he is who he is!

Best wishes,
Judy

–PROF. JUDY TYDOR (BAUMEL) SCHWARTZ,

Director

The Arnold and Leona Finkler Institute of Holocaust Research

The Abraham and Edita Spiegel Family Professor in Holocaust Research

The Rabbi Pynchas Brener Professor in Research on the Holocaust of European Jewry

Professor, The Israel and Golda Koschitsky Department of Jewish History and Contemporary Jewry Bar-Ilan University, Ramat-Gan, 5290002 ISRAEL

<http://jewish-history.biu.ac.il/he/node/432> [hebrew]

<http://jewish-history.biu.ac.il/en/node/583> [english]

Consulting Historian and Curator, Museum of Jewish Heritage, New York



MESSAGE FROM ANA FRENKEL

It was an honor and a pleasure to work with Dr. Efraim Zuroff. I believe that he has dedicated his entire life to this important cause and that he is the true successor of Dr. Simon Wiesenthal. We worked dedicatedly for several years on the processing of Sándor Kepiro.

Although the trial, after great efforts, did not end as we expected, it was a lesson for Hungarian society to face its Nazi past. Sándor Kepiro died of natural causes without being convicted of his crimes, but despite this, Dr. Zuroff's persistence and dedication to this work was brilliant. May he continue to do his job for the benefit of all of us and future generations of young people.

-DR ANA FRENKEL

President of the Novi Sad Jewish Community

MESSAGE FROM COLIN RUBENSTEIN

“Like Simon Wiesenthal himself, Efraim’s career is a testament to his uncompromising and unwavering dedication to bringing Nazi war criminals to justice.

This passion for justice in the name of both survivors of the Shoah and six million Jewish victims who lacked a voice because they perished at the hands of the Nazis, meant pursuing former Nazi war criminals to the ends of the earth, including, importantly, here in Australia.

“Without Efraim’s tireless efforts, who knows how many would have succeeded in disappearing into Australian society, not only without consequence but without even any recognition of their past criminal acts. Even when battles to extradite such criminals ultimately failed, the criminals were branded with the mark of Cain – bringing shame upon them and their defenders, as well as the Australian system that failed us all.

“For many years, Efraim and I, my late colleague Jeremy Jones and indeed all of AIJAC shared both a fruitful friendship and a common project to bring about a measure of justice. He has been our honored visiting scholar and contributed to the Australia/Israel Review, made many media appearances and raised the bar for Holocaust awareness and education that has benefitted all Australians. For all of that, we are forever grateful.”

–DR. COLIN RUBENSTEIN AM,

**Executive Director, Australia/Israel & Jewish
Affairs Council**



Colin Rubinstein with
Dr. Efraim Zuroff
during an AIJAC
function in Australia.



MESSAGE FROM DAN MERIDOR



Photo: from left to right: Efraim Zuroff, Dan Meridor, former Israeli Justice Minister and the late Professor Dov Levin, Lithuanian survivor and leading scholar of the history of Lithuanian Jewry.

אני מצרף תצלום מביקור שלי באתר ההשמדה ביער פונאר, ליד וילנה, עם אפרים זורוף ועם פרופסור דב לוין ז"ל.

יצאנו במשלחת לבקשת יו"ר הכנסת דאז, דב שילנסקי ז"ל, לליטא, לדרוש מממשלתה (הנשיא בראזאוסקאס וראשי השלטון ומערכת המשפט שם), לתקן את העוול הבא: כשהשתחררו מהשלטון הקומוניסטי וכוננו את ליטא העצמאית, ביטלו את פסקי הדין של המשטר הקומוניסטי, לרבות פסקי דין שניתנו נגד משתפי פעולה עם הנאצים. ביקשנו שיבטלו את הביטול ולא יתנו לגיטימציה לפושעים, סייעני הגרמנים.
בברכה,
דן

I am attaching a photo from my visit to the Ponar mass murder site near Vilnius, together with Efraim Zuroff and the late Professor Dov Levin.

We were sent to Lithuania at the request of the then-Speaker of the Knesset, the late Dov Shilansky, to demand from its government (President Brazauskas, and senior officials in the government and judicial system there) to correct the following injustice: When Lithuania was freed from Communist rule and became independent, it annulled the verdicts of the Communist regime—including those issued against collaborators with the Nazis. We demanded that they revoke this annulment and not grant legitimacy to criminals who aided the Germans.

Sincerely,
Dan

דן מרידור-

Dan Meridor, former Israeli Minister of Justice



MESSAGE FROM JOVAN C'ULIBRK

A MAN OF THE BOOK STORMS THE BALKANS

It was on October 4th, 1999 that Dr. Efraim Zuroff made his great entrance into the Balkans – and in a blink of an eye he took countries and peoples of former Yugoslavia by storm.

Namely, on that day Dinko Šakić – former commander of Jasenovac concentration and death camp in the Independent State of Croatia during the Second World War - was found guilty of war crimes and sentenced to twenty years in prison by a Zagreb County Court.

At the same time clouds were lingering heavily over the Balkans: a NATO facilitated ceasefire between the Albanian guerilla and Yugoslav forces in Kosovo and Metohija was signed on October 15, 1998, just two months after Šakić's was indicted on County Court in Zagreb in August; the NATO bombing of Serbia and Montenegro, known as operation "Allied Force", ended on June that year after 78 days, all while the trial of Dinko Šakić was taking place in Croatia; and on October 4, NATO-led Kosovo Force was struggling to prevent terror against Serbs who remained in Kosovo and Metohija after majority of them were forced to leave the province.

Prompted by NATO action, Russia went through a sea change within weeks: by his birthday, just three days after the Zagreb court sentenced Dinko Šakić, Vladimir Putin was firmly in the seat of Russia's prime minister's office. The world was changing and not only the proverbial Mr. Jones was wondering: "Something is happening and you don't know what it is!" But it seemed that there is at least one man who was at the top of his game: Efraim Zuroff

At his prime, 51 year old Nazi-hunter who sharpened his teeth for years and decades in the efforts to convince Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia and other post-Communist societies to confront the

widespread complicity of their nationals in the crimes of the Holocaust and to prosecute local Nazi collaborators, frustrated by endless obstacles in their prosecution, in the case of Dinko Šakić was in for the kill.

Efraim Zuroff – assisted by many, including Belgrade-based Museum of Genocide Victims - found, confronted and exposed to the world the former Jasenovac commander who was hiding in Argentina. Dinko Šakić was extradited to Croatia, put on trial and sentenced to the longest possible punishment, 20 years in prison. In the opinion of the triumphant director of the Jerusalem's office of the Simon Wiesenthal Center, Šakić was only the first one; the others are to follow, mainly in the Baltic countries that were of his and Centre's primary interest.

Not that Zuroff's actions in the Balkans gained him a crucial attention in his own country: in the beginning of April, 1999 – parallel with the trial of Dinko Šakić ongoing in Zagreb - the Israeli Foreign Minister Ariel Sharon had something more urgent to deal with: he called on his US counterpart Madeleine Albright, naming NATO bombing of Yugoslavia "brutal interventionism", causing stir in the Israeli ally in Washington.

Then prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu felt obliged to distance himself from his minister, saying "the foreign minister was merely expressing his personal opinion" and to express his support for the US-led operation – but also leaving the groundbreaking trial in Zagreb, just few hundred kilometers from the place where the US bombs and occasionally US planes were falling at the same time - out of his scope.

Thus, while initially the trial of Dinko Šakić was somehow overshadowed by the annual War and Peace event in the Balkans in 1999, in 2010 Efraim Zuroff was decorated by the Croatian president Stjepan Mesić; by 2017 the Serbian president Tomislav Nikolić followed suit; it was obvious that Zuroff's success was cumulative and with unexpected and lasting results.

In the rest of the former Communist world, the results kept to be frustrating: there were no more Šakić's, trials often ended with deaths of late apprehended criminals, or with their release. In the Balkans, Efraim Zuroff became somehow an arbiter in the Holocaust affairs, capable of both grinding former head of Museum of Genocide Victims' head Dr. Milan Bulajić for his lax criteria in dealing with historical sources^[1] at a conference in Jerusalem in 2002 and calling the new exhibition at Jasenovac Memorial Site in Croatia "a big disappointment" if not "a post-modernist trash" in 2006.

Where from is coming this resolute will to confront the world events and to stand his ground fighting for a case that at the moment in 1999 seemed to be so heavily rooted in the past and so small compared to the first full size war waged by the biggest military alliance ever? That had to be a strong knowledge deeply planted in a heart of the man: "I know that whatever God does, it shall be forever. Nothing can be added to it, and nothing taken from it" (Ecclesiastes 3:14). That "God does it, that man should fear before Him" is something that can be read from the forehead of Efraim Zuroff, but his deeds are much more convincing than his supposed attitudes. On the other hand, he was following path of his teacher – he made his PhD at the Hebrew University under supervision of late Yehuda Bauer, and Bauer stated that "If nothing else, Jasenovac was more horrible than its Nazi counterparts". What achievement could be more worthy to give to your teacher as gratitude, than to bring the master of the Jasenovac Hell to justice?

–JOVAN ĆULIBRK

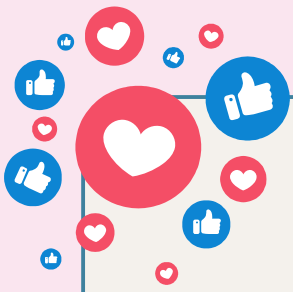
The Serbian Orthodox Bishop of Pakrac and Slavonia

Colegio Hebreo Tarbut

x = independently organized TED event



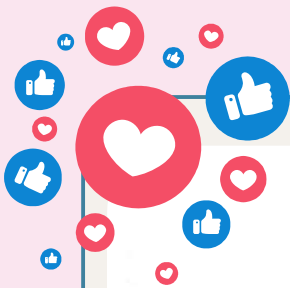
Dr Efraim Zuroff



"MESSAGES"

ACROSS SOCIAL MEDIA





Efraim's Post



Efraim Zuroff

September 3, 2024 · 🌐

...

After 38 years as Director of the Israel Office of the Simon Wiesenthal Center, and 13 years during which I was responsible for Eastern European Affairs as well, I will be leaving the Center at the end of this month (September 2024). Looking for new opportunities to continue to combat Holocaust distortion, and anti-Semitism.



Joy Schonberg-Blum, Aaron Koller and 185 others

76 comments 5 shares



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Ørjan Aarmo

Well done. Thank you for your effort also in Norway regarding holocaust matter. Will never forget meeting you in Oslo almost a decade ago.

28w Like Reply



Daniel Schatz

Big shoes to fill.

28w Like Reply



Jonas Stenerud

Thank you for your work ! And it was a honor to meet in you in Oslo a few years ago !

28w Like Reply



Ilan Schneider

Thank you, Mr. Zurroff for your commitment and for all the important things you have done .Good luck in your future tasks!

28w Like Reply



Ariel Gelblung

It has been a real honor to stand side by side with you, my dear friend

28w Like Reply



Steve Linde

Wishing you all the best! And thank you for all you've done!

28w Like Reply



Mila Volvovsky

בהצלחה!



Write a comment...



Efraim's Post



Paul Gross

Wow! You've done incredible things Efraim. Wishing you success in all you go on to do.

28w Like Reply



Bo Persson

All the best! Hope to be in touch!

28w Like Reply



Stevan Simijanovic

Dear Efraim,

On behalf of the Serbian nation, I want to express our deepest gratitude for your tireless dedication over the past 38 years at the Simon Wiesenthal Center. Your remarkable efforts in bringing Ustaše and Nazis from the Independent State of Croatia to justice have been invaluable to preserving the truth and honoring the memory of all victims, especially in combating the Holocaust and genocide against Serbs.

We will always remember your unwavering commitment to combating Holocaust distortion and anti-Semitism, and your work will forever be appreciated and remembered.

I am personally proud and honored to have been your student at Yad Vashem, and I look forward to seeing the impactful work you will continue to do in the future.

With deepest respect and appreciation,

Stevan Simijanovic

28w Like Reply

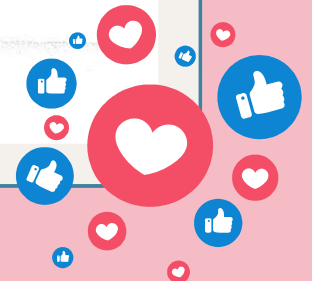


Jane J Prawda

Mazel Tov never stop fighting for Justice. Incredible times we've lived thru and still fighting Nazis and other villains. They'll find remnants of anti-Semitism in Ft. Lee and Old Tappan NJ. Blessings upon your head for you and your family. Reading parts of our Czyzew Yizkor memorial book in mourning still. Still amazed with the stories I keep coming across. Reb Yechiel **Asher Provda Prawda Karen Pravda CM La Forajida Prawda** My heroes! Proud of Yechiel in collecting for JNF so strong and courageous. A true fighter for democratic values running for office on the Mizrahi party. **Andrea Bolender** our familia always **Jeanne Andreassen Connell** connected. Most of the Mizrahi Jews from Czyzewo made Aliyah to Palestine Israel **Alex Levin, Art Levin Studio. www.ArtLevin.com Lev Haolam - Supporting Israel** They didn't follow the rules and lead with their hearts to reach the **Rosalyn Provda Jessica Provda Jessica Bicas Jenni Rosenbaum Provda Jason Provda** Promised Land! We the Chosen...The Land of **Emanuel Miller Mila Volvovsky Milk and Honey** Journey and journaling...38 good number! Had fallen in love with my **Rest I ttle HairHouse in Westwood** my **Reshet**



Write a comment...



Efraim's Post



Jerusalem and Jewish Life Paintings

28w Like Reply



Arich O'Sullivan

Can't imagine the center without you. Good luck

28w Like Reply



Melissa Mikel

I'm so sorry to read this! Wishing you every success in your next opportunity! ...

28w Like Reply



Tom Gross

You're the best. Your work has been so important. You are the best thing (by far) in the SWC.

28w Like Reply Edited



Linda Slavin replied · 1 Reply



Sergey Kanovich

Thank you for your dedicated service Efraim!

28w Like Reply



Boris Maftsir

Dear Ephraim - There are no words to thank you for your work, perseverance, dedication, and uncompromising struggle.

28w Like Reply



Francisco Javier Fravimelo

siempre estaras acompañado.

28w Like Reply See translation



Bruce Weinberg

Efraim your work will never be forgotten. On behalf of those who were murdered in the concentration camps and for those who survived, you brought honor to all of those whose bodies were burnt to ashes, mutilated, maimed and for those who miraculously escaped and survived. I guess there aren't many left to bring to justice.

28w Like Reply



Bruce Weinberg replied · 2 Replies

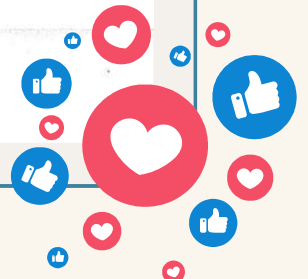


David Z. Harris

Mark



Write a comment...



Efraim's Post

28w Like Reply



Efraim Zuroff

Bruce Weinberg I greatly appreciate your support for so many years. My father would be very proud of you Bruce.

28w Like Reply



Bruce Weinberg

Efraim Zuroff very nice of you to write. If my father, who survived the horrors, was alive all of these years reading about you and seeing how many you brought to justice he'd be very proud of you and probably would be star struck meeting you in person.

27w Like Reply



Write a reply...



David Z. Harris
Mark

28w Like Reply



Leena Hietanen

It was a pleasure to work with you and your book The Last Chance. Hope you Many active pension years to come.

28w Like Reply Edited



Zac Nsenga

Thanks for almost 4 decades of dedicated service to the cause of justice and humanity. I am hoping that you will not retire from this responsibilities during your next calling!

28w Like Reply



Dubravko Vaid

Thank you! Good luck! Mazal Tov!

28w Like Reply



Gary Pickholz

Kol hakavod on a job well done

28w Like Reply

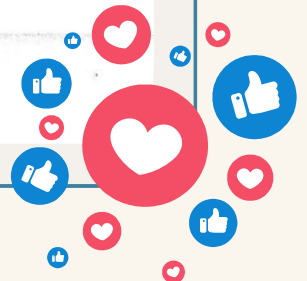


Hannah Wilson

You leave behind such a legacy; I remember when you came to speak to our class in Haifa ten years ago, and I was blown away by your passion and your drive for justice. I wish you every success with your future projects.



Write a comment...



Efraim's Post

wish you every success with your future projects.

28w Like Reply



Felice Richter

It's been such a pleasure working with you, Effie. Wishing you the best as you move forward with your next adventure!

28w Like Reply



Anita Klawans

So proud of my cousin. You've had a worthwhile life, but it's not over yet.

28w Like Reply



Liat Collins

Wishing you all the best in the next chapter of life's ventures and adventures

28w Like Reply



Haim Dov Beliak

Amazing and thank you

28w Like Reply



Barbara Grossman Federman

Mazel Tov. Wishing you all the best in this next chapter.

28w Like Reply



Howard Weisband

B'hatzlacha going forward!!

28w Like Reply



Noelle Smith

Excellent work and dedication to important mission. Well done, Dr. Z.

28w Like Reply



Alyssa Trachtman

Wishing you only good things in your future! Hopefully we will get you back in to the US soon. They will have very big shoes to fill in your absence, but how grateful we are for the very important work you've done all over the world.

28w Like Reply

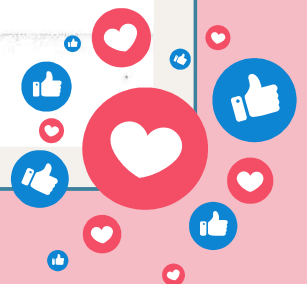


Mark Blumberg

Thank you for your service. Your work is more urgent today than ever. I'm happy to support you with my skills in any way possible. and there are many others who will do the same. a huge special thanks to you for all your efforts in the war against the rewriting of history in Lithuania. You were instrumental in the changes of the government policy. There's still a huge amount of work to be done there but the



Write a comment...



Efraim's Post



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28w Like Reply Edited



Vilhjálmur Örn Vilhjálmsón

Dear Efraim, thank you for all the great work you have done for the victims and Justice. It was an honor working for you on projects in Denmark and watching your work in Iceland and elsewhere. Your fight for justice will go on. Ignorance related diseases like Anti-Semitism haven't left this world. I am sure your fight will go on - bis 120!

28w Like Reply



Efraim Zuroff replied · 1 Reply



Eli Zarkhin

Dear Efraim, good luck!

28w Like Reply



Arik Bender

בהצלחה אפי. אחרון צידי הנאצים בעולמנו

28w Like Reply See translation



Boris Salomon

Good luck 🍀🍀🍀

28w Like Reply



Ezra Rosenfeld

בהצלחה!

28w Like Reply See translation



Ezra Rosenfeld

no retiring for you....

28w Like Reply



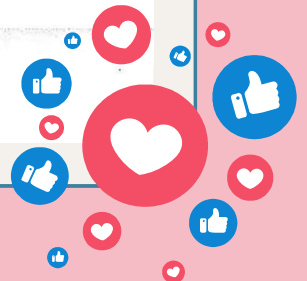
Colin Rubenstein

Great innings..keep batting going forward!!

28w Like Reply



Write a comment...



Efraim's Post



Arne Lapidus

Thanks for 38 years of excellent work and being a never-ending source of news and material for my stories.

28w Like Reply



David M. Weinberg
Call.me!

28w Like Reply



Efraim Zuroff replied · 1 Reply



Nili Keren

Thank you for your good work and your devotion to the mission you took upon yourself ❤️🙏

28w Like Reply



Fern Reiss

Congratulations on an incredible service, and b'hatzlacha.

28w Like Reply



Bonita Reich

Effie, I remember back to the first time we met, you claimed you became a Nazi Hunter because you wanted to MAKE HISTORY, rather than WRITE IT !! Your knowledge, dedication, inspiration and lifelong service is truly remarkable. History has most certainly been made. You will be sorely missed.

28w Like Reply Edited



Jeff McLaughlin

Thank you so much for the outstanding lecture you gave us at Yad Vashem and for all your amazing work that I reference when I speak to my students about how seeking Justice has no deadlines...

28w Like Reply



Riki Shefi Vered

Thank you for years of service.

28w Like Reply



Joy Schonberg-Blum

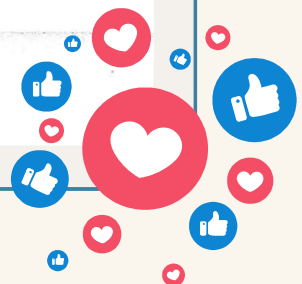
כל הכבוד for all the great work

May HaShem grant you many more years to fight against one of the most important distortions in history and rampant anti-semitism

28w Like Reply



Write a comment...



Efraim's Post



20w Like Reply



Joy Schonberg-Blum

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May HaShem grant you many more years to fight against one of the most important
distortions in history and and rampant anti-semitism

28w Like Reply



ספירה רפפורט

אפרים, תודה רבה על כל עשייתך הכבירה למען קורבנות ושורדי השואה.

28w Like Reply See translation



David Rising

The Center will be less without your tireless work. All the best in your new pursuits!

28w Like Reply



Monica Lowenberg

You have done incredible work and the world should thank you.

28w Like Reply



Judah Ausubel

Wishing you all the best

28w Like Reply



Ronit Treatman

I wish you much success in all your endeavors. Thank you for all you do!

28w Like Reply



Per Rudling

You leave quite a legacy. It is not over yet; looking forward to many more productive
years ahead.

28w Like Reply



Harold Kahn

All the best.

27w Like Reply



Shlomo Loshinsky

A powerhouse in the fight to reach the truth and search out our enemies. You have
always been a source of pride to the Jewish People and to all those who want to assure
the Jewish Peoples survival

Wishing you much success in your future endeavors

27w Like Reply



Write a comment...



חזק חזק ותתחזק



Efraim's Post

27w Like Reply

2



Efraim Zuroff

Thanks Shlomo. I appreciate your friendship and support.

27w Like Reply



Orrin Persky

Congratulations on your unique legacy.

There is still much to be done and your contribution could be invaluable.

27w Like Reply



Suzanne Ananicz

Was first acquainted with you on your hunt for Dr Death..You seem a kind,non judgemental ,patient person .You said " The State of Israel was the negation of the Holocaust"..today with this awful conflict in Gaza the eyes of the world is upon them..Good luck in your future endeavours..I hope your decision to leave was your decision..Nazi hunting evolves which means avenging the perpetrators today of Holocaust distortion and lies..forms of anti semitism,prejudice and hatred still need voices to fight for them....

27w Like Reply



Mark Hotz

I guess there were no more Nazis to hunt. But there are plenty of Muslims and Palestinians and their supporters in the US and Europe you should harass endlessly.

27w Like Reply



Efraim Zuroff

To all of you who took the time to write such nice messages, thank you so much. It's nice to know that our efforts to expose and prosecute the murderers of our people and other innocents did not go unnoticed. Now we have to continue the fight against Holocaust distortion throughout post-Communist Eastern Europe, so that the accurate narrative of the Shoa will be preserved to the end of time.

27w Like Reply

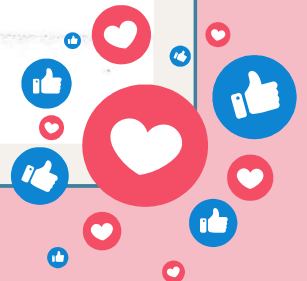
2



Damjan Novakovic



Write a comment...



IN CONCLUSION ...

It was a deeply rewarding experience to collaborate with Bonita Reich and the Begin Center on this Tribute to Efraim.

Efraim is a tireless activist whose strengths-his commanding presence, exceptional public speaking skills and adeptness with the press-have enabled him to achieve justice for Holocaust victims, and hold mass murderers and other perpetrators accountable. However, despite his dedication, Efraim often felt underappreciated and unrewarded for his relentless efforts.

I found particular satisfaction in the recent trials in Germany, which established crucial legal precedents. As one judge aptly noted, there were no "small cogs" in the Nazi murder machine-no minor participant should be exonerated. Yet even this acknowledgment did not fully satisfy Efraim.

Encouraged by Bonita to celebrate his retirement, I convinced Efraim to let his professional colleagues of 40 years share their reflections on his career. This proved to be a remarkable gift.

Together with Bonita, we reached out to many individuals who had interacted with Efraim over the years, and they shared their own stories about Efraim's life's work and its impact.

Efraim has been moved to tears almost daily by these heartfelt messages.

It has truly been a pleasure to work alongside Bonita, a steadfast supporter of Efraim's mission.

ILANA DREYER ZUROFF