



The
**Survivor
Mitzvah**
Project

How Do You View the Holocaust?

“Somehow in telling the story of the Holocaust, we have managed to leave out half our dead.”

These words, written by scholar and journalist Izabella Tabarovsky,* stunned me. Aside from Father Patrick Desbois' groundbreaking books, *Holocaust by Bullets* and *In Broad Daylight*, I have never heard any public discourse about a subject I know only too well: The Holocaust in the East.

Tabarovsky writes, *"We are used to experiencing the horror of the Holocaust through the lens of Auschwitz...[but] most Jews weren't murdered in Death Camps. It's time to talk about the Other Holocaust."*

In fact, 2.7 million Jewish men, women, children and infants – **almost half of the six million** – were not murdered in concentration camps or death camps but were massacred by local collaborators and the *Einsatzgruppen*, the mobile killing squads which fanned out across Eastern Europe killing every Jewish man, woman, and child in their path. Most Jews were shot into large pits or ravines. Those who were not killed instantly were buried alive. Others were killed in gas vans, starved, burned alive, drowned, or hung. Many villages were torched to wipe out any trace they ever existed.

How can it be that this part of the Holocaust is not taught in schools, not part of organized commemoration days, not featured in most museums, not in our collective memory?

Since I first went to Belarus and Lithuania in 2001 to search for the villages of my grandmothers, I have been immersed in this "Other" Holocaust. In the early 1900s, during the tsarist era, half the population of their villages were Jewish. In 1941 those populations were burned alive in the synagogues or shot in pits in the forests. In my ancestral villages of Vishneveh and Ivenets, there was no family to greet me, no traces of Jewish life – just ruins, desecrated cemeteries and burnt buildings. Many of you who are searching for your roots in any of the thousands of cities, towns and villages in Eastern Europe and the Baltics will likely find the same destruction.

All across Eastern Europe, witnesses describe the aftermath of the slaughter of their Jewish friends and neighbors with the words, “The road ran red with blood.” Of the killing fields and pits which hold tens of thousands, entire populations of murdered villages, they say, “The earth moved for days.”

All of the survivors in our program have lived through the crimes of the Holocaust in the East. Yet for millions who perished, there is no trace of their once vibrant lives. There are few if any memorials. Most victims are nameless - lying in unmarked or communal graves, in forests known only to the locals, and at the bottom of countless rivers and ravines.



Above: One of the few memorials to the mass murder of the Jews in a forest in Ukraine.

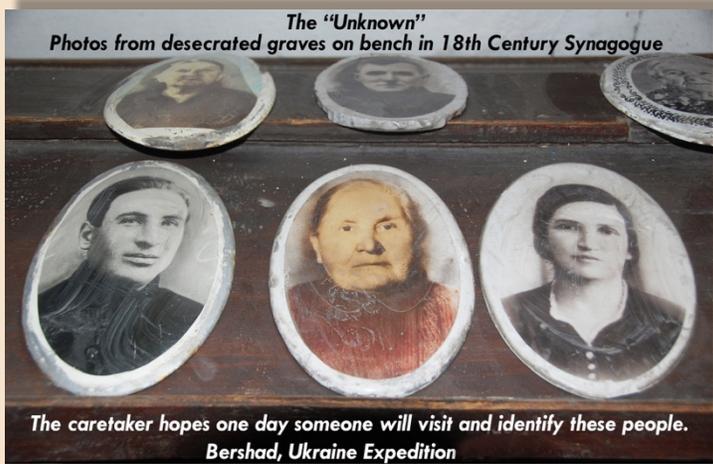


Manya Anatolievna tells her story.

Who will tell their stories to future generations?

Who will broaden our collective memory of the Holocaust to include everyone?

The Survivors!



On numerous expeditions to Eastern Europe, *The Survivor Mitzvah Project* has been filming the last vestiges of Jewish life: synagogue and cemetery ruins, mass graves, deserted villages, and riveting testimony of survivors, witnesses and rescuers. In our voluminous correspondence with the survivors we help we have amassed over 12,000 documents. On our Emergency Aid Expeditions overseas we have recorded over 500 hours of videotape testimony recounting painful and touching stories of endless courage, monumental suffering, acts of resistance, the fight for survival, and the hope for a peaceful future. These stories teach us about the "Other Holocaust" – life in the ghettos and forests of places we have never heard of, and death camps and concentration camps with unfamiliar names like Pechora and Kodyma.

They paint a picture of those who ran from the killing squads by crossing rivers set on fire by Nazi airstrikes, or fleeing hundreds of miles on foot in freezing weather with no shoes, or evacuating into jammed trains that were routinely bombed and took months to reach destinations like Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and other places in Central Asia where starvation and hard labor awaited them. They tell us of exile in Siberia for decades, and of the rapes and torture of their mothers, sisters and children, the execution of their fathers and brothers, of the mass burnings of their grandparents. **They tell us the stories we have never heard before.**

All of this important material, never before recorded, is now part of *The Survivor Mitzvah Project's Holocaust Educational Archive*, which will have a significant educational and historical impact now and into the future, playing a vital role in opening a modern-day dialogue on justice, tolerance, an appreciation of human commonality, and a warning to confront evil wherever it takes hold. **The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum** in Washington, D.C. has expressed interest in long-term preservation of and accessibility to our significant collections.

Our primary mission remains unchanged. By bringing emergency aid to the last survivors of the Holocaust we ensure that no survivor who has experienced the darkest days of human history will ever be hungry, neglected or forgotten again.

Remember: 70% of Holocaust Survivors do not have enough food, 75% do not have the medication they need, and 60% have no heat for the brutal winter months.

Remember: You can help! You can bring the last survivors of the "Other Holocaust" the comfort and care they deserve and the kindness and compassion they have longed for. - Zane Buzby



Please make checks payable to "The Survivor Mitzvah Project"

The Survivor Mitzvah Project

2658 Griffith Park Blvd. #299

Los Angeles, CA 90039

100% of all donations go directly into the hands of a Holocaust Survivor in need.

Donations in any amount save lives.

\$150 supports a survivor for one month • \$1800 supports a survivor for one year.

The Survivor Mitzvah Project is a 501c3 non-profit public charity. All donations are tax deductible to the full extent of the law.

www.survivormitzvah.org

** Izabella Tabarovsky is a scholar with the Kennan Institute at the Wilson Center in Washington, DC. Her research focuses on Holocaust in the USSR, politics of historical memory, and anti-Semitism. We encourage you to read the complete article, "Most Jews Weren't Murdered In Death Camps. It's Time To Talk About The Other Holocaust" at forward.com/opinion/425672*