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Yahad In Unum-2011

Name of program

72

Year of activity

2011

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Status of program

Yahad - In Unum is the leading research organization investigating the mass executions of 2.2 million Jews and an unknown number of Roma/Gypsy people in Eastern Europe between 1941 and 1944. While the atrocities of the concentration camps are well-known, this genocide perpetrated as far east as Ukraine, Belarus, Russia, Romania or even part of Poland is not common knowledge. Until today the work of Yahad – in Unum has confirmed the location of hundreds of mass graves, many previously unknown. Up today, more than 2600 Ukrainian, Belarusian, Polish, Russian, Moldovan and Romanian witnesses to the executions have been interviewed and their testimony recorded. Yahad – in Unum's research has accelerated in recent months as investigators race to identify and document as many of the graves as possible while remaining witnesses are still alive. Yahad also started in 2011 a specific research on Roma genocide.

Main achievements during the last year of activity

- One major goal of YIU was to increase the number of research travels in Eastern Europe. In 2011, YIU achieved 14 research trips.

More than 33,440 archives pages were scanned and transferred to Yahad- In Unum's office in Paris to prepare the on-the-ground research. Yahad – In Unum has increased the archival research in order to provide the necessary background information needed for the 2011 investigation travels.

From January 1st to December 31st 2011, 638 new testimonies have been recorded during the research travels and 214 mass graves sites localized.

Another goal was to expand our researches in Poland and in Romania.

In 2011, YIU made two successful research trips in Poland :

July 2011 - Region of Lublin

From July 5 to July 21 2011, a Yahad team investigated the towns of Kobylany, Miedzyrzec Podlaski, Malaszewicze Duze, Swory, Sycyna, Lomazy, Biala Podlaska, Terespol, Sobibor, Wlodawa, Luta, Drelow.

During this trip, the Yahad team interviewed 44 witnesses and located 21 execution sites.

August 2011 - Region of Lublin

From August 14 to August 25 2011, a Yahad team investigated the towns of Dorohusck, Wolka Cycowska, Sawin, Siedliszcze, Trawniki, Piaski, Rybczewice, Fajslawice. During this trip, the Yahad team interviewed 35 witnesses and located 18 execution sites, including 11 without memorials.

In 2011, YIU made its second trip to Romania:

July 2011 – Region of Oltenia:

The story of Nazi persecution and killings of the Roma is one of the less known and documented stories of the Holocaust. According to the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, historians estimate that 25% of the Roma in Europe were killed by the Germans and their allies, or 220,000 people, although estimates range as high as 500,000. During this research trip, Yahad interviewed 15 witnesses in the villages of Craiova, Cerat, Cosoveni who testified about their deportation.

- A third goal was to expand our educational program.

On June 30-July 1st, Yahad cosponsored the international symposium, “Mass Graves of the Holocaust,” in Bucharest, Romania, with the Wiesel National Institute for the Study of the Holocaust in Romania, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum’s Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies and the support of the European Union. The symposium followed the commemoration of the 1941 Iași Pogrom and the recent discovery of a mass grave by a team of archaeologists and historians from the Wiesel

Institute near the town of Popricani. On July 7-8 2011, seventeen History teachers from European high schools (Poland, Sweden, United Kingdom, Netherlands, Russia, Moldavia, Slovakia, Spain) have been invited to participate to a seminar on the Holocaust in Eastern Europe. The seminar was organized jointly by Yahad - In Unum and the Ann Frank House in Amsterdam. It was called: “Teaching the Holocaust by Bullets. Witnesses, archives and investigations”. Historians, researchers and members of the Yahad – In Unum team presented the different faces of the “Holocaust by bullets » to further educators’ understanding of this part of the history of the genocide of the Jews and Roma of Europe.

In partnership with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, the Ecole Normale Supérieure and the University Paris IV, Yahad - In Unum organized in Paris on September 19-20, 2011 an international Symposium about "the Nazi Camps in Occupied Soviet Territories". The symposium is the third international gathering of historians and researchers organized by Yahad to focus in-depth discussion and exchange regarding a particular aspect of the Holocaust in the East. In January 2011, The Hong Kong Jewish community welcomed Yahad for commemoration of UN International Holocaust Remembrance Day. A photo exhibition on the Holocaust by Bullets opened at the Holocaust and Tolerance Centre of Hong Kong and run until February 23. Conferences were given to more than 2 000 students at 11 local schools which draw students from throughout the world, aged 13-17.

On May 27, 2011, a visit to Yahad's offices in Paris by a delegation of German youths from « Aktion Sühnezeichen Friedensdienste » (Action Reconciliation Service for Peace) was part of the 50th anniversary of the volunteer services organization. ASF offers young Germans the possibility to work on behalf of peace in countries involved in World War II, including several European countries, Israel and the U.S. Two volunteers from ASF actually spoke about the documents in the German archives, whereas members of Yahad explained how Yahad lead the interviewes of eyewitnesses of the Holocaust by Bullets. Patrice Bensimon, director of the CERRESE, and Serban Catalin from the Association Dignity Rom talked about the specificity of the Rom mass murders during the World War II and how Yahad and Dignity Rom work together to protect the memory of the victims. Providing perspective on the Eastern Holocaust, from multiple viewpoints - historical, sociological, political, geopolitical, artistic, literary and psychoanalytical viewpoints – this is the objective of a new series of conferences launched by Yahad - In Unum in Paris at its European Resource Center for Research and Learning about the Eastern Holocaust (in French CERRESE) in 2010.

On April 27, 2011, Yahad invited Mr Thomas Will, a German judge and prosecutor of Nazi criminals, who heads the Central Office of the State Justice Administration for the Investigation of National Socialist Crimes in Ludwigsburg, Germany. He spoke about "German prosecution of Nazi war criminals". The prosecution of criminals, establishment of the facts, taking of testimony and conduct of trials have contributed to the advancement of historical research while challenging the public conscience. The conference was held at the College des Bernardins. On May 18, 2011, Yahad invited Serge Klarsfeld, French historian and lawyer, president of the Association "Daughters and Sons of Jewish Deportees from France" to participate to an open discussion with Father Patrick Desbois. The two men, who both dedicated their lives to the memory of unknown victims, exchanged their views on their commitments and experiences.

On December 15, the French historian Nicolas Werth made a conference about his father Alexander Werth, "a journalist in Russia at war".

In total, more than 300 people from different backgrounds attended the different lectures and activities organized by Yahad - In Unum during 2011.

With the support of the European Commission, Yahad – In Unum edited an educational toolkit for History teachers and students: "Holocaust by Bullets". It is composed of a book and a DVD. In the book, one can find texts, pictures of witnesses whom Yahad interviewed in Ukraine, Belarus, Russia, Poland and Romania and pictures of execution sites; maps of the frontline and the territories occupied by Nazis; historic pictures of the pre-war

Jewish life. It has also excerpts of Yahad – In Unum witnesses testimonies, describing “ the German arrival in the Soviet Union”, how the ghettos were constructed and being liquidated, the various camps, “the shootings”, “the rescuing of the Jews” and the “extermination of the Roma”, along with quotations from German and Soviet archives that are used for our researches. The DVD includes extracts of 12 testimonies highlighting the various steps of the Jews and Roma genocide process in Eastern Europe.

- Combating Holocaust Denial thanks to our Holocaust exhibition is part of our priority. In November 2011, the exhibition “Holocaust by Bullets” opened in Kiev, Ukraine, and then moved to the city of Kharkhov. It was the first time ever the Ukraine welcomed an exhibition concerning the extermination of Jews during the World War II. After this exhibition in Ukraine, Yahad edited a toolkit for 1,000 Ukrainian teachers with the support of the USC Shoah Foundation Institute.

Evaluation

Yahad - in Unum has three aims:

1. To restore dignity to thousands of Jews who were murdered and thrown into mass graves;
2. To fight against Holocaust denial;
3. To uncover, disseminate historical information on hundreds of mass murder sites that are totally unknown.

In 2011, more than 33,440 archives pages were scanned and transferred to Yahad- In Unum's office in Paris to prepare the on-the-ground research. Yahad – In Unum led 14 investigation travels from January to December 2011. From January 1 to December 2011, 638 new testimonies have been recorded during the research travels and 214 mass graves sites localized.

In 2010, more than 9,000 archives pages were scanned and transferred to Yahad- In Unum's office in Paris to prepare the on-the-ground research. Yahad – In Unum led 13 investigation travels from January to December 2010. From January 1 to December 2010, 579 new testimonies have been recorded during the research travels and 154 mass graves sites localized.

Others

Yahad - in Unum has three aims:

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