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Yahad In Unum-2014

Name of program

Yahad In Unum

Year of activity

2014

Name of the report's writer

Hanna Yakunina

Function of the report's writer

Eastern Europe affaires assistant

Status of program

Yahad - Yahad-In Unum's work is conducted on three fronts –archival research, field research trips

to actual sites, and educational activities and programs. The field research trips by Yahad-In Unum's

researchers are prepared by archival studies cross checking with the archival sources: the Soviet

Extraordinary State Commission archives of 1944 accessible today at the US Holocaust Memorial

Museum in Washington D.C., the Polish archives from the National Memory Institute, the archives

of German Juridical investigation of the national socialist crimes accessible at the German Archives

of Ludwisburg, Germany, and Romanian archives from the Romanian Information Service and the

General Inspectorate of Romanian Police. Their findings provide the background information for the

research on the ground.

In 2014, more than 35650 archival pages were collected and studied at Yahad- In Unum's research

center in Paris to prepare the on-the-ground research. Yahad – In Unum has increased the

archival

research in order to provide the background information needed for the 14 investigation trips, which took place in 2014.

Main achievements during the last year of activity

I - 2014 RESEARCH ON THE GROUND - OVERVIEW BELARUS

April 15 – May 1, Region of Grodno

From April 15th to May 1st, 2014, a Yahad-In Unum team conducted its fifteenth research trip to Belarus, in the Grodno region.

The region in which Yahad conducted its field work was quickly occupied by the Germans, from the summer of 1941 until 1944, and was predominantly populated by Jews before the war. Many of

them were killed by bullets on the spot, but for the locations close to the Lithuanian border, from

which the Jews were sent to the Vilnius ghetto.

During the course of this research trip, which yielded many diverse discoveries, Yahad interviewed

40 witnesses and identified 24 sites of execution.

May 13 - 29, Region of Minsk

From May 13th to May 29th, 2014, a Yahad-In Unum team conducted its sixteenth research trip to

Belarus, in the Minsk region, more precisely around the Soligorsk area.

The region in which Yahad conducted its field work was quickly occupied by the Germans, from the

summer of 1941 until 1944. The Holocaust by bullets was very diverse in its implementation here,

giving way to many local initiatives in the cities and villages concerned. In the city of Sloutsk, in particular, the team was able to carry out an exhaustive investigation and to interview a former Jewish survivor who was able to escape from the ghetto.

During the course of this research trip, producing pertinent and insightful research results, Yahad

interviewed 44 witnesses and identified 27 sites of execution.

June 10 - 26, Region of Gomel

From June 10th to June 26th, 2014, a Yahad-In Unum team conducted its seventeenth research trip

to Belarus, in Gomel region, the first one in that region, centered on the Gomel area itself.

The region in which Yahad conducted its field work was quickly occupied by the Germans, from the

summer of 1941 until 1943, but remained under military administration because of its proximity to

the front. The Holocaust by bullets took place early on here, during the winter, in 1941-1942.

As the

ground was frozen, the executioners often had to use pre-existing pits for the executions.

The team also collected several testimonies on the Belarusian villages burned after anti-

partisan

actions, and the massacres of these rural civilian populations.

During the course of this fruitful research trip, Yahad interviewed 45 witnesses and identified 21

sites of execution.

Sept 16 – Oct 2, Region of Gomel

From September 16th to October 2nd, 2014, a Yahad-In Unum team conducted its eighteenth research trip to Belarus, in the Gomel region, a trip that is a continuation of the previous one in June.

This trip was centered on the Mozyr area.

The area in which Yahad conducted its field work was quickly occupied by the Germans, from the

summer of 1941 until 1943 or 1944, but remained under military administration because of its proximity to the front. In addition to investigating the Holocaust by bullets, the team investigated the

sinister camp of Ozaritchi, a significant site in Belarusian historical memory. It was a civilian camp

of people who had been chased from the East of the country during the German withdrawal.

This

camp was the site of several thousand deaths. Another major theme that arose from investigations of

this area was the deportation of children. They were sent to children's camps where their blood was

drawn. They were sometimes also selected for a process of Germanization.

During the course of this research trip, yielding many new discoveries, Yahad interviewed 46

witnesses and identified 29 sites of execution.

RUSSIA

May 29 – June 12, Region of Leningrad

Yahad conducted its first research trip to the region of St. Petersburg to investigate the Siege of

Leningrad. This new research focus is completely consistent with Yahad's objective to document the

violence perpetrated by the Nazis during World War II in Eastern Europe. Indeed, for more than 800

days, the city of Leningrad was encircled by the Wehrmacht and thereby cut off from the Soviet

Union. The German blockade prevented any supplies from reaching the city, so that the population

was left to live off of meager bread rations for months. The people were left starving, sick, and under

constant bombardment from German aircraft.

The research team interviewed 35 survivors of the Leningrad blockade. Their testimony helped to

reconstruct the daily life of each person, each family during the blockade: how people ate, how they

kept themselves warm, where they worked ... Recording these testimonies not only allows for the

preservation of their individual histories, but also the history of their entire family. Almost every

witness lost several relatives, many of whom froze to death, died of hunger, dystrophy or from the bombings.

The interviews also highlight the suffering of an entire city. St. Petersburg, the second largest city in the Soviet Union, lost more than 1 million Soviet citizens during the blockade. Paradoxically, these interviews also highlight the massive and incredible mobilization of these Soviets to survive and resist in the face of the relentless bombing from German planes, the programmed famine, and Nazi propaganda.

Sept 19 – Oct 5, Region of Leningrad

A second research trip was conducted in St. Petersburg on the Siege of Leningrad.

The Yahad research team continued to interview survivors of the blockade not only in the city of St.

Petersburg, but also in small towns on the outskirts of the city which were closest to the front. Their

testimonies enabled the continued documentation of the extreme violence and difficulties of living in

a besieged city, a few hundred yards from the front. Many witnesses were forced to leave their homes to live in holes in the ground in the hopes of escaping the gunfire of the German army.

Entire

families died from hunger, the cold or bombing.

The investigation of the Leningrad blockade also focused on the identification of hundreds of symbolic sites of the blockade.

During interviews with survivors, dozens to hundreds of places are mentioned by the witnesses.

These places are where they lived, worked, survived ...

These places are key and very symbolic for witnesses. Because of the cold and fatigue, people

moved very little during this time. They stayed home and went out to get their daily bread ration.

Some could work. It was also the place where they last saw their fathers, mothers, grandparents,

where they were orphaned. But these places are also where they fought, worked, and were given

medical care. Each location allowed us to better understand and convey the story of Blockade of

Leningrad, its scale, and its impact.

All these locations are recorded in photos, filmed and their coordinates are documented.

The Yahad research team interviewed 41 survivors of the blockade during this trip.

ROMANIA

Aug 2 – 16, Region of Suceava-Botosani

During the 5th research trip to Romania, the Yahad-In-Unum investigated the northeastern region.

The research trip lasted 15 days; from August 2-16, 2014.

A large Jewish population lived in the area and in the cities including Stefanesti, Lespezi,

Dolhasca, Saveni, Darabani, Dorohoi and Radauti. During World War II, thousands of Jews were deported to

Transnistria by the fascist Antonescu government.

During this research trip, the investigation of Yahad-In Unum has recorded testimonies on:

- The deportation of Roma to internment camps in Transnistria.
- The shootings of Jews, The looting of Jewish homes and shops.
- The arrest and internment of Jews to forced labor camps in Romania, The rape of Jewish women.

During 15 days in the region, Yahad-In Unum interviewed 31 witnesses and identified two mass

graves of Jews, both without monuments.

POLAND

May 6 – 22, Region of Biabystok

During the 8th research trip to Poland, a Yahad-In Unum team visited the Bialystok region for the

first time. The trip lasted 17 days, from May 6 to 22, 2014.

The region of Bialystok was under Soviet occupation between 1939 - 1941. Nearly 240,000 inhabitants lived in the area before the war. Persecution against the Jews began in the first days of

the German occupation. During the first two weeks of July, nearly 7,000 Bialystok Jews were shot in

a forest near the village of Pietrasze, Giżycko County, by members of Einsatzgruppe B and members

of Police Battalion 316. In Tykocin or Trzcianne, the Jews, who constituted the majority of the population, were liquidated immediately.

During this research trip, the investigation of Yahad-In Unum collected testimonies on:

Mass executions of the Jewish population in the early days of the German occupation

The liquidation of the ghettos, Deportations to Treblinka, The participation of the local population in

the genocide, Shootings of Poles.

During two weeks in the field, Yahad-In Unum interviewed 46 witnesses and identified 24 mass

graves, including a dozen without monuments.

June 16 – July 2, Subcarthian region

During its 8th research trip to Poland, the Yahad-In Unum team visited the Subcarpathian region for

the first time. The trip lasted 17 days, from June 16 to July 2, 2014.

The trip took place in the west and south of the Subcarpathian region, which are part of the historic

Galicia. A large Jewish population lived in the region and in cities like Debica,

Jaslo, and Krosno. The territories where Yahad-In Unum investigated were occupied by the Nazis

between 1939 and 1944. Although the Subcarpathian region is located near Auschwitz and Belzec,

the Germans killed several thousand Jews in mass graves. According to the Polish archives, nearly

1,500 Jews were shot in Dobrucowa, several thousand in Warzyce, 645 in Jasielnica, and 2,000 in

the Halbow forest.

During this research trip, Yahad-In Unum collected testimonies on:

Mass shootings of Jewish victims in mass graves, The Szebnie labor camp

Shootings of Roma, The liquidation of the ghettos

The requisitioning of young Poles of the Baudienst during the genocide

During 17 days in the region, Yahad-In Unum interviewed 43 witnesses and identified 24 mass graves, including a dozen without monuments.

Dec 2 - 17, Subcarthian region

The 10th research trip to Poland took place in the Subcarpathian region, in the East, near the present-

day Ukrainian border. Before World War II, three communities lived in the area: Poles, Jews and

Ruthenians. Between 1939 and 1941, the Nazis and the Soviets divided the region. The border was

the San River. When the Germans arrived, many Jews residing in the West San tried to escape to the

Soviet side. Those who remained were herded into ghettos in the cities, into regions such as Przeworsk, Kanczuga or Przemysl. The Jews from these ghettos were mainly deported to Belzec,

shot during their interment in the ghettos or shot in mass graves. Jews who hid were shot in the

villages where they were caught.

During this research trip, the investigation of Yahad-In Unum collected testimonies on:

The mass shootings of Jewish victims perpetrated by the Nazis and their collaborators, as in Dachnow, Pelkinie, or even in Przemysl.

The executions of the Jewish victims who tried to hide was carried out by shootings of small groups

in the Jewish cemeteries of Wielkie Oczy, Oleszyce and Siedlecza.

Convoys of Jews heading towards Belzec and the shootings of Jews who tried to escape from the

trains. The Soviet POW camps, The massacres of Poles, committed by Ukrainian nationalists.

During two weeks in the field, Yahad-In Unum interviewed 33 witnesses and identified 18 mass

graves, the majority of which do not have monuments.

FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

April 14 – 28, Region of Skopje

Yahad conducted an investigation in Macedonia on the deportation of the Jews and the persecution

of the Roma people. During WWII, Macedonia was annexed by Bulgaria, an ally of the Nazis.

Yahad collected testimonies of Jewish survivors and local non-Jewish witnesses about how Jewish

people were arrested, rounded up and deported. The Yahad team also heard testimonies on how the

local Bulgarian police sold the property of the Jews and how Jewish houses were looted.

Additionally, Yahad interviewed elderly Roma about their life during WWII. There are almost no historical sources on the fate of the Roma in Macedonia during WWII, during the Bulgarian

occupation. However, according to our testimonies from Roma people, the Roma were indeed persecuted: they were victims of humiliation, forced to shave their heads, women were raped,

men

were forced to join the Army but not given uniforms, thus serving for free. Yahad's investigation in this country has allowed for the documentation of an unknown part of history—the fate of the Jews and Roma during WWII.

The Yahad team recorded 42 testimonies during this research trip.

MOLDOVA

Nov 12 - 26, Region of Comrat

Yahad led a fourth research trip to Moldova in the Autonomous Territorial Unit of Gagauzia (Gagauz Yeri), in the region of Comrat. Gagauzia is an autonomous region with a large gagouze minority, a Turkish-speaking Christian population.

The investigation allowed for the collection of testimonies about the massacres and deportations of Jews and Gypsies in the region, during the Romanian occupation from 1941-1944, and for the identification of the victims' graves. The interviews revealed information on many shootings, which took place exceptionally early and were perpetrated upon the arrival of the Romanian army in early

July. The first victims were killed after the beginning of Operation Barbarossa.

The research collected has also allowed us to better understand the situation in Gagouzia before the war, during the Soviet period and during the war-time period of the Romanian occupation. The Gagouzes and other minorities, like the Bulgarians, were victims of deportation by the Soviet authorities.

Yahad interviewed 47 witnesses and identified 10 executions sites, none of which had a memorial.

LITHUANIA

March 27 – April 10, Region of Vilnius

In this third research trip to Lithuania, Yahad-In Unum investigated in the apskritis of Vilnius, a historically complex region. Populated by a majority by Jews and Poles before the war, the region

had various occupations from 1939 - 1944. A few days after the arrival of the Nazis, the Jewish populations of the villages were exterminated at the edge of mass graves.

The population is now incredibly diverse. In the villages investigated, the team met with interlocutors of various origins: Lithuanian, Russian, Belarusian, Polish or Karaite.

During this research trip, Yahad-In Unum collected testimonies on:

Mass shooting of Jewish victims, such as on the sites of Svencioneliai (7,000 Jewish victims), Varnikiai (1,446 Jewish victims), and Semeliskes (962 Jewish victims)

The execution site of Paneriai, where nearly 120,000 victims (Jews, Poles and Russians) were shot,

The fate of the Karaites of Trakai, The Ogrondniki and Naujoji Vilna Soviet POW camp

The shooting of Polish civilian casualties

From March 27 to April 10, the investigation team interviewed 37 witnesses and identified 26 mass graves.

Oct 8 -24, Region of Klaipeda-Telsiai

The fourth research trip to Lithuania took place in the regions of Klaipeda and Telsiai.

On June 22, 1941, Nazi Germany, determined to invade the Soviet Union as quickly as

possible,
launched Operation Barbarossa. Western Lithuania was occupied in a few days and the persecution of the Jews began immediately thereafter. This was the beginning of the Holocaust in Lithuania.

According to the archives of the German courts, between June and September 1941, the Einsatzkommando Tilsit executed 5,502 victims. They were in charge of the first mass shootings of Jewish victims in Lithuania.

During this research trip, the Yahad-In Unum collected testimonies on:

Mass shootings of Jewish men, who were the first victims of the Holocaust in Lithuania during the

first days of Operation Barbarossa, The emergence of Nationalist police

Ghettoization and murder of women and children, Shootings of Lithuanian Communists

During these two weeks in the field, Yahad-In Unum interviewed 39 witnesses and identified 26

mass graves.

II - ARCHIVAL RESOURCES

GERMAN ARCHIVES

Archives of German Juridical investigation of the national socialist crimes: Bundesarchiv in Ludwigsburg, Germany

One of the archival resources in Germany is the Central Office of the Judicial Authorities for the

Investigation of National Socialist Crimes (Zentrale Stelle der Landesjustizverwaltungen zur Aufklärung von NS-Verbrechen)'s files.

On the basis of an administrative agreement between the federal states, which are responsible for the

Central Office and the Federal Republic of Germany, the holdings of the Central Office were to a

large extent transferred to the Bundesarchiv, which established its local branch office in Ludwigsburg for this aim. Since then, the Central Office is primarily concerned with its original juristic tasks, namely to conduct a preliminary investigation of NS crimes and in this vein, to collect,

to inspect and to analyze relevant material in Germany and abroad. In this context, the Central Office

is at any time entitled to use the entire archive holdings transferred from the Bundesarchiv.

Each month Yahad In Unum searches for the necessary archival material to conduct research in the

field. The research work at the Bundesarchiv proceeds geographically, according to the investigations in the field conducted by Yahad's research teams.

From January to November 2014, the following regions were studied and archival material was treated in Ludwigsburg, then studied and translated:

Region of Bialystok (Poland), Region of Subcarpathia (Poland), Region of Gomel (Belarus), Region

of Grodno (Belarus), Region of Vilnius (Lithuania), Region of Klaipeda (Lithuania).

Over 8.000 pages of depositions were collected for the preparation of the research trips in these

regions.

The German archival material used in 2014 for the preparation of the research trips is as

follows :

Region of Klaipeda: 3723 pages

Region of Vilnius: 3762 pages

(Total Lithuania: 7485 pages)

Region of Bialystok: 3026 pages

Region of Subcarpathia: 4313 pages

(Total Poland: 7339 pages)

Region of Gomel: 1098 pages

Region of Grodno: 1642 pages

(Total Belarus: 2740 pages).

General Total: 17564 pages of German archival material treated.

SOVIET ARCHIVES

Extraordinary State Commission to Investigate German-Fascist Crimes Committed on Soviet Territory from the USSR and KGB Archives today accessible at the US Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington D.C.

Belarus (Gomel region):

Extraordinary State Commission (fond RG-22.002M, Reel 8). From 959 pages 62 pages have been

selected and translated from Russian into French.

Russia (St Petersburg and Leningrad region):

Extraordinary State Commission (fond RG-22.002M, Reel 12, 15, 16, 17, 18). From 4,200 pages,

about 40 pages have been selected and translated from Russian into French.

Moldova:

- Extraordinary State Commission (fond RG-22.002M, Reel 18). From 4,095 pages, 280 pages have

been selected and translated from Russian into French.

- KGB Archives: 44 KGB files (fond RG-54.003, total of 6,850 pages) have been viewed, about 100

pages have been selected and translated from Russian into French.

Lithuania (Vilnius, Klaipeda and Telšiai region):

- Extraordinary State Commission (fond RG-22.002M, Reel 19). From 641 pages, about 70 pages

have been selected and translated from Russian and Lithuanian into French and English.

- KGB Archives: 17 KGB files, (fond RG-26.004M, Reel 9, 11, 46, 47, 48, 50, 55, 138, 142, 150,

153, 214). From 21,094 pages, about 150 pages have been selected and translated from Russian and

Lithuanian into French and English.

ROMANIAN ARCHIVES

In 2014, a total of 1862 pages from the Romanian archives were analyzed and translated.

Part of this work was in preparation for a research trip to Ukraine, which had to be postponed due to

the turbulence of current events in the region, a total of 125 pages was viewed from the Romanian

Information Service Records, 1936-1996, Reel 15, File 18209 - 3.

The rest was in preparation for Yahad's 4th research trip to Romania:

National Archives of the History of the Central and Regional Police

File; 47/1941. Pages= 27.

File; 130/1942. Pages= 7

National Archives of the Central History of the General Inspectorate of the Gendarmerie.

File; 203/1942 Pages= 537.

Files; 47/1942 ; 258,259/1942. Pages= 173

File; 259/1942. Pages= 469.

File; 260/1942. Pages= 25.

National Archives of the Moldovan Republic, file 4570/5, 20 pages.

National Archives of the Central History of the Ministry of Interior. General Direction of Police.

File; 196/1942. Pages= 472.

LITHUANIAN ARCHIVES

The two research trips to Lithuania required a significant amount of research within the Soviet, Lithuanian and German archives. Our researchers provided us with documents from three different

archival sources:

War Crimes Investigations and trial records from the former Lithuanian KGB Archives 1944-1992

RG-26.004M, available at the USHMM (3971 pages)

Extraordinary State Commission to investigate German-Fascist Crimes Committed on Soviet Territory, available at the USHMM (1960 pages)

The Ludwigsburg Federal archives in Germany (7485 pages)

Over 600 pages have been selected and translated from Russian and Lithuanian into French and English.

POLISH ARCHIVES

Archival work has been effectuated with documents from three main institutions: the Institute of National Remembrance in Poland, the Jewish Historical Institute in Poland and the Federal Archives in Germany.

The Institute of National Remembrance in Poland:

An important part of the Polish archives comes from The Commission for the Examination of Hitler's Crimes in Poland. Established after the Second World War, the commission focused on research, examination and prosecution of Nazi crimes. The archives are held in the Institute of National Remembrance (IPN) and at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) in Washington DC.

The Jewish Historical Institute in Poland:

The Jewish Historical Institute in Poland (ZIH) is a repository of materials relating to the Jewish historical presence in Poland and a centre for academic research and study about the culture and history of Polish Jewry. The ZIH and the USHMM provided a part of the archives used in the research trips. The documents are mostly testimonies of Jewish survivors of the Holocaust, collected by the Central Jewish Historical Commission after the Second World War. Established in 1944, the main task of the Commission was to preserve a record of the gruesome events of the Holocaust.

The Ludwigsburg Federal archives in Germany:

The German archives concerning Poland were obtained from the Ludwigsburg Federal archives in Germany. This department has been and still is responsible for collecting, viewing and analyzing materials documenting atrocities perpetrated against civilians during World War II. The archives used to prepare the research trips are mostly extracted from trials against the perpetrators of the mass shootings.

Almost 10 000 pages of German (7339 pages) and Polish (2147 pages) archives were

processed and around 800 pages were translated. Trip files were compiled to identify the research area, containing maps and all the information necessary to investigate in the villages. They come from secondary literature sources.

III - RESEARCH CENTER

Yahad-In Unum's Research Center is open every Tuesday and Thursday by appointment. In 2014, the research center had 30 visits from 16 visitors. Of these 16 visitors, 10 were relatives of victims and 6 were researchers.

Additionally, Yahad responded to more than 120 requests for information sent to the contact address listed on their website and on the interactive map. 100 requests came from relatives of the victims,

14 were from researchers, and 6 from history teachers. Most of the requests were from the US,

others were from Israel, Europe, and Southern America.

IV - ACADEMIC & EDUCATION ACTIVITIES

EUROPE

Yahad-In Unum's Victims of Nazism Cycle – Academic Conference: "Religious Minorities in Eastern Europe during WWII"

December 11th, 2014 – Collège des Bernardins, Paris

Conference given by Mr. Ovidiu Creanga, with introduction by Marie Moutier.

Since the initial months following Hitler's arrival to power, the Jehovah Witnesses were among the first victims of his regime. Fierce opponents of Nazism, they rebelled against military service and work in arms factories. Yet, they were not the only religious minority to be persecuted by the Nazis and their allies. Romania, an important ally of Germany in Eastern Europe, repressed numerous religious minorities (pejoratively called "sects"). Yahad-In Unum found traces of the shootings of Baptists in Belarus.

Ovidiu Creanga, a Romanian researcher with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, presented his knowledge and research on the persecutions of religious minorities in Romania during World War II, a subject that is still not well-known. Marie Moutier, a researcher with Yahad-In Unum, addressed the archives and witnesses testimonies gathered by Yahad-In Unum in Belarus on the execution of the Baptists.

Meeting and Discussion with Oradour-sur-Glane Survivor

December 10, 2014, Oradour-sur-Glane, France

On Wednesday, December 10, 2014, Yahad-In Unum's ASF (Action signe de réconciliation/Action sign of reconciliation) volunteer, Marius Bickhardt, participated in a discussion and lunch hosted by German Ambassador to France Susanne Wasum-Rainer. The lunch focused on Robert Hébras, who shared his account of surviving the Oradour-sur-Glane massacre in France with the attendees.

"Antisemitism as viewed by a Christian" Lecture by Father Desbois

November, 30th, 2014, Synagogue des Ulis, France

In the face of rising instances of anti-Semitism, notably in France, Father Patrick Desbois delivered a speech entitled "Anti-Semitism as viewed by a Christian."

Seminar “Memories of Gypsies, Memories of Europe”

November 28th, 2014, Madrid, Spain

On November 28-29 in Madrid, Yahad Roma Project Manager Costel Nastasie and Yahad Historical Advisor Andrej Umansky participated in the seminar “Memories of Gypsies, Memories of Europe.”

They presented Yahad-In Unum’s research results on the genocide of the Roma in Eastern Europe in a presentation entitled “The Genocide of the Roma in the 20th century.” This event was co-organized by the Spanish Ministry of Education and was aimed at learning and recognizing the history of the Roma as part of collective European memory as well as encouraging the education of Roma history.

Training Seminar for European Teachers

November 8th, 2014, Caen Memorial France

In conjunction with the Caen Memorial, Yahad-In Unum hosted a training seminar for European middle school and high school teachers from November 8-9, 2014 at the Mémorial de Caen in Calvados, France. This seminar allowed teachers to learn more about the Holocaust in Eastern Europe during World War II and gave them the tools to teach this chapter in history to their students.

Yahad research team members and historians who specialize in this area presented the different periods of the Holocaust in the East including: the steps of the extermination in Ukraine, Belarus, Russia, Moldova and Lithuania, the execution methods (shooting and others), the successive phases of the concentration of Jews in ghettos and forced labor camps, and the persecution of the Roma.

Participants were introduced to original teaching tools, including Yahad’s interactive map and an educational toolkit, which will allow them to introduce the subject of the Holocaust in the East in a more interactive method to their students. The participants also received a guided tour of the Caen Memorial’s permanent exhibition and a visit to the D-Day landing beaches.

Lecture on Yahad-In Unum’s work Heidelberg University

October 21st, 2014, Eastern European History Library, Heidelberg, Germany

Historical Advisor Andrej Umansky gave a thought-provoking presentation on Yahad’s work over the past 10 years, including the preparatory work in the archives, its relationship to the field work, and the significance and utilization of the research results.

Yahad-In Unum’s Contemporary Massacres Cycle – Academic Conference – “Cambodia”

October 9th, 2014, Collège des Bernardins, Paris, France

On August 8, 2014, after a long and costly trial, two leaders of the Democratic Kampuchea (Khmer Rouge Regime) were sentenced to life in prison for having allowed more than a quarter of the country’s population to perish, from 1975 to 1979. Is this considered a genocide according to the terms of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948?

Father François Ponchaud, a recognized specialist on this Cambodian question, presented in dialogue with Father Patrick Desbois, on understanding how a Buddhist population, considered gentle, could carry out one of the most devastating tragedies of the 20th century. This lecture is part of the research department “Society, Liberty, Peace.”

Photographic Exhibition: “The Neighbors Speak”

July 18th, 2014, Le salon H, Paris, France Yahad-In Unum, in conjunction with salon H, presented a photographic exhibition, displaying 10 years of our research in Eastern Europe. The exhibit was on display to the general public from July 2-18.

Academic Conference: "Why is so little known on the persecutions of the Roma during the Second World War?"

June 20th, 2014 – Dignity Roma Center, Brussels, Belgium

Alain Reynier, ethnologist at the University of Louvain, well-known specialist on the history of the Roma as well as director of the review "Etudes Tsiganes" and author of Tsigane, heureux sit u es libre! presented alongside Lydia Chagoll, dancer, choreographer, actress, writer, and film-maker. Mrs. Chagoll is the director of the documentary Ma Bister, on the life of the Roma, particularly during the genocide perpetrated by the Nazi regime. Both Mr. Reynier and Mrs. Chagoll spoke in dialogue with Yahad President, Father Desbois.

Colloquium on the Memorial of the Shoah

June 18th, 2014, Collège des Bernardins, Paris, France

This colloquium explored the particularities of anti-Semitism in Europe during the Middle Ages and in modern times, including the Nazi anti-Semitic campaign and featured a response from Father Desbois. This event was open to the general public.

Conference: "The history of the Roma in Romania during the 19th-20th century"

May 20th, 2014, Catholic University of Louvain, Brussels, Belgium

General view of the history of Roma in Romania during the 19th and 20th centuries : the diverse ethnicities, their different languages and cultures. Given by ethnologist at the University of Louvain, recognized specialist in the history of Roma populations, Alain Reyniers, directs the journal « Roma Studies ».

Academic Conference: "The History and Memory of the Roma Genocide"

May 16th, 2014, Dignity Roma Center, Brussels, Belgium

This academic conference focused on the latest research results of Yahad-In Unum in Romania and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia on the persecution of Roma during the Second World War. Patrice Bensimon, Director of the Research Centre of Yahad-In Unum and Costel Nastasie, President of Dignity Roma, presented in dialogue with Mr. Marco Gonzalez, Director of Yahad-In Unum.

Father Desbois and Yahad are honored by the French President, François Hollande

March 4th, 2014, Paris, France

On the occasion of the annual CRIF dinner, Father Desbois was honored with the Crif Award "in recognition of his commitment to the truth." In the address given by François Hollande, President of France, Mr. Hollande stated:

"A moment ago, you honored Father Patrick Desbois. Through his own family history, he discovered the tragedy of Ukrainian Jews. He worked for the recognition of the 'Holocaust by Bullets' because the Holocaust had begun even before the camps, and furthermore, not only in the Ukraine. It is very important to know how the genocidal process began, and how it came to the

extermination camps.”

UNITED STATES & CANADA

Holocaust by Bullets course at Georgetown University with Father Desbois

Fall Semester, 2014, Washington D.C.

Georgetown University launched a course this fall semester, « Holocaust by Bullets » which was

team-taught with Fr. Dennis McMannus (Program for Jewish Civilization) and Fr. Patrick Desbois

as an adjunct professor. The course focused on the mobile killing units that exterminated the Jewish

population of small villages, which we refer to as the “Holocaust by Bullets.” This

undergraduate

class began in the fall and concluded in December.

“The course will help [them] to understand what was going on behind the official reports, to have a

real awareness of modern genocides in order to anticipate and fight against them.” – Father Desbois

quoted in Georgetown University article.

Holocaust By Bullets: The Untold Story with Father Patrick Desbois

November 17th, 2014 - Chapman Auditorium Memorial Hall, Orange, California

Father Desbois recounted his journey in exposing the Holocaust by Bullets in Eastern Europe to a

public of university students and community members at a lecture that was held at Chapman University.

Holocaust Teach-In

November 9th, 2014 - Gratz College, Pennsylvania

On Sunday, November 9, Father Patrick Desbois was featured as the Keynote Speaker at the Arnold

and Esther Tuzman Memorial Holocaust Teach-In at Gratz College in Melrose Park, Pennsylvania.

This event was open to the public, especially welcoming teachers, professors and attorneys engaged

in the subject.

Father Desbois speaks at Georgetown University

July 17th, 2014, Washington D.C.

Organized by the Jan Karski Institute for Holocaust Education, Father Desbois spoke as part of the Certificate in Holocaust and Genocide Studies held in July 13-19, 2014.

Father Desbois speaks at the Association of Holocaust Organizations

June 7th, 2014 – Hilton Hotel, Tampa Florida

Father Patrick Desbois spoke during an event organized by the Association of Holocaust Organizations at the Hilton Hotel.

Interfaith Holocaust Remembrance Service

May 15th, 2014 – Calgary, Canada

Father Desbois spoke during the Interfaith Holocaust Remembrance Service at St Michael's

Roman Catholic Church, in Calgary Canada. The service was sponsored by the Calgary Council of Christians and Jews.

Revealing the Untold story: the Holocaust by Bullets Conference and Exhibit in Calgary, Beth Tzedec Synagogue

May 14th, 2014 – Calgary Canada

“I am coming to Calgary because one of the survivors (of the mass killings) came to me in Detroit a certain time ago,” says Father Desbois. “She was a survivor from one of those villages. She told me: ‘I would like you to come to Calgary because it’s so unknown this model of genocide by shootings’.

That person was Fanny Wedro.”

With the support of the Fanny Wedro Holocaust Education Foundation, Father Desbois addressed an

audience at the Beth Tzedec Synagogue in Calgary on Wednesday, May 14th and presided over an

Interfaith Holocaust Remembrance Service the following day.

The Holocaust by Bullets exhibit also appeared at Beth Tzedec Synagogue in Calgary from May 14-

20. Photos from the exhibit, including Father Desbois explaining the windows that reveal another

layer to the large scale photographs, are below.

Father Desbois in a Panel Discussion on Genocide at St Paul University

April 28th, 2014 – Ottawa, Ontario, Canada

A thought-provoking discussion on genocide exploring how tolerance, understanding and a duty to

remember are essential ingredients in preventing such evil.

Panelists included: Father Patrick Desbois, President of Yahad-In Unum

Jan Grabowski, Professor of History, University of Ottawa

Rabbi Reuven P. Bulka, Machzikei Hadas Congregation

Vern Redekop, Conflict Studies Professor, St. Paul University

Emery Rutagonya, Rwandan genocide survivor and co-founder of the Rwanda Survivors Foundation

Dr. Naomi Azirieli, CEO of the Azirieli Foundation moderated.

Holocaust by bullets exhibit premieres in Ottawa

April 24th, St Paul University, Ottawa, Ontario Canada:

After ten years of research, Yahad-In Unum was proud to present their exhibit on their decade of

research in Eastern Europe. The exhibit features large-scale photographs and testimonies from eye-

witnesses to mass executions as well as archival pictures. Premiering at St. Paul University in Ottawa in April before moving to Calgary in May

Holocaust by Bullets course at Georgia Gwinnett College

September, Georgia, United States

Andrej Umansky, historical consultant to Yahad - In Unum, gave a course at Georgia Gwinnett College (Georgia, United States) at the invitation of Professor Dovile Budryte. This session brought

the public nature of the genocide of Jews and Roma in Eastern Europe and used numerous extracts

from video testimonies. It took place in the form of a video conference, allowing students

across
campus to attend.

V - PUBLICATIONS

In 2014, Yahad researchers published the following:

A feature article was written by Danielle Rozenberg in collaboration with Patrice Bensimon, on the extermination of the Jewish victims in Rava-Ruska (Lviv Region, Ukraine). It was based on research conducted in both the German and Soviet archives, but also on field work, which allowed for the interview of 32 witnesses and identification of 6 executions sites. The study established the different aspects and stages of extermination (ghettoization, forced labor, deportation, mass shootings, isolated shootings) of Jewish victims of the shtetl, nearly 6,000 Jews. It provided a glimpse of the complexity and the violence of the Holocaust in Eastern Europe by tracing step by step the persecutions and massacres of over 12,000 Jews, 14 000 Soviet prisoners of war, and thousands of French prisoners of war. This monographic work showed how violence is rooted locally. On the occasion of 10th Anniversary of Yahad, the study focused on the village where Yahad's research began, tracing how the method of the association initiated and developed by Patrick Desbois, has continued to develop over several sessions of investigation in Rava-Ruska and demonstrates the need to combine archival research and field research at the most local level.

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.

From January 1st to December 17th, 2014, Yahad conducted research trips to 470 villages in Eastern Europe, gathering 554 new testimonies and recording 233 new mass killing sites.

In 2014, we have translated a total of 208 witness testimonies.

To this day, Yahad has effectuated research concerning 1,615 execution sites in 8 different countries and has gathered 4,115 testimonies during the course of its 93 investigative research trips.

In 2014, there were 27, 111 visitors to Yahad's website.

From January 1st to December 31, 2014, Yahad-In Unum edited and digitized 701 testimonies video recorded during research travels, which can be consulted at the Research Center in Paris and at the Research Center of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington.

The development of Yahad - In Unum will continue in 2015 on three levels:

- Field Research :

Research trips concerning the murder of Jews by shooting and the localization of execution sites

in the Ukraine, Belarus, Russia, Poland, Moldova and Lithuania

Research trips to interview Roma survivors in Romania, Moldova, Serbia, Kosovo, Bosnia, Albania.

Research trip to interview survivors and witnesses to the massacres of the indigenous people

and

the families of the disappeared in Guatemala

- Academic and educational activities (studying the Holocaust to fight against mass violence today)

International dissemination of the research results through academic activities, exhibition and the publication of educational and communication tools. Organization of seminars at the university level and for history teachers at the school level, international conferences to deepen the knowledge of the Holocaust and to fight against new mass violence. Teaching the Holocaust to minorities to learn to fight against violence.

Others

- Accessibility of results

The online interactive map to view research results of the association village by village, the consultation of testimonies via the internet through an online video library, and the creation of a

traveling exhibition on the persecution of the Roma Eastern Europe.

<http://www.yahadinunum.org/?lang=fr>

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