

## Robin Bernstein: Beauty and Terror



### Józefów

2019

Reserve Police Battalion 101 was comprised of “regular” German men from Hamburg, too old for conscription. They were construction workers, druggists, businessmen, dock-workers, teachers, machinists, waiters and professional policemen. They became part of the German Order Police.

These men transformed themselves into a killing squad of such violence, brutality, sadism, and enthusiasm that it has been well studied.

Their first action was in Józefów, Poland and lasted for 17 hours. The men were given large amounts of ammunition and alcohol (provided by the mayor of Józefów). They separated Jewish men of working age then took 1500 Jewish women, children, infants, and elderly men to a nearby forest, forced them to lie naked on top of their murdered neighbors, friends, and relatives, and were shot in the back of the neck at point blank range (as directed by the Battalion physician). Those trying to escape, those too frail to walk and very young children were shot on the spot.

After the war, the 500 men of Police Battalion 101 returned to their previous occupations.

Of the 14 men indicted for these crimes in Józefów, for the crimes of 38,000 additional direct one-on-one murders, and for the crimes of transporting 45,000 Polish Jewish citizens to their deaths at Treblinka, only 3 individuals were ever jailed and each served an average of 5 years

The commander, Wilhelm Trapp, and one other policeman were executed in 1947 for the killing of 78 non-Jewish Poles. The 180 Jewish victims killed at the same time were deemed not relevant to the case.



### Iasi

2017

At the beginning of 1941, approximately half of the 100,000 residents of Iasi, Romania were Jewish.

On June 28 and 29, a violent slaughter of the Jewish citizens of Iasi was perpetrated by the Iasi police, the Romanian military, SSI agents, The Iron Guard, and many ordinary citizens (neighbors of Jews, known and lesser-known supporters of anti-semitic movements, students, poorly-paid, low-level officials, railway workers, craftsmen frustrated by Jewish competition, “white-collar” workers, retirees and military veterans) who knew they would not have to account for their actions.

On June 30, 1941, two trains departed from Iasi, Romania in the blazing heat of summer on a ‘trip to nowhere’. They contained the survivors of that pogrom. 2500 people were crammed into cattle cars that had their ventilation slats nailed shut. For the next 17 hours this ‘death train’ traveled a circuitous route across Romania. Periodically, rail cars were opened to remove those who died of suffocation, heat exhaustion, dehydration, wounds inflicted during the pogrom, and suicide. Anyone attempting to get water at these stops was immediately shot.

Approximately 200/2500 people survived. They were subsequently “invited” to return home.



## Vel D'Hiv

2016

Beginning at 4 AM, on July 16, 1942, the French Police rounded up and arrested 13,152 Jews in Paris.

Each person was instructed to bring one blanket, one sweater, a pair of shoes and two shirts. They were held in extremely crowded conditions at Velodrome d'Hiver, a professional bicycle racing arena one block from the Eiffel Tower. About 6000 were taken to a transit camp and on to Auschwitz the following day, but 7000 remained at Vel D'Hiv in extreme heat without water, food or sanitary facilities. After 5 days, the remaining adults were taken, leaving the children (ages 16 and under) behind. Over 3,000 children were sent via rail cattle cars to their deaths in Auschwitz from Vel D'Hiv. The youngest was 18 months old.



## Morning Until Evening

2018

An 8 year-old Polish boy incited the Kielce Pogrom after the end of the war. This boy, named Henryk Błaszczyk, and his father accused local holocaust survivors of kidnapping Polish children, holding them in a building at 7 Platy Street, and committing "ritual murder". This resulted in a massacre of innocent survivors including Jewish men, women, and children. In 1998, when that boy turned 60 years old, he told a journalist that the entire story was a lie. The ruthlessness of this action and these

murders sent the international message that Jews would not be safe to return to their homes across Europe - and thus began a mass exodus of survivors.

There are only about 20,000 people with Jewish ancestry currently living in Poland. Before the war, there were 3,000,000.



## A Nefarious Faith

2011

Included here is Oliver O'Grady from Stockton, California who admitted to raping and molesting at least 25 children. He was recently arrested for possession of child pornography of children as young as 2 years old. The church (Bishop Roger Mahoney) knew of his crimes as early as 1976 and each report would motivate the diocese to transfer him to a new parish. Also present is Bishop Roger Vangheluwe who admitted to abusing his nephews for 15 years beginning when one nephew was 5 years old. Vangheluwe was never charged as the statute of limitations had expired. He is currently living on a generous pension somewhere in West Flanders. Saint Athanasius of Alexandria was a charismatic and highly intelligent theologian born in 290. He was exiled 5 times in part for his unwavering belief that Jesus was God incarnate. It has been written that Athanasius rigged his own election, stole funds for the sale of grain meant for the Empire, and was suspected of the murder of a fellow theologian.



## The Ponary Riflemen

2017

The near total destruction of Lithuanian Jews between July 1941 and July 1944 was, in large part, due to the willing and enthusiastic participation of the local populace in Nazi occupied Lithuania.

Both the Ypatingas Burys (special security force) and the Ponary Riflemen (so named by Kazimierz Sakowicz who, from his attic window, witnessed and recorded precise information about the executions and executioners) were primarily responsible for the deaths of over 70,000 Jews, 10,000 Polish intellectuals, academics, and resistance fighters, and 2,000 Soviet POWs.

The victims included men, women, and children who were forced to strip before being shot. The bodies were buried in huge pits that had been previously built by the Soviets for storage of fuel oil. Their remains were subsequently burned, ground up, and mixed with sand in an attempt to cover up the crime.

Before WWII, Ponary (Paneriai) was a picturesque village and forestland where people picnicked, skied, and enjoyed the outdoors. This area is now a suburb of Vilnius, Lithuania.

Many Lithuanians benefitted economically from this and other similar actions.



## Babi Yar

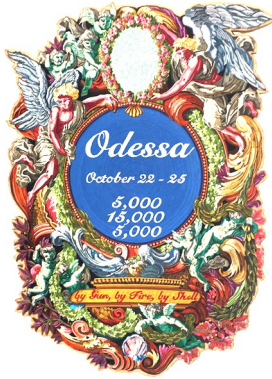
2015

*NOTICE: "All Yids of the city of Kiev and its vicinity must appear on Monday, September 29, by 8 o'clock in the morning at the corner of Mel'nikova and Dorohozhytska streets. Bring documents, money and valuables, and also warm clothing, and linen. Any Yids who do not follow this order and are found elsewhere will be shot."*

33,771 men, women and children assembled and were marched two miles out of Kiev to Babi Yar, a deep ravine. The crowd was enormous and chaotic. The people were forced to deposit all of their luggage, warm coats, money, valuables and clothing (including underwear) into designated piles. The naked people were then forced single file in groups of 10 down a corridor of soldiers into the bottom of the deep and wide ravine. The Schultpolizei required them to lay face down and German marksmen proceeded to shoot each person in the neck with submachine guns. Like a layer cake, soil from the sides of the ravine was scraped down in between the rows of dead bodies.

29 out of 33,771 survived. One testified.

Witnesses recounted what they saw. The stories match.



## Odessa

2018

In October 1941, one of the largest single mass murders of Jewish people took place in Odessa, Transnistria (now Ukraine).

Romanian and German troops took the city on October 16. On the afternoon of October 22, a Soviet booby-trapped safe exploded inside the Romanian Military Headquarters killing the Romanian Commander and 66 others.

In retaliation, the Romanians led between 25,000 and 34,000 Jews out of town, tied them together in groups of 40–50 people, threw them into ditches and began to execute them. The Romanians decided that the killing was taking too long and was too expensive, so they led the remaining Jews into four large adjacent wooden warehouses. The doors were closed and the soldiers fired directly into the buildings through perforations they made in the walls.

In order to make sure that all the people inside the buildings had died, they poured gasoline into three of the buildings (one held women and children) and set them on fire. Those who tried to escape through windows or the roof were shot or met with hand grenades. On October 25, the fourth building, which was filled with men, was shelled.



## Lorenzo's Primo

2019

At Auschwitz, Lorenzo Perrone, (a modest Italian civilian brick mason) saved Primo Levi's life by bringing him a piece of bread and soup every day for 5 months, secretly and at great risk to himself. After the war, Primo Levi found Lorenzo and tried to return the gift by saving him from tuberculosis and alcoholism. Sadly, he was unsuccessful.

Primo Levi became one of the greatest Jewish writers of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. He said of Lorenzo, "his humanity was pure and uncontaminated. Thanks to Lorenzo, I managed not to forget that I, myself, was a man."

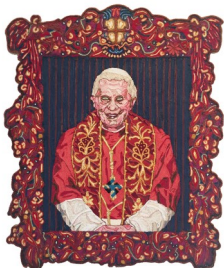
In the face of great injustice, do what you can.

Find your Primo.

## ***In the Office:***

### Bad Pope

2012



Pope Benedict XVI (aka Joseph Aloisius Ratzinger) has a legacy which includes protecting a notorious pedophile Priest Father Maciel and covering up other pedophile clergy, promotion of neo-fascist sects including Opus Dei, support of extreme right wing groups, public disrespect for other faiths, a reaffirmation of the "morality" of sexism, diatribes against gay people, irresponsible positions against condom use in the age of AIDS, and interference in the US presidential election of 2004 (by refusing to give communion to any Catholic politician who did not denounce homosexuality and abortion). He is the first pope to resign of his own initiative since 1294





### Frontman

2017

Father and Daughter Robert and Rebekah Mercer are the billionaire donors and virulent supporters of Trump and Steve Bannon, cofounders of Cambridge Analytica and main stakeholders in Breitbart News. They have given upwards of \$100M to conservative think tanks, the GOP, and climate misinformation groups. Apparently, they are quite proud of being responsible for Trump's public denial of climate change.



### Kamianets-Podilskyi

2015

On August 27-28, 1941, near the Ukrainian city of Kamianets-Podilsky, SS General Friedrich Jeckeln oversaw the killing of 23,600 Jewish people in pursuit of Hitler's Final Solution. This was their initial large-scale mass murder action. Most victims were Hungarian, and had been loaded into freight cars by the Hungarian authority, dropped off in Kolomyia, forced to walk 102 miles to Kamianets-Podilsky and where they were subsequently shot with automatic weapons.

The perpetrators did not make any attempt to hide their actions and witnesses did not interfere.

Photographs exist which show thousands of naked corpses piled into open pits.



### Koszeg

2015

On July 4, 1944, the 2000 Jews held in a slave labor camp in the Hungarian town of Koszeg were quickly deported to Auschwitz as the Russian Army approached. It can be said that the Hungarian Authority was anxious that these remaining 2000 Jews might survive.

200,000 Hungarian soldiers, gendarmes, police, transport personnel, bureaucrats, doctors, nurses and other civilians had already been cooperating and were complicit in the murders of 450,000 other Hungarian Jews.

For several weeks, these final survivors were forcibly marched toward Auschwitz through the mountains of Austria. Those who could not rise each day were shot. Reportedly, only 15 people survived this march.



### Novi Sad

2018

For three days in January 1942, the Hungarian military and gendarmes forced over 1200 Jews and Serbs to the banks and bridges overlooking the frozen Danube River. The ice was shelled. The people were robbed, many were shot, and groups of adults, children, and the elderly (bound with piano wire) were pushed to their deaths through the ice into the river. Bodies washed up for many months afterwards as spring arrived and summer began.

It is believed that Admiral Miklos Horthy, leader of Hungary, was aware of the raid and approved the action. However, at the Nuremberg trials, the Soviets and the Americans pressed that all charges of him be dropped.



### Volary

2018

January 20, 1945

1,350 Jewish women prisoners were forcibly marched 550 miles from three concentration camps in freezing temperatures for 106 days. 118 managed to survive murder, starvation, exposure, and utter brutality at the hands of their SS guards. After being liberated by American forces on May 5, in Volary, Czechoslovakia, 26 of the women died within days (of frostbite, dysentery, and severe injuries to the feet). The Germans knowingly marched these women to their deaths as the Russians approached and a German defeat became evident.

In the last 10 months of World War 2, approximately 250,000 people died on forced death marches such as these.



### Lamination

2011

People are quite capable of living safely and comfortably in diverse communities. Fear drives us apart. Strong leadership, which acknowledges and encourages the strengths, abilities, uniqueness and contributions in creative human endeavors will change everything. Peace and survival ARE compatible. This artwork overlays traditional symbols of Islam and Judaism.

*All works string and wax on wood by Robin Bernstein*

Transmission Gallery, 770 West Grand Ave, Oakland, CA 94612  
thetransmissiongallery.com