

**ZACHOR, REMEMBER: THE ROMANIAN HOLOCAUST, THE JEWS  
OF ITALY AND GREECE, & POLLARD ROTTING WHILE OBAMA &  
KERRY PRESSURE ISRAEL TO RELEASE MURDERERS**

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Isranet Daily Briefing, August 9, 2013

<https://www.isranet.org/daily-briefing/zachor-remember-romanian-holocaust-jews-italy-and-greece-pollard-rotting-while-obama-kerry-pressure/>

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**[That Sunday— Romania, June 29, 1941- July 6 1941](#): Baruch Cohen, Aug. 9, 2013—The Yassi pogrom horrors should never be forgotten, no matter how many years have passed since then: June 29, 1941, *That Sunday*, will forever remain inscribed in the history of Romanian Jewry and of the Holocaust.**

**[United Jewish Declaration: Jews Are Indigenous To The Land Of Israel](#): Yosef Rabin, *GoPetitions*, June 24, 2013**

The Land of Israel fits all the criteria to be recognized internationally as the land in which Jews are indigenous natives, and the only current requirement is a public declaration from a representative body of the Jewish people.

**[Prisoner Release Highlights Erosion of Israel's Will](#): Morton A. Klein and Dr. Daniel Mandel, *The Jewish Press*, Aug. 8, 2013—Under pressure to restart talks with Mahmoud Abbas's Palestinian Authority, Israel has diverged from its refusal to accede to Palestinian preconditions and agreed to free 104 Palestinian terrorists from its jails. It's a mistake. Israel should withstand the pressure and say no.**

**[What about Pollard, Mr. President?](#): Ben Caspit, *Jerusalem Post*, July 23, 2013—The United States is the leader of the free world, the strongest democracy on the face of the earth, the cradle of human rights and freedom. But these bombastic titles**

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are worthless when the US acts cruelly, hypocritically and according to double standards.

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**[An Accidental Odyssey: Jews In The Mediterranean: Ilana Brown, eJewish](#)**

**[Philanthropy, June 25, 2013](#)—I had been to Italy and Greece fifteen years before, but in those days I was not interested in finding remnants of Jewish communities and exploring the Jewish past of the area. This summer I had the opportunity to take a whirlwind tour of a few locations in Italy and Greece. Having lived in Israel for the past 11 years, I was now much more curious about Jewish communities.**

**[On Topic Links](#)**

**[Former-American Mks Disappointed Pollard Not Free: Gil Hoffman, Jerusalem Post, July 30, 2013](#)**

**[For Zion's Sake: Not in Our Vital Interest: Daniel Tauber, Jerusalem Post, July 23, 2013](#)**

**[Top 10 Ways Israel Fights Desertification: Karin Kloosterman, Israel21c, July 15, 2012](#)**



**THAT SUNDAY— ROMANIA,  
JUNE 29, 1941- JULY 6 1941  
Baruch Cohen**

***In memory of beloved Malca z'l***

**The Yassi pogrom horrors should never be forgotten, no matter how many years have passed since then: June 29, 1941, *That Sunday*, will forever remain inscribed in the history of Romanian Jewry and of the Holocaust.**

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***The Sunday that Was* became known as the bloodiest day in the history of Romanian Jewry. The Yassi pogrom was the first huge planned massacre, heralding the horrors to come during the years 1940-1943. 14,850 Jews were killed in Yassi. Ultimately, over 200,000 Romanian Jews would be murdered.**

**“By the number of its victims, by the bestiality of the means used to torture and kill, by the vast scope of killing; the pillaging and destruction, by the participation of the agents of the public authorities to whom the life and property of the citizens were entrusted, the pogrom of Yassi marked at the local level the crowning of an accursed, injurious effort which violated the Romanian conscience for a period of the three quarters of a century, and it opens at the worldwide level the most tragic chapter in history,” writes Matatias Carp in *Cartea Neagra—The Black Book*. June 29, 1941, *That Sunday*, remains forever the blackest day in the history of Romanian Jewry.**

**In his book, *Kaput*, Italian journalist Curzio Malaparte described the scene with a sharp pen dipped in gall and disgust! In the summer of 1941, black was the predominant color in Yassi, and yellow was the color of the stars sewn onto the clothing of all Jews.**

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**UNITED JEWISH DECLARATION:  
JEWS ARE INDIGENOUS TO THE LAND OF ISRAEL**

***Yosef Rabin***

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[GoPetitions](#), June 24, 2013

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**Target: United Nation's, Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon**

**Petition Background (Preamble):**

**The United Nations currently recognizes as indigenous any nation that declares itself as such, and according to section 10 of the UN General Assembly's 2007 Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People, "indigenous peoples shall not be forcibly removed from their lands or territories. No relocation shall take place without the free, prior and informed consent of the indigenous peoples concerned and after agreement on just and fair compensation and, where possible, with the option of return."**

**The Land of Israel fits all the criteria to be recognized internationally as the land in which Jews are indigenous natives, and the only current requirement is a public declaration from a representative body of the Jewish people, whether it be from Israel's Knesset, the WZO or even the Council of Jewish Communities in Judea and Samaria. [Sign the petition](#)**

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**PRISONER RELEASE HIGHLIGHTS EROSION OF ISRAEL'S WILL**

***Morton A. Klein and Dr. Daniel Mandel***

**[Jewish Press](#), Aug. 8, 2013**

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**Under pressure to restart talks with Mahmoud Abbas's Palestinian Authority, Israel has diverged from its refusal to accede to Palestinian preconditions and agreed to free 104 Palestinian terrorists from its jails. It's a mistake. Israel should withstand the pressure and say no. Why? Because it makes a mockery of justice - and inflicts unimaginable pain on families of the victims - when multiple murderers walk free.**

**It also boosts the standing of terrorist groups; encourages the kidnapping of Israelis for the purpose of extorting the release of further terrorists; demoralizes Israeli counter-terrorism personnel who risk life and limb to capture these murderers; erodes Israeli deterrence to vanishing point when the most bloodthirsty murderers know they are likely to be freed early; and, above all, results in the subsequent murder of additional Israelis by terrorists freed under such deals. In short, we've been here before and the results have been tragic.**

**The Almagor Terrorist Victims Association (ATVA) disclosed in April 2007 that 177 Israelis killed in terror attacks in the previous five years had been killed by terrorists who had been previously freed from Israeli jails. An earlier ATVA report showed that 123 Israelis had been murdered by terrorists freed during the period 1993-99. Former Mossad chief Meir Dagan has observed that the terrorists released in the 2004 Elhanan Tenenbaum prisoner exchange deal caused the death of 231 Israelis. In agreeing to this morally unjust, tactically unwise, strategically harmful, militarily hazardous and life-endangering unilateral concession, we see the profound and purposeless erosion of Israeli will. In the past, Israel at least scrupled not to free those with "blood on their hands" and demanded the return of living Israelis, however lopsided the exchange.**

**In July 2008, however, Israel agreed to release to Hizbullah a gruesome murderer, Samir Kuntar, and four others prisoners in return for merely the corpses of two kidnapped Israelis. In August 2008, Israel freed 198 jailed terrorists, including two with blood on their hands and 149 others guilty of attempted murder, as a "confidence-building measure." In October 2009, Israel freed 20 Palestinian terrorists - not for a life or a corpse, but for a video of a kidnapped Israeli. And in**

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October 2011, Israel freed 1,027 Palestinian prisoners, including convicted terrorists, in exchange for a single kidnapped Israeli serviceman, Gilad Shalit, leading Hamas's Khaled Meshaal to crow that "This is a national achievement for the Palestinian people...we promise the rest of the Palestinian detainees to liberate them.... Those released will return to armed struggle."

On this occasion, however, Israelis cannot even take refuge in the consolation that they freed a loved one, retrieved a corpse or even obtained a video. They cannot even say that they exacted any concession from the PA. To the contrary, Mahmoud Abbas just reiterated that he will not permit "the presence of a single Israeli - civilian or soldier - on our lands." Prime Minister Netanyahu is not unaware of the danger; to the contrary, he once warned against the very thing he now intends to do.

In his 1995 book *Fighting Terrorism*, Netanyahu observed that refusing to release terrorists was "among the most important policies that must be adopted in the face of terrorism." With this release, he erodes his credibility by dishonoring his pledge to withstand Palestinian preconditions. U.S. pressure alone explains Netanyahu's decision, not some valuable quid pro quo. How else to account for a decision opposed by 85 percent of the Israeli public and the Shin Bet head, Yoram Cohen? The Obama administration has not expressed a new determination to see Iran cross no red lines in its march to a nuclear weapon....

The idea that the U.S. needs some Israeli concession to unify its Arab allies against the Iranian nuclear threat is in any case absurd, given the imploring of Arab leaders for Washington to deal with the problem, as revealed by the Wikileaks documents. The Obama administration has made Israel no secret promise of action on Iran, military or otherwise - top Israeli officials have privately told us as much, and it is hard for any country to insist on secret commitments of this type anyway. All of which suggests that Israel will rue this decision. The U.S. would never release Guantanamo detainees because the Taliban demanded it in return for talks. Why should Israel? It is still not too late for Jerusalem to refuse to release the terrorists - and say why.

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**WHAT ABOUT POLLARD, MR. PRESIDENT?**

*Ben Caspit*

[Jerusalem Post](#), July 23, 2013

**The United States is the leader of the free world, the strongest democracy on the face of the earth, the cradle of human rights and freedom. But these bombastic titles are worthless when the US acts cruelly, hypocritically and according to double standards. Yesterday, Udi Segal of Channel 2 TV announced that the US had rejected Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu's proposal that Jonathan Pollard also be released when Israel releases dozens of murderers serving life sentences.**

**The Americans have no problem asking Israel to release savages who've slaughtered innocent civilians. This is a no-brainer for them. They urge Israel to make "gestures" toward Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas to promote peace, to strengthen the moderates, to help calm things down and to get the Palestinians to return to the negotiating table. But then, when in return we ask for one basic humanitarian gesture - for Pollard to be released - the Americans are horrified.**

**We should release Pollard? What the heck are you talking about? Where did this come from? Did Pollard kill anyone? No. Was he responsible for someone's death? Absolutely not (despite the fact that they did try to pin this on him, too). Pollard**

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passed on classified information to Israel. This offense usually comes with a relatively light sentence; many people indicted for such offenses in the US have been sent home after serving for just a few years. Pollard has been sitting in jail for almost 30 years. That's three decades. Pollard has spent most of his life in prison. He has been deprived of a family life and was not allowed to attend either his mother's or his father's funeral.

I understand, my dear Americans, that you need to prove a point, to set a precedent for other American Jews who might also feel a dual loyalty. But I think we passed that point a long time ago, and that now it is time for you to go back to being civilized and to make amends for your vindictiveness and recklessness by releasing Pollard.

It must be said - to Netanyahu's credit - that of all of Israel's leaders, he has been the only one to consistently fight for Pollard's release (not that it's done us or Pollard any good.) At the Wye Plantation conference, president Bill Clinton promised Netanyahu Pollard would be released, but reneged at the last minute (due to pressure from the CIA.) Netanyahu tried again with George Bush and Barack Obama - and now once again with Obama.

But when it comes to its own prisoners, the US is much less flexible. When it concerns prisoners sitting in Israeli jails who've murdered innocent citizens and who still swear every morning to continue to fight until Israel is completely destroyed, they are flexible. Israel is expected to release these prisoners, many of whom will go on to carry out additional terrorist attacks, while the Americans continue with their own style of cruelty by keeping Pollard locked up. This is a morality lesson, American style.

*Translated by Hannah Hochner.*

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**AN ACCIDENTAL ODYSSEY: JEWS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN**

*Ilana Brown*

*[eJewish Philanthropy](#), June 25, 2013*

I had been to Italy and Greece fifteen years before, but in those days I was not interested in finding remnants of Jewish communities and exploring the Jewish past of the area. This summer I had the opportunity to take a whirlwind tour of a few locations in Italy and Greece. Having lived in Israel for the past 11 years, I was now much more curious about Jewish communities.

**The Jewish Cathedral of Florence**

My journey began in Florence. My first order of business was to climb to the top of the Duomo and to the top of the campanile. I decided that if I had time, I would also visit the synagogue, which I missed 15 years ago. From both of these high perches, I saw a small, beautiful, green-ish dome in the distance that I knew to be the synagogue. After the 463 steps of the Duomo and the 414 steps of the campanile, I was ready to walk on flat ground to the synagogue and back in order to catch my bus that afternoon.

Arriving at the synagogue, the first sight is the high gates and the protective detail guarding the site, but the green-ish dome beckoned from its hiding place. The security is high - no bags, no photos, metal detectors. And the price seems high as well - €6.50 to enter.

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I entered a pleasant, well-kept, clean courtyard and made my way to the synagogue. I noticed that there were groups of Italian (non-Jewish) schoolchildren visiting, which I thought was a good thing for the Jewish community of Florence. Instead of entering the sanctuary first, I went directly to the museum and viewed the beautiful religious and ritual objects of the synagogue. And then I went into the women's section, the balcony, of the synagogue. I was overwhelmed by emotion. For a moment, I couldn't breathe. As much as I had admired cathedrals in the many cities in Europe I had visited, they did not speak to me on a deep level. I have also been to several very beautiful mosques, but again they did not speak to me. Here I was in a cathedral, but it was a Jewish cathedral. David Levi, the man who donated the funds to build it in the late 1870s, said that he wanted to build a synagogue worthy of Florence.

### Hidden Treasure in Siena

My next stop was a visit to my college professor in Siena. As we entered the Campo, the main square of Siena, I thought to ask my professor if he happened to know where the synagogue of Siena was. He did and we went, but it was already closed. The next day, after a climb up another tower (503 steps), I went directly to the synagogue. The synagogue is a hidden synagogue in that there is little outward evidence of its existence. There are opening hours, but the door is not open. I knocked on the door several times and finally someone opened the door.

### The entrance of the synagogue in Siena

"Hello! Where are you from?"

"I live in Israel."

"Oh! *Baruch habah!*"

And the conversation continued from there in Hebrew. As I was speaking to the

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enthusiastic woman in Hebrew in the doorway of the synagogue, but more people entered the synagogue. We all went together to tour the museum (€4 or €3 upon showing the ticket from the Florence synagogue) and sat in the sanctuary with our guide who happily chatted in perfectly fluent Hebrew. She has family in Israel and Rome. Sadly, the community in Siena today is approximately 50 people. Yet, the sanctuary has a beautiful marble *ahron kodesh* in the traditional Italian style and a large *bima*. The feeling is that there is a rich and deep history, but today it is only an echo of the past. The entrance to the museum contains many pictures of the Jewish community in Siena and our guide would have happily talked through the day about its history. One of the interesting pictures was of a wedding that took place during WWII between a Jewish woman of Siena and a Jew from Britain, who was serving in the Jewish Brigade of the British Army....

### **An Unexpected Encounter in Corfu**

The next day in Corfu a sign saying “Jewish synagogue” caught my eye. From the main street we followed the signs like clues in a scavenger hunt. In each square, we looked for another sign, until the next square and another sign. At one sign, my mother looked into a store and spoke to the owner, but we went on to the synagogue. The synagogue is a large building and at the entrance, we saw a woman sitting and welcoming guests. My mother and I went in (entrance is free).

“Hello! Welcome! Welcome! Where you from?”

“I live in Israel.”

“*Yaffe! Baruch habah!*”

We could have had the conversation in Hebrew, but we switched to English and my mother and I sat and spoke with this large, friendly woman, who sat with her sunglasses on and unapologetically smoked (on Saturday!) in the community room of the synagogue. Ruti, as we learned her name was, lived in Israel for six years

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and returned to Corfu to care for her sick father. Eventually, she ~~was taken away and~~ stayed in Corfu. She ~~told us that the Jews of Corfu were taken away in WWII, ten~~ families were hidden. Two thousand Jews left and only about 150 returned. Once there had been three synagogues and now this one was the only one left and was used only during holidays when they brought in a rabbi from Italy, Greece, or Israel. Today there are approximately 50 Jews, eight are children.

**Dedicated to the Lost**

On our way back to the main street, we passed the store that my mother had stopped into. The owner called out, "Did you find the synagogue?"

"Yes." How did he know? Did my mother mention it?

"Where are you from?"

"Israel."

*"Bohenna!"*

At this Hebrew suggestion, I went right in. "I want to show you something." He pulled out a package from behind his sales counter. "This is the shirt that my father was wearing when he left Auschwitz and came back to Corfu. From his family of 13, only he and his sister returned. From my mother's family of 12, only my mother and her sister returned. They met here and made our family."

In shock, I asked his name and if I could take a picture of him with the shirt. Moshe (Zinos in Greek) agreed. During WWII, the island had first been under the control of the Italians and then in late 1943, under the Germans. The story of the Jews of Corfu is that only as late as June 10, 1944 (coincidentally I was there on June 15) the Jews were taken to Auschwitz. Looking around the store, I saw that the back wall had an Israeli flag and Beitar Yerushalayim memorabilia. A quick search on

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the internet later revealed that Moshe is the President of the Jewish Community of Corfu. As we left, we wished each other a Shabbat Shalom.

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## Final Thoughts

I went to Italy and Greece for a vacation and to revisit places I had been before to see the sights I had missed. When I entered the synagogue in Florence, I understood that I needed to not only revisit the places I had been before, but revisit them with curiosity about the Jewish community that was there - or in many cases, that was once there. That is what I missed 15 years ago. Living in Israel has blinded me somewhat to the situation outside of Israel for Jewish communities. The Jewish communities are small, but proud. The best surprises were those that in the smallest communities, there was Hebrew, there was pride, there was still a connection. I was saddened a bit by the communities in Rome and Venice. It is expensive to enter the synagogue and the "Ghetto" is a tourist attraction, no more. Hebrew is not spoken and the community is Roman, Venetian or Italian first, with Jewishness as a close second.

That is why this was an accidental odyssey. Until I arrived in Italy, I did not know what my quest would be. Now, upon my return, what I went to find was a connection to the Jewish community and to be inspired anew to live in Israel.

*Ilana Brown lives and works with the Im Tirtzu Zionist-Advocacy Organization in Jerusalem. She is a donor relations professional, editor, Zionist, and intrepid traveler.*

*(This article has been shortened in the interests of space. For the full piece including photographs please click on the [link](#) or download a pdf [here](#) - Ed.)*

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## **On Topic**

**Former-American Mks Disappointed Pollard not Free: Gil Hoffman, *Jerusalem Post*, July 30, 2013—Economy and Trade Minister Naftali Bennett and Yesh Atid MK Dov Lipman, who both renounced their American citizenship to enter the Knesset, expressed frustration on Tuesday with the American decision to keep Israeli agent Jonathan Pollard in prison while Israel releases more than 100 Palestinians terrorists as a gesture at the start of diplomatic talks.**

**For Zion's Sake: Not in Our Vital Interest: Daniel Tauber, *Jerusalem Post*, July 23, 2013—In a matter of days, Israel will resume its bad habits: It will begin releasing a large number of convicted terrorists, with reports varying from 82 to up to 350, and it will bar its citizens from building, which for many of them means living, in the communities of their choosing east of the 1949 Armistice Line.**

**Top 10 Ways Israel Fights Desertification: Karin Kloosterman, *Israel21c*, July 15, 2012—Israel has gained a worldwide reputation for its ability to turn barren desert into useful and arable land. ISRAEL21c takes a look at the country's top 10 eco-strategies.**



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