



Edmond J. Safra Plaza
36 Battery Place, New York, NY 10280
(646) 437-4200 www.mjhnyc.org

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Contacts: Abby R. Spilka / (646) 437-4333 / aspilka@mjhnyc.org

Film Series To Honor French Documentary Filmmaker Pierre Sauvage
at the Museum of Jewish Heritage—A Living Memorial to the Holocaust

New York, NY— This spring, the **Museum of Jewish Heritage — A Living Memorial to the Holocaust** presents a rare retrospective of works by multi-award-winning documentary filmmaker Pierre Sauvage. A child survivor, Sauvage has devoted himself to exploring stories about rescue during the Holocaust and the American reaction to the massacre of the Jews in Europe. The series opens on **Wednesday, March 17 at 6:30 p.m.** with a screening of *Yiddish: The Mother Tongue*. On **Thursday, March 18 at 6:30 pm.**, the filmmaker's most personal work, *Weapons of the Spirit*, will be shown. The series concludes on **Sunday, March 21. At 2 p.m.** Sauvage will feature excerpts from his work in progress *And Crown Thy Good: Varian Fry in Marseille* followed by a **3 p.m.** screening of *Not Idly By: Peter Bergson, America and the Holocaust*. All film screenings will be followed by discussions. Please see below for information about the films and panelists.

Tickets are \$10, \$7 for students and seniors, \$5 for members for each day of the series, and are available online at www.mjhnyc.org or by calling the Museum box office at 646.437.4202.

About the Films

Wednesday, March 17, 6:30 P.M.

Yiddish: The Mother Tongue (USA, 1979-2009, DVCam, revised 30th anniversary edition, 56 minutes)

Post-screening discussion with Pierre Sauvage; Aaron Lansky, director, National Yiddish Book Center; Isaiah Sheffer, artistic director, Symphony Space; and Professor Joshua Fishman, Yeshiva University

This Emmy-award-winning film is a loving portrait of a unique and tenacious language and culture, told through interviews, music, humor, poetry, and film clips. Examining the importance of Yiddish to American Jews today, this first documentary ever made about the centuries-old language of the Jews evokes its riches through interviews with comedian David Steinberg, actor Herschel Bernardi, writer Leo Rosten, and many others.

Aaron Lansky is the founder and president of the National Yiddish Book Center. He has received numerous awards and recognitions, including a National Jewish Book Award, honorary doctorates from Amherst College and the State University of New York, and a 1989 Genius Grant from the MacArthur Foundation.

Isaiah Sheffer is co-founder and artistic director of Symphony Space and director and host of *Selected Shorts* live and on radio. His radio, television, theater, and film credits include work as a commentator on the arts for WNYC's weekly radio column *Around New York*; producer/writer for *The Road to the White House*, and writer/director, *The Last Chapter*.

Dr. Joshua Fishman is a distinguished University Research Professor Emeritus of Social Sciences at Yeshiva University. He is an international leader in the fields of sociolinguistics and bilingual education. Dr. Fishman's books include *The Handbook of Language and Ethnicity* and *Can Threatened Language Be Saved*.

Co-sponsored by the National Yiddish Book Center

(More)

Thursday, March 18, 6:30 P.M. *Weapons of the Spirit* (USA/France, 1989-2010, DVCam, 90 minutes)

Post-screening discussion with Pierre Sauvage and other Le Chambon residents

In this acclaimed film, which *Newsweek* calls “enormously uplifting,” Sauvage tells the story of the mountain community in Le Chambon, France that defied the Nazis and saved 5,000 Jews, including the filmmaker’s parents. Sauvage himself was born in this unique Christian oasis. It was only at the age of 18 that he learned that he and his family were Jewish and survivors of the Holocaust. *Weapons of the Spirit* won numerous awards, including the prestigious DuPont-Columbia Award in Broadcast Journalism (sharing the documentary award with Ken Burns’ *The Civil War* series). The film received two national prime-time broadcasts on PBS.

Sunday, March 21, 2 P.M.

And Crown Thy Good: Varian Fry in Marseille

Excerpts from feature work-in-progress (USA, forthcoming in 2011, digital video)

Sauvage presents a preview of excerpts from his upcoming documentary about the most successful private American rescue effort during the Nazi era, the mission led in France by New York intellectual Varian Fry. The Fry committee helped some 2,000 people escape from France, including many intellectual and artistic luminaries. Marc Chagall, Max Ernst, and Hannah Arendt were among those saved by Fry. While celebrating Fry and other remarkable Americans who joined him in his efforts, the documentary will also place the story in the context of those challenging times and address American policies toward unwanted refugees.

Sunday, March 21, 3 P.M.

New York Premiere

Not Idly By: Peter Bergson, America and the Holocaust (USA, 2009, digital video, 40 minutes)

Post-screening discussion with Pierre Sauvage interviewed by author and *Vanity Fair* writer-at-large Marie Brenner

This film presents the challenging testimony of a militant Palestinian Jew who spent the war years in the U.S. leading a group that struggled to make saving the Jews of Europe an American objective. The controversial Peter Bergson is given his posthumous say as he castigates American Jewish leaders at the time for failing to rise to the occasion and pressure the American government to save European Jews. While it chronicles his rare triumphs, the film also looks at his inability to rally the Jewish establishment, the hostility of the U.S. State Department, and FDR’s reluctance to get involved in rescue measures.

Marie Brenner’s exposé of the tobacco industry, “The Man Who Knew Too Much,” was the basis for the 1999 movie *The Insider*, which was nominated for seven Academy Awards, including Best Picture. She is also the author of *Apples and Oranges: My Brother and Me*, *Lost and Found* (2009) *Great Dames: What I Learned from Older Women* (2000), and the bestselling *House of Dreams: The Bingham Family of Louisville* (1988).

Join us for a tour of *The Morgenthau: A Legacy of Service* at 1 p.m. Space is limited. Pre-registration for tour is required. Call 646.437.4202.

About the Museum of Jewish Heritage

The Museum’s three-floor Core Exhibition educates people of all ages and backgrounds about the rich tapestry of Jewish life over the past century—before, during, and after the Holocaust. Special exhibitions include *The Morgenthau: A Legacy of Service*, on view through December 2010 and *Beyond Swastika and Jim Crow: Jewish Refugee Scholars at Black Colleges*, on view through February 21. The Museum offers visitors a vibrant public program schedule in its Edmond J. Safra Hall. It is also home to *Keeping History Center*, an interactive visitor experience, and Andy Goldsworthy’s memorial *Garden of Stones*. The Museum receives general operating support from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs.

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