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April 16, 2009

Ms. Rachel Margolis
Rehovot, Israel

Dear Rachel:

I allow myself the familiarity of addressing you by your first name, because we have a rare and meaningful connection as fellow survivors of the Vilna Ghetto.

As the heroism of the Jewish partisans in and around Lithuania becomes better known and celebrated, you should take great pride in your role in a chapter of Jewish history that inspires us all. Such an achievement by itself would bring a lifetime of fulfillment to most, but you have made two additional extraordinary contributions to Jewish life and history.

Your many years of work at the Jewish Museum in Vilna provided testimonials to those who merited them, lessons to those who needed them, and rebukes to those who deserved them for denying or denigrating the Holocaust or the richness of Jewish life in Vilna that preceded it. Your service at the museum elucidates one of the greatest eras of Jewish history, Vilna as the "Jerusalem of the North," as well as the immense tragedy that the Nazis and their Lithuanian collaborators inflicted on that storied Diaspora community.

You had fellow partisans and several colleagues at the Jewish Museum, you alone are responsible for another significant achievement: the publication of the Ponary Diaries. This vital historical document, an eyewitness account of the mass murder of Vilna's Jews, is a singular contribution to the history of the Holocaust. Without your persistence to rescue the original diaries, this record of the fate of so many victims would undoubtedly have been lost.

On behalf of the Anti-Defamation League, thank you for a lifetime of service to the Jewish people.

With admiration and best wishes,



Abraham H. Foxman
National Director