To quote a few of The Righteous:

"I did what I did because I do not believe that a nation that abandons its moral and human values has the right to exist." (Dino Kazamov, Bulgaria)

"You are wrong to think that we help you only because you are Jews. If you were Negroes or Hottentots we would do the same. We are helping you in the name of justice because you are in trouble." (Joop Westerweel, Holland)

"How can you call us 'good.' We were doing what had to be done. Who else could help them? And what has all this to do with goodness? Things had to be done, that's all, and we happened to be there to do them. You must understand that it was the most natural thing in the world to help these people."

"Ah. It was not reasonable. But you know, I had to do it anyway." (Inhabitants of Le Chambon sur Lignon, France)

The silence of the outside world and the hostility towards Jews of many of their fellow countrymen in some countries made it all the more difficult to thwart Nazi plans and save Jews. Those who
saved Jews did so at great personal peril. They had to be alert not only for Nazi surveillance but also for blackmailers and betrayers from amongst their own neighbors and countrymen (to anyone turning in a Jew, the Gestapo paid one quart of brandy, four pounds of sugar and a carton of cigarettes, or a small amount of money). As distinct from the momentary bravery displayed by the soldier in the heat of battle, the deeds of these civilians were performed over days, weeks, months, or even years.

Against this background one can better appreciate the uniqueness of those designated as "Righteous Persons" by Yad Vashem. In their willingness to sacrifice their own well-being on behalf of persons towards whom they had no obligations, they wrote a new chapter in man's efforts towards a better humanity. Kadish Luz said, "These few saved not only the Jews but the honor of Man."

The following examples of citations will afford a glimpse into the nature of the deeds of The Righteous and the motivations for their actions.

**DR. GEZA PETENYI (HUNGARY)**

Dr. Petenyi was professor at a Budapest university and head of the Pediatric Department at the Feher Kereszt Hospital. A friend of the OG family, he succeeded in acquiring Swiss and Swedish safeconduct passes for them which facilitated their movements in the city after curfew.

After the Arrow Cross pro-Nazi movement took power in October 1944, unleashing a new wave of terror against the Jews, Petenyi brought OG and his sister MG to his ward and falsified X-ray documents in order to make it appear that they were suffering from tuberculosis and had to be treated. In addition, he filled all the private rooms in his ward with Jewish escapees of the Arrow Cross terror, registering them under assumed names as refugees fleeing the advancing Russian Army. The elderly among them were transferred to Leo Hochner, an Austrian armed with false "Aryan" papers and masquerading as an S.S. officer, who was also hiding Jewish children in his attic. Since Hochner, in order to strengthen his position, would occasionally invite S.S. officers to his home, he could not keep the children. He agreed to exchange them for Petenyi's elderly Jews. Thus OG's parents were hidden by this Hochner.

MG, who moved to London after the war, wrote in her deposition to Yad Vashem that the hospital staff, a lot of them Nazi sympathizers, saw what Petenyi did. Petenyi "took hair-raising risks, calmly and fully aware of the consequences. The only reason they did not denounce him was that ... he personally was greatly loved and respected." Her brother, OG, testified that Petenyi's enormous prestige and integrity were his only safeguard and his personnel dared not denounce him to the authorities because "they did not wish to destroy him." It is a measure of the man's nobility of mind that even the antisemites among his colleagues wished him no harm.

All in all, Petenyi saved tens of Jews, most of whom survived the war and reconstructed their lives anew. All this was done without payment, but solely out of humanitarian convictions.

Petenyi died in 1963. On 17 March 1983, Yad Vashem acceded to MG's petition to recognize Petenyi as a Righteous Person. Three months later MG died in a London hospital, gratified that her life-benefactor had at last been honored by the State of Israel on
behalf of the Jewish people.

CHARLES COWARD

Charles Coward, an Englishman, was a prisoner-of-war at Monitz P.O.W. Camp, two kilometers from Auschwitz. As liaison officer with the Germans and the Red Cross, he had the right to visit Auschwitz and Birkenau.

Coward conceived of and executed a scheme which enabled Jews working in forced labor details outside the extermination camp to escape, their absence not being noticed by the Germans due to the substitution for the escapees of the corpses of dead Jews which Coward purchased from corrupt camp officials. Due to the deprivations suffered by them, it was commonplace for concentration camp inmates to collapse and die while engaged in forced labor.

Coward and his helpers also smuggled munitions into Birkenau for use by members of a Jewish suicide squad, which subsequently blew up the "showers" and gas chambers.

MYKOLAS SHIMELIS (LITHUANIA)

Mykolas Shimelis was a forester who, before the war, supplied tree roots to MK, whose factory in Vievis produced turpentine. MK, who knew Shimelis since 1929, describes him as honest, goodhearted, of noble character, and friendly toward Jews. When the Germans staged an "action" in Vievis on 6 October 1941, MK and his family hid out in the factory, afterwards escaping into the larger Kovno ghetto.

One day while he was doing forced labor, someone touched MK's shoulder. It was Shimelis. He said, "There is room for you in my place," (which was 45 kilometers away), and he disappeared as suddenly as he had appeared. Since MK worked as a car mechanic for the Germans, he managed to procure a truck. On a cold evening in November 1943, nine persons slipped out of the Kovno ghetto to a truck waiting outside the ghetto gates and made the journey through the Lithuanian landscape to Shimelis' house. They parked the truck at a distance from his home in order not to leave traces of the vehicle in the snow in front of Shimelis's house. Shimelis greeted the group with his typical broad smile and hearty handshake late that night. His family of five children had already been forewarned of the group's coming and were told that they were Lithuanian non-Jewish refugees of the war.

After living in a small back room, it was decided to build an underground bunker under the house to prevent detection. The house served as a meeting place of people working with Shimelis. All helped in the work. The earth removed was taken to the attic. It might have aroused suspicion had it been placed outside. The trapdoor was hidden by a closet in the living room. A second entrance led from behind the oven in an adjacent room. Shimelis installed a stove and electricity for the comfort of his guests. Covers and hay served for sleeping. He relied on trustworthy friends to procure food for his guests at various locations so as not to arouse suspicion. In January 1944, four more people were added, and later two more.

When the people told him how sorry they were to cause him all that trouble, he replied blandly, "The world is not without some good people ... I would have helped anyone knocking at my door." Every