

JERUSALEM Yad Vashem

QUARTERLY MAGAZINE, VOL. 23, SUMMER 2001



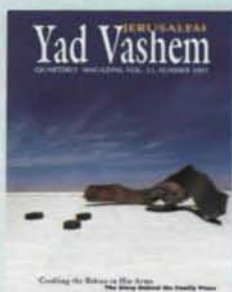
Cradling the Babies in His Arms

The Story Behind the Family Plaza

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The summer edition of *Yad Vashem Jerusalem* includes a variety of topic matter, ranging from the personal story of a WWII veteran, to the acquisition of invaluable personal effects from inmates of former extermination camp, Chelmno. The progress of the “Yad Vashem 2001” masterplan is charted, with an in-depth look at the Visual Center, a component of the Museum Complex to be completed by 2004. As well, a most notable change in format has been made to the education section of the magazine, which from hereon will include a central article focusing upon a relevant educational issue or topic of interest, together with a listing of current highlights at the International School for Holocaust Studies, and new educational materials or units of study recently released by Yad Vashem.



Cover: A partial view of renowned artist, Menashe Kadishman's sculpture on permanent display in Yad Vashem's Family Plaza (see article on page 4).
Photography: Sasson Tiram-Tav-Or.

In February of this year, Polish and German media published information that wall sketches by Polish Jewish author/artist, Bruno Schulz, were found in the home of SS officer, Felix Landau, in the town of Drohobycz. During the Holocaust period, Landau took advantage of Schulz's artistic talent and gave him the assignment, among other tasks, of covering walls in his house with illustrations. Schulz was killed by SS officer, Karl Günther, in November 1942.

The Holocaust-era works produced by Schulz hold a special significance for Yad Vashem because a Jewish artist created them, and even more so, as they clearly reflect the exploitation of a Jew at the hands of the Nazis and the premature death of the artist for the sole reason that he was a Jew. Schulz's wall sketches serve as testimony to the Holocaust, in that they were not fashioned as expressions of creative freedom, as were his previous works, but instead were the products of forced labor.

Following the publication of the discovery, Yad Vashem contacted the Drohobycz municipality requesting permission to obtain Schulz's wall paintings for future display in its new Museum Complex.

In March 2001, Yad Vashem's representative, Mark Shraberman, travelled to Drohobycz and met with the Mayor, Oleksy Radziyevsky, and the town's Head of Culture, Mikola Michatz. Both Michatz and Radziyevsky expressed willingness to hand over Schulz's sketches to Yad Vashem, to honor the memory of Bruno Schulz and to commemorate the horrors that took place in Drohobycz during the Holocaust.

The Drohobycz municipality continued to cooperate with Yad Vashem over the following months, informing Yad Vashem that the apartment housing Schulz's sketches was under private ownership and that the sketches could be acquired with the owner's permission alone.

In May 2001, Michatz arranged for Shraberman and a team of two restoration specialists from Yad Vashem to meet with the owner of the apartment, Mikola Kaluzhny, who consented to give Yad Vashem all but one of the sketches. The restoration specialists found that only fragments remained of the sketches and that the fragments were peeling off the wall and in a most neglected condition. On completion of the removal of the sketches, Mayor Oleksy Radziyevsky, gave a letter to Yad Vashem in which he praised the cooperation between Yad Vashem and the town of Drohobycz.

Following publicity regarding the arrival of the sketches to Yad Vashem, the Polish press started a campaign against Yad Vashem, claiming that the Schulz sketches, which were obtained from the Ukraine, are a part of the Polish legacy. Among the claims made against Yad Vashem—which in several instances were extremely severe and out of proportion, relative to the issue at hand—were those that contained antisemitic tones, as best indicated by caricatures which appeared in Polish newspapers. This form of provocation leads Yad Vashem to believe that the Polish response was heavily determined by the heated national debate currently taking place in Poland regarding the murder of the Jewish residents of Jedwabne, which has yet to reach both a conclusion and a consensus.

The Polish reaction to Yad Vashem's acquisition of the Schulz sketches has revived the fundamental issue of Jewish cultural assets that have remained in Poland since the Holocaust—the majority of which have not been transferred to Jewish representative bodies, and all the less so, to the State of Israel.

Yad Vashem attaches importance to having acquired Schulz's Holocaust-era sketches. It also emphasizes that it does not believe that the entirety of Bruno Schulz's lifelong creations should be the property of any specific country or institution, and dismisses attempts by any country to claim a monopoly on the works of an internationally acclaimed artist.

Had Polish officials or institutions held an interest in or experienced any opposition to the arrival of the sketches to Yad Vashem, the correct approach would have been to contact Yad Vashem to discuss the issue. Yad Vashem still maintains that should Poland feel that it has a national interest in these cultural assets, a discussion can be initiated regarding the greater moral issue of assets—those that are part of the Jewish legacy in the broadest sense, and those that are the sole remnants of the Holocaust-era.

The Allied victory over Nazi Germany, Lazar Shneyer adorns his chest with the medals and commendations he received for his service in the Red Army. One of his most prized awards, the Red Star medal of high merit, was presented to him for successfully breaching the front line along with his squad members and defusing 16 tank mines while crossing the river into the nearby town of Krustpils, Latvia.

Shneyer was born in November 1924 in the Jewish *shtetl* of Baltyshevo, in the vicinity of Karsava, Latvia. His father, an observant Jew, was deported to Siberia for his religious beliefs in early 1941, when the atheist Soviet regime stationed itself in Latvia. On 22 June 1941, when the Nazis invaded the Soviet Union, and their planes were already visible over Karsava, the remaining members of the Shneyer family managed to board one of the last trains heading East. Shneyer does not like to recall the details of his escape—masses of people, Jews and non-Jews, traveling deep into Russia in an attempt to escape the horrors of the Nazi conquest.

By spring of 1942, Shneyer's family was living in Tashkent, the capital of Uzbekistan and in the summer of that same year, Shneyer and two friends from Latvia visited the recruitment bureau and enlisted in the Red Army (adding a few months to their ages since they were not yet 18 and of draftable age).

“I knew that it was inevitable that I would be drafted,” explains Shneyer, “so I decided to enlist early with my friends so we could all serve together.”

The trio finished a sapper course, and at the beginning of 1943 they were sent to the Latvian division positioned next to the city of Staraya Russa. Recalling his first day at the front, Shneyer laughs: “At 4 a.m. we arrived at the place, and by 6 a.m. I was already wounded.”

Shneyer suffered many injuries at the front, and remembers the circumstances of one particular incident as if it happened only yesterday:

In the spring of 1944, as we were carrying out a mission, most of our squad members fell in battle, and I was wounded in my jaw. I arrived at the base in bad condition. After a while they sent me to the unit's *politruk* [the person in charge of making sure that the Soviet soldiers upheld the patriotic, anti-religious values and ideology of the regime].

He asked me about my injury, then about my family, and all of a sudden, he took *tefillin* out of his pocket. My *tefillin*! It turned out that our squad's bags had been searched while we were on the mission. I did not know how to escape the embarrassment, so I said that they were a souvenir from my mother, like an amulet. The *politruk* interrupted me and demanded to know if I believed in God. What could I have answered? I did not want to say

“no,” but to admit the truth would have been very dangerous... I remained silent. The *politruk* looked at me, returned the *tefillin*, and advised me not to leave them in my bag in the future. From then on, I carried the *tefillin* in my pocket. As a sapper, I had to crawl a lot, and the *tefillin* boxes were constantly being crushed, so after awhile, I went back to keeping them in the bag.

While having his *tefillin* in near proximity aided Shneyer in maintaining his spiritual belief during combat, it was a chance conversation with a fellow resident of his town, that led him to

believe in miracles:

About two months after being drafted, when I was still in the preparatory course, I met a resident of my town who told me that he had heard that my father was alive, had been released from prison, and was working as a laborer in the Krasnoyarsk city hall restaurant. I didn't know whether to believe him or not, but, I decided to write to the municipality and address the letter in my father's name. What a feeling of happiness when I received an answer from him! For my father, though, it was even more than mere happiness—the



Lazar Shneyer as a young man in the Soviet Red Army

Behind the Medals and Commendations

The Story of a Jewish Fighter in the Red Army



discovery that his wife and his children were safe and sound, after Karsava had been under Nazi rule for two years. Shneyer and his father were reunited, but only

after the war ended in 1945.

On 31 April 1945, Shneyer was released from the hospital where he had been sent to recover from one of his more serious injuries, and on 7 May he was already back on the front in Kurland, on the Lithuanian border. He had requested to return to his battalion, but instead he not only found himself among strangers, but also was ordered to join a machine-gunners brigade, without any idea of how to operate a machine gun.

He and another soldier were situated above a valley with a machine-gun and were ordered to follow the enemy's movements on the other side of the valley. On the night of 7 May, all of the machine-guns around the valley suddenly began shooting in rapid sequence. “It took me a while to understand that it was not a surprise attack but the end of the war...,” Shneyer laughs as he wipes a tear from his eyes.

In 1972, Lazar Shneyer immigrated to Israel, but his wife and children did not come with him, as they preferred to live in the United States. Since his arrival, he has volunteered for military service in the Yom Kippur War and the Lebanon War and today Lazar Shneyer is still deeply involved in Israeli politics.

The author is responsible for the FSU section of the Righteous Among the Nations Department

VE Day Ceremony

The state ceremony to mark the Allied victory over Nazi Germany was held at Yad Vashem's Memorial to the Jewish Soldiers on 9 May and was attended by hundreds of Jewish WWII veterans of Allied armies—the majority from the former Soviet Union—Jewish fighters and Partisans, disabled ex-servicemen, and *yishuv* volunteers who fought in the British army and the Jewish Brigade.

Israeli Prime Minister/ Minister of Immigrant Absorption, Ariel Sharon; Chairman of the Yad Vashem Directorate, Avner Shalev; and representatives of the Jewish fighters, Avraham Cohen and Yevsei Paskover, addressed the gathering.

In his address Shalev noted the vital role played by the veterans: “You fought in order to save the free world. Your victory in the war changed the history of the twentieth century and decided the fate of humankind... The combatant legacy you have left us provides us with as a great source of identity and faith in the spirit of the Jewish individual.”

Following a memorial service, approximately 40 wreaths were laid by the Israeli Prime Minister, the Deputy Minister of Immigrant Absorption, representatives of the Israeli army and the Israeli police force, military attaches from countries that fought against the Nazis, and Partisan and veteran representatives.

The ceremony was organized by Yad Vashem, the Israel Information Center, and organizations of disabled ex-servicemen and WWII veterans, in conjunction with the Ministry of Immigrant Absorption.



Israeli Prime Minister, Ariel Sharon, meets VE Day veteran at Yad Vashem ceremony

Renowned artist,
Menashe Kadishman's
sculpture on permanent
display in the Family
Plaza



Cradling the Babies in His Arms

The Dedication of the Family Plaza

by Lisa Davidson

At a moving ceremony in mid-April, Yad Vashem's Family Plaza was dedicated in the presence of Prime Minister of Israel, Ariel Sharon; Mayor of Jerusalem, Ehud Olmert; donors, Ruta and Dr. Felix Zandman together with members of their family; Antoinette Grossman and Michel Freydovicz, children of Zandman's late uncle, Sender Freydovicz; former Israeli Deputy Minister of Defense and close friend of the Zandman family, General Israel Tal; Chairmen of Societies for Yad Vashem from several countries; artist, Menashe Kadishman; and Chairman of the Yad Vashem Directorate, Avner Shalev.

The Family Plaza was designed by architect, Dan Zur, in coordination with the architect of Yad Vashem's International School for Holocaust Studies, David Guggenheim, and the architect of the Archives and Library Building, Dan Lanski. Built to commemorate the Jewish family in the Holocaust, the Family Plaza was endowed by close friends of Yad Vashem, Ruta and Dr. Felix Zandman in memory of their families who perished in the Holocaust. On permanent display within the Plaza is a sculpture, strategically placed to overlook the impressive view of Jerusalem and its suburbs, by renowned artist, Menashe Kadishman, winner of the Israel Prize for Art in 2000. The sculpture, which was also endowed by Ruta and Dr. Felix Zandman, was inspired by Zandman's personal story during the Holocaust and bears witness to the terrible experiences he endured.

In January 1943, when the Germans conducted a major *aktion* in the Grodno Ghetto and the Zandman family was forced into hiding,

the family made the heartbreaking decision to leave its two young babies, as well as the baby of acquaintances out of the hiding place in the ghetto, fearing that the babies' cries would expose the



From left to right: donors of the Family Plaza, Ruta Zandman and Dr. Felix Zandman, pictured with Israeli Prime Minister, Ariel Sharon

occupants. Zandman's grandfather, Nahum Freydovicz, chose not to let the babies endure their fate alone, and therefore left the hiding place and together with the three babies (two of whom were his grandchildren) met his death.

In February of that same year, Zandman, who was outside of the ghetto working as a forced laborer, got word of the final liquidation of the ghetto and managed to escape to the home of the caretakers of his family's summer home, Janowa and Jan Puchalski. There, along with his uncle, Sender Freydovicz, and a husband and wife couple he remained hidden beneath the floorboards of the Puchalski's bedroom, in a hole five feet wide, five-and-a-half feet long, and four feet deep for a year-and-a-half. Felix Zandman was the only

grandchild of Nahum Freydovicz who survived the Holocaust.

In recent years, Dr. Felix Zandman has been the recipient of many awards, including the Franklin Institute Medal for Science, the French Legion of Honor, and most recently the Electronic Industries Alliance 2001 Medal of Honor. At present, he is the Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Vishay Intertechnology, Inc., the largest US and European company that manufactures passive electronic components. Among the 16,000 member staff employed by him throughout the world is the grandson of the woman who saved him during the Holocaust. In 1962, when he founded the company, Zandman chose to name it Vishay Intertechnology Inc.,

in memory of his ancestral home in Lithuania and that of the company's Honorary Chairman, Alfred P. Slaner. Zandman is also the author of *Never the Last Journey*, an autobiographical account that describes his life from victim of war to victor on Wall Street.

Following the Yad Vashem dedication ceremony, a well-attended, festive dinner was held in honor of Ruta and Dr. Felix Zandman at Jerusalem's Holiday Inn Crowne Plaza. Those present included Felix Zandman's children Gisele, Ariele, and Marc and families; family and friends of the Zandman family; Chairmen of Yad Vashem Societies around the world; and members of the Yad Vashem Directorate and the International Relations Division.

Many religious followers and academics have grappled with the question of “Where was God during the Holocaust?” However, little attention has been made to answer this question through the examination of documents written by Jews during the Holocaust that comment upon their adherence to the commandments, their observance of the Jewish holidays, and their religious beliefs.

Professor Gershon Greenberg, a researcher in the field of religious philosophy, Jewish religious thought, and comparative religious studies arrived at Yad Vashem’s International Institute for Holocaust Research this March, to investigate Jewish religious belief during the Holocaust through an examination of such documents.

Since beginning his four-month research fellowship, Greenberg has found a vast amount of documentation in Yad Vashem’s Archives, including some 1,500 Yiddish and Hebrew documents that contain testimonies given after the war, prayers, Passover *haggadot*, booklets, letter exchanges, sermons, public posters, calendars, and Hebrew and Yiddish newspapers. Greenberg explains that he has “decided to focus mainly on documents written during the Holocaust, so as to more accurately ascertain

present reality resulted in the idea—as the Holocaust progressed—of man displacing God as the center of holiness. Greenberg is researching this theory by focusing on four main stages during and after the Holocaust and three areas of religious life: prayer, Passover, and the Days of Awe.

Based on his research, Greenberg estimates that prior to WWII and during the Nazi invasion (autumn 1939), the understanding of the course of history as an expression of the sanctity of God was maintained in the prayers and in the manner in which the Jewish holidays were celebrated. In many prayers and documents from the time, extensive references to God’s intervention in history are apparent, e.g. when Rabbi Yosef Gelernter of Skempa, Poland and his congregants fled from the Nazis, he based his appeal for God’s assistance on rabbinical sources and different verses wherein God helped Joshua and other biblical figures.

In the second stage of the war, when the Jews were taken to the ghetto, they still upheld the belief that their connection to God was most strongly felt through God’s involvement in history. At the same time, however, they exhibited traces of a crisis in faith as their harsh reality revealed a seeming incompatibility with the biblical accounts of God’s intervention for

fulfilled commandments; however, it is clear that they made enormous efforts to continue performing them.”

After the war, the majority of survivors in the refugee camps displayed a great reverence for God’s sanctity in history. They observed the past with the belief that God had been with them and the present with the conviction that God continues to direct the events of history towards the establishment of a Jewish state. As evidence of this change on the part of the survivors, Greenberg cites the entreaty of the rabbis of Bergen-Belsen during Israel’s War of Independence. They issued a call to gather for the recitation of Psalms, and to commemorate admirably those who died sanctifying God as a result of the war in order to awaken the mercy of God, who would then be moved to grant victory and bring about redemption.

“The theory that I have adopted, which states that during the phase between the ghettos and the refugee camps God’s sanctification of history was replaced by the individual who sanctified the moment by fulfilling a commandment, is based on the fact that there are almost no mentions of God’s sanctification of history during this period of time. This is mainly based on the documents that I have

analyzed, but also matches other theologians’ findings on the Holocaust, such as the findings of the theologian, Eliezer Berkowitz, who claimed that the Jews in the time of the Holocaust had no basis on which to believe that God directs

Religious Life During the Holocaust: The Sanctity of God in History

religious thinking and practices that existed during the different stages of the Holocaust.”

Many years of research on religion have led Greenberg to the belief that the Jewish religion is transmitted from generation to generation and from place to place, as a continuing relationship between God and the Jewish people through the Torah—a scripture highlighted by moments of divine intervention and instances where God directs the shaping of history. According to Greenberg, divine intervention and miracles are recorded in the Jewish people’s collective memory as empirical history, a phenomenon that he terms the sanctity of God in history.

In examining documents from the time of the Holocaust, Greenberg believes that the Jewish people’s inability to understand how the sanctity of God in history was manifest in their

the sake of the Israelites.

In addition, the deprivation with which the Jews were forced to cope and the difficulties in observing the commandments in the ghettos—for example, the near impossibility of observing the commandment of blowing the *shofar* (ram’s horn)—threatened the faith of many Jews.

In the third stage of the war, when the Jews arrived at labor and concentration camps, “their crisis of faith brought many of them to a situation in which they ceased attempting to reconcile their current situation with their belief that history was an indication of God’s sanctity,” Greenberg explains. “Instead they began to focus on sanctifying specific moments in their lives by observing a commandment or by celebrating a holiday. It is not clear at this stage, from what they had written, precisely why they



Professor Gershon Greenberg

history,” Greenberg explains.

Asked why he chose to conduct the bulk of his research at Yad Vashem, Greenberg responds, “Yad Vashem is the central place for Holocaust research, and is an institution where Holocaust research is conducted from the Jewish perspective—which is the most compatible perspective with the type of research I am conducting. Also, for me, walking in the halls of Yad Vashem and speaking with researchers such as Yehuda Bauer, Israel Gutman, and others—who are among the foremost living scholars in the field of Holocaust research—that is a great honor.”

In the future, Greenberg hopes to publish the findings of his research in various scholarly articles and ultimately, in a full-length book.

by Arich Saposnik

Who were the human beings—children to their parents, parents to their children, brothers, sisters, husbands, and wives—who murdered six million Jews during the Holocaust, and millions of other human beings?

A new educational program presently nearing completion by Yad Vashem's International School for Holocaust Studies attempts to probe this disturbing question, as well as others, that arise from this dark chapter of history. Through an interdisciplinary approach, using historical documents, art, and literature, the unit, titled "How Was It Humanly Possible?" explores the human and ethical dimensions of the Holocaust and of those who committed the mass murder.

This topic is complicated and delicate. The unit deals with individuals, with human beings, who participated in what may be considered the most evil of all evils: the deliberate, planned, total murder of the Jewish people.



Mark Zitzky (1903-1992), *Prominent Nazi with Family*, 1945, ink on paper

And yet, the educational and moral imperatives seem to mandate such a unit. All study of history is, in the end, an attempt to understand human actions and some aspect of human nature. The study of the Holocaust, perhaps even more than any other chapter in history, seems to pose the most penetrating and disturbing questions about human nature.

Any understanding of the planned mass murder of millions of human beings would be partial, at best, if it were to satisfy itself with a chronicle of the construction of the concentration camps, the administration of the ghettos, or military maneuvers. Without wrestling with the question of how so many human beings were enlisted to function on behalf of the Nazi murder machine, our attempt to understand would hardly be begun.

This academic consideration is coupled by the moral imperative which emerges from the ashes of the Holocaust. If one of the central goals of Holocaust education is to act toward a human society in which such events

do not recur, we are compelled to attempt to comprehend how human beings—"ordinary men," as historian/author, Christopher Browning, has called them—are transformed into mass murderers.

The vast machinery of murder which the Nazis constructed required the participation of many individuals—some of whom were personally committed to Nazi ideology, and others who were not. Although fully aware that there are no clear answers to the disquieting questions raised by the choice made by so many individuals to participate—actively or passively—in mass murder, this educational unit seeks, first, to raise the questions and to explore them.

The central axis for all of the unit's components is the question of individual choice. A choice, or a series of choices, led the individual from the status of one who was not involved, to a position of involvement—either as a direct perpetrator, as a rescuer, or as a bystander with varying degrees of passive involvement. Where were those crucial crossroads?

Accordingly, the unit examines a number of pivotal points at which a choice was not only possible, but indeed necessary. It begins with the isolation of the Jews in Germany between 1933 and 1939. Once again, it is not the decisions made by the German government or its legislative acts that serve as the focus, but rather the human dimension involving the participation, or acquiescence, of vast sectors of German society—fellow pupils and teachers in schools, business colleagues, neighbors, and others—in the gradual isolation and segregation of the Jews. Although this pre-war process can by no means serve as a comprehensive "explanation" for the mass murder that ensued, it serves as an important backdrop, and as the first step, in the processes which were aimed at dehumanizing the Jews and which resulted ultimately in the dehumanization of their persecutors.

From this pre-war background and ideological preparation, the unit progresses to the "leap to action"—the participation not only of the

H H

W A S I T
H U M A N L Y
P O S S I B L E

Einsatzgruppen, the Nazi mobile killing units, but also of non-ideological army, police and other units in the mass shootings of Jews, which began with the German invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941. This first stage of the mass murder required the perpetrators to stand face to face with their victims and shoot them at point-blank range. Some 1.5 million Jews were murdered in this way. Although there are no known cases of repercussions taken against individuals who refused to participate in these shootings, instances of refusal were extremely rare. The unit consequently explores the inevitable question: Who were the people who carried this out?

The next sections of the unit focus on the deportation and transports of Jews from Germany to the killing centers in the East. These transports took place in broad daylight, with many of the victims' neighbors watching—some in shame, others with pleasure. Few took action to oppose the transports. These deportations, moreover, were dependent on the direct participation of a broad range of professionals: railway officials, city clerks, policemen,

What the human hand attempts to conceal the earth exposes and reveals

In a most cautious and arduous conversation, laden with an undercurrent of emotion, and conducted in a mixture of half Polish, half Hebrew, Director of the Konin Regional Museum and the Chelmno Museum in Poland, Dr. Lucja Pawlicka Nowak, enlisted the help of the only living survivor of Chelmno, Shimon

demolition at the hands of the retreating Nazis towards the end of WWII—in order to better commemorate the camp's victims and establish a memorial museum on the site.

Since 1985, and more significantly within the last five years, the underground layers at Chelmno have yielded much of this missing information. Although the number of items found at the Chelmno death camp to date may not be as great as that uncovered at other sites of Nazi

1005, the Nazis gave Chelmno's remaining 50 prisoners the task of destroying the site and obliterating all signs of the mass murder by exhuming and cremating the bodies that had been buried in mass graves. On 17 January 1945, as Soviet troops advanced, the Nazis began to murder the remaining 47 Jewish prisoners. The prisoners revolted, but only three survived, among them Shimon Srebnik. In all, according to the highest estimates, some 330,000 people from

UNCOVERING THE LAYERS

Srebnik. Sitting side by side during her April visit to Yad Vashem, the two examined recent maps of the site and worked towards matching Srebnik's personal experiences as one of Chelmno's first inmates, with Nowak's recent findings in her capacity as an archaeologist and museologist.

Srebnik succeeded in filling in several important details about the former Nazi extermination camp, including those that Nowak termed the "unknown story of Chelmno." When questioned as to why people would drink from the river and not from the well at the site of the extermination camp, Srebnik answered with a terrifying response:

Two people were thrown in the well by a member of the camp staff and were left, dead, at the bottom—that is why no one would drink from the well. I saw the second man being bound and then being lowered down the well on a rope in order to retrieve the first man. Once he was already near the bottom and had the first man in his grasp, the German in charge decided to cut the rope, leaving them both to die.

After hearing this story, Nowak promised Srebnik that the well would be excavated this upcoming year and the remnants of the bodies retrieved, as a continuation of an undertaking, the first of its kind, to which she and her husband, Andreas, have been committed since 1985.

Using aerial photographs taken by the German airforce in May 1942, the couple began mapping out the site of former Nazi extermination camp, Chelmno, and conducting a series of archaeological excavations. The excavations were sparked by Nowak's desire to uncover information about the layout and inner workings of the camp—information that was greatly lacking due to Chelmno's complete



Director of the Konin Regional Museum and the Chelmno Museum in Poland, Dr. Lucja Pawlicka Nowak, speaks with the only living survivor of Chelmno, Shimon Srebnik

terror, these relics and personal belongings are of special historical importance, as they tell the story of the first extermination camp in which mass executions were carried out by means of gas and the first site, outside the Nazi occupied USSR, where mass killings were conducted in the framework of the "Final Solution."

The Chelmno extermination camp was located in the Polish town of Chelmno, 47 miles west of Lodz. It began operation on 7 December 1941, with the arrival of the first transport of Jews from the vicinity, as well as some 5000 Gypsies, and continued to function until March 1943, when the Nazis ceased deportations, as a result of the annihilation of the majority of the region's Jews.

In April 1944, the camp was reopened in conjunction with the liquidation of the Lodz Ghetto and by 23 June of the same year transports to Chelmno began anew. By mid-July, in order to accelerate the pace of liquidation of the Lodz Ghetto, the Nazis once again halted the transports to Chelmno, and instead sent remaining residents of the ghetto to Auschwitz, where the pace of extermination by Zyklon B gas was ten times faster.

In early September 1944, as part of *Aktion*



Gas van used to kill Jews and other Nazi victims as part of the Final Solution

Poland, Germany, Austria, and Luxemburg were murdered at the Chelmno extermination camp.

Now, in conjunction with eyewitness reports and former testimonies of the camp's survivors, the findings of Nowak's excavations are helping fill in the missing details of Chelmno's history. In the earliest stage of the excavations, from 1986-1987, one of the camp's two main former sites of operation, the Rzuchow Forest was investigated. Mass burial pits, where victims were disposed of after being gassed to death, and the ruins of two crematoria that were used to burn the bodies of victims beginning in the summer of 1942, and which were later blown up by the Nazis upon their retreat in 1945, were uncovered there.

From 1997-2000, following interviews with several residents of the town of Chelmno and with the aid of layout plans from 1933 and 1940, the camp's second site of operation, an old palace, was mapped out and was excavated. Recalling his own experiences in the palace, Srebnik noted, "I arrived at Chelmno with 80 other people and we were brought to the palace. The Germans instructed us to clean up the palace that was brimming over with stuff. When we started to clean I found arms, legs—so many bodies."

Indeed, during the camp's operational period, the palace served as a reception and extermination center for the victims and a residence for camp staff. Victims were first concentrated in the courtyard of the palace, where they were reassured that they were being sent to a work camp and would therefore have to wash up. They were then taken in groups of 50, to the ground floor of the palace where they were told to strip, while their clothes were sent

baby in close proximity to a spoon and knife set decorated with pearls and inscribed with the Hebrew words *Shmor Shabbat* (Keep the Sabbath). In the east wing, half of a skull was uncovered, that matched a second portion of a skull previously discovered outside of the palace's southern wall. In the palace's basement, animal stables were found that were used to house the prisoners who were responsible for burial duties, along with three seamstresses' workshops, two

RS OF CHELMNO

Yad Vashem Receives Personal Artifacts



for disinfecting. Their valuables were collected in baskets that were to be marked with their names to create the impression that the valuables would be returned shortly. They were then taken to the cellar, down an enclosed ramp with signs reading "To the Washroom." At the end of the ramp one of three gas vans awaited them with open doors, into which they were forced. Once the doors of the van were closed, the engine was switched on and carbon monoxide was pumped into the van through an exhaust pipe that fed back inside. After 10 minutes the victims suffocated to death.

Recent excavations in a room near the eastern entrance of the palace revealed the remains of a

shoemakers' workshops (indicated by remains of scraps of leather and tools of the trade), and several other rooms, including one in which pieces of "balloons" constructed out of dark glass that were used to store unidentified toxic chemicals (most probably a chemical additive that was combined with the gas of the vans). During the excavations of 1998, the remains of three male bodies, as well as the skeleton of a decapitated man were found buried in the southeast corner of the palace, reaffirming the testimonies of town residents that people were taken inside the palace never again to reemerge, before the palace was blown up.

In the area of the park and orchard, seven pits were found, containing a wealth of personal effects of Chelmno camp victims which tell the story not only of the machinations of the camp, but of the lives of the victims, as well. Among the personal relics unearthed were: a *Magen David* (star of David) containing the words "Litzmannstadt Ghetto," keys, locks, scissors, jewelry, Bayer aspirin tins, buttons, thimbles, toothbrushes, pliers, knives, pins with names, and broken glass bottles with the word *Pessah* written on them in Hebrew.

While at Yad Vashem, Nowak presented Museum Divisions Director, Yehudit Inbar, and Director of Artifacts Retrieval, Haviva Peled Carmeli, with a substantial number of the personal effects uncovered in the excavations, for permanent display in Yad Vashem's new Museum Complex to be opened in 2004. As Inbar noted, "these personal items are invaluable, because not only do they tell the story of Chelmno, but each object is all that remains of an entire life—a life that, by human devise, was prematurely ended."



by Lisa Davidson

As part of the ongoing expansion in the framework of the “Yad Vashem 2001” masterplan, the Visual Center, a component of the Museum Complex to open by summer 2004, will be the only video “library” of its kind and scope in the world. The Visual Center will allow the more than two million annual visitors to Yad Vashem on-the-spot access to visual material documenting the unprecedented acts of inhumanity that took place during the Holocaust.

Supported by the Righteous Persons Foundation established by Steven Spielberg, and close friends of Yad Vashem, Daniella and Daniel Steinmetz from Israel, the Visual Center will give visitors direct and interactive access

The Visual Center

A View to

to all the audio and visual testimonies taken by Yad Vashem, to the majority of documentaries and films produced on the subject of the Holocaust over the years, to authentic footage on Jewish life in Europe before the war, and to films shot by the Germans during the Holocaust. All of the unedited video testimonies of Holocaust survivors, liberators, rescuers, and other witnesses taken by Steven Spielberg’s Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation also will be accessible.

In addition to the Visual Center, the Museum Complex—which will make use of the most up-to-date museological concepts and which will provide added space for the increased numbers of visitors to Yad Vashem in recent years—will also house the Historical Museum, the Hall of Names, the Museum for Holocaust Art, the Learning Center, the Exhibition Pavilion, and a Synagogue.

Designed by world-renowned architect, Moshe Safdie, the Visual Center, is being constructed in order to more effectively present the Holocaust to the international public by exposing as much of Yad Vashem’s visual archival material as possible. It will occupy 300 square meters within Yad Vashem’s Museum Complex, will be equipped with the most up to date technology and modern exhibition design techniques, and will contain individual workstations where films can be viewed privately, searches can be conducted, and materials can be retrieved. There will also be areas for small groups designated within the Center.

The Visual Center will serve as a priceless repository for visitors, researchers, teachers, and students alike granting them the opportunity to trace the path of a lost generation, to ensure Jewish continuity, and to preserve the Jewish memory.

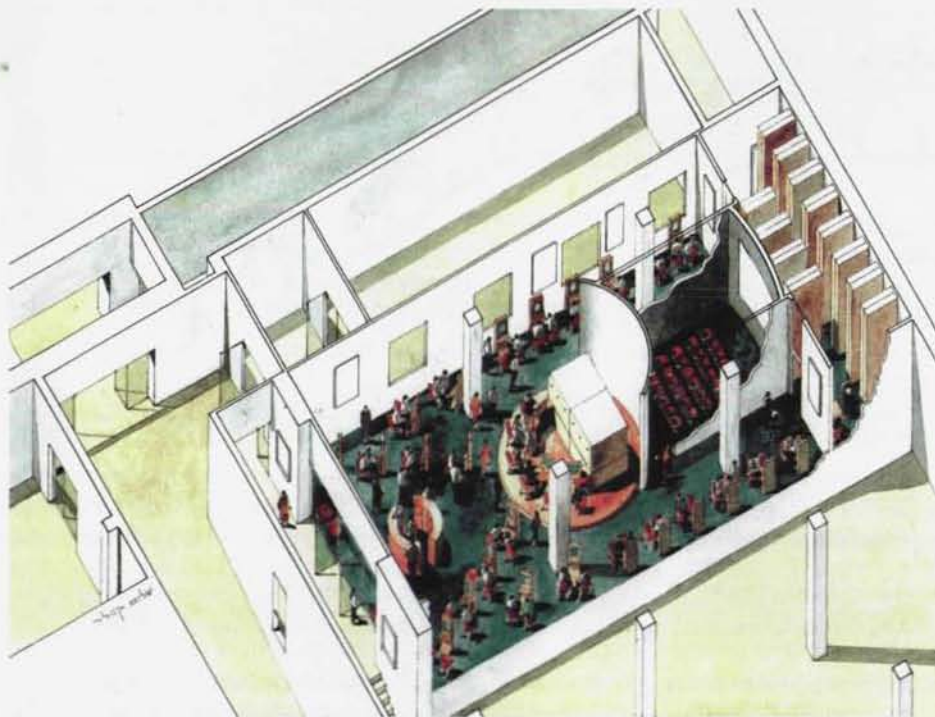
er- the Past

* Visual, adj.: of or pertaining to sight; concerned with seeing, conveying a mental vision

(the Chambers Dictionary)



The Visual Center - View from the entrance

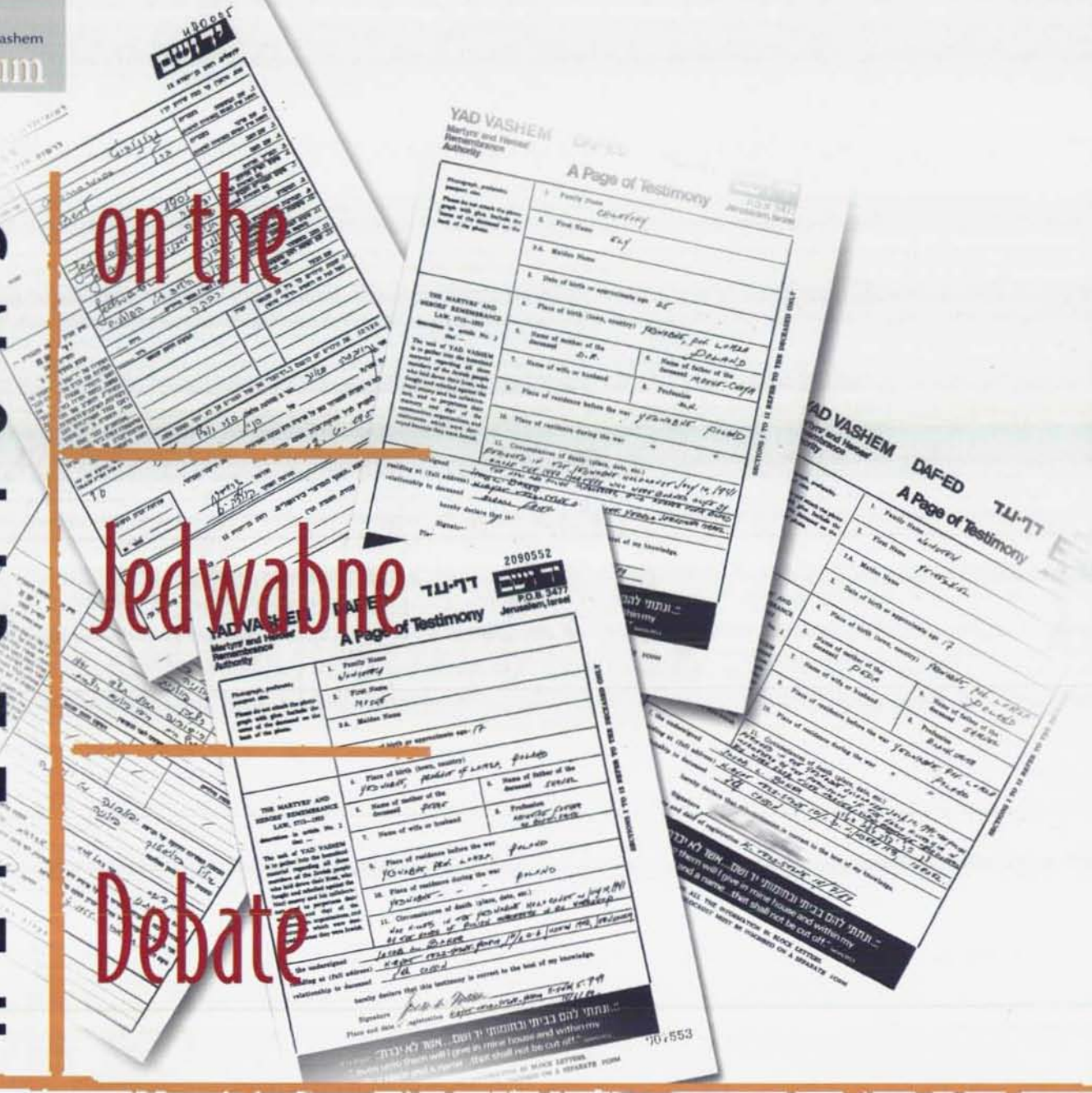


The Visual Center - An overhead view

Architectural illustrations by Shalom Kweiler

REFLECTIONS

on the Jedwabne Debate



by Professor Israel Gutman

For several decades following WWII, the subject of the treatment of the Poles towards the Jews during the Holocaust was cloaked in a conspiracy of silence.

It was not until 1987, with the publication of Jan Blonski's groundbreaking essay "Poor Poles Look at the Ghetto," in *Tygodnik Powszechny*, that the taboo was lifted and the subject entered the public arena.

Blonski wrote about the shared guilt of the countries and peoples of Europe for the Holocaust, stressing that this guilt should be expressed with particular force in Poland, a country in which so many Jews lived for so many centuries. He touched upon this

painful reality without hesitation, but he also expressed relief that the worst evil had passed Poland by: "When one reads what people wrote about the Jews before the war, how much hatred there was in Polish society, one often wonders how it is that words were never followed by deeds. Well, they were not (or were seldom) followed by deeds."

That is what Blonski thought, and that is also what many friends of Poland thought until recently. In light of the recent publication of Polish historian, Professor Jan Tomasz Gross's *Neighbors: The Destruction of the Jewish Community in Jedwabne*, which exposed the 10 July 1941 massacre of Jews in the northeastern Polish town of Jedwabne at the hands of their Polish neighbors (and

not as previously thought at the hands of the Nazis), one can no longer claim that genocide was alien to the Poles during the Holocaust.

According to Gross's account, which was assembled from survivor testimonies, postwar trial transcripts, and a memorial book, the 1,600 Jewish inhabitants of the 200-year-old market town of 2,500 people were ordered to the town square by the town's mayor, Marian Karolak, for the ostensible purpose of cleaning up the grounds. Once assembled, the Polish townspeople began to chase their Jewish neighbors throughout the streets, butchering them to death with stones, clubs, whips, knives, and other implements. The majority of Jews were then

taken to a nearby barn were they were forced inside and burned alive.

The massacre at Jedwabne clearly exceeds the pattern of universal indifference or marginal deviation. This is the murder of over 60 percent of the inhabitants of an impoverished town by their compatriots and neighbors with whom the victims had lived for generations. This massacre—committed only because the victims were Jews—is an unheard of, incomprehensible atrocity. The tools and the methods by which mass murder was committed against defenseless people, completely at the mercy of their tormentors, illustrate an incredible breakdown of humanity.

How was this atrocity possible, and what was the origin of so much pent-up fury and bloodlust? And how is it that the murder of some 1,600 people in the heart of a town has stunned us 60 years after the event, like an unexpected archeological discovery?

Knowledge of the mass murder committed in Jedwabne is an enormous shock to Poles, one that clashes with their national myth about the war years. The continuing series of articles in the press, the public debates, and discussions have concentrated not solely on Jedwabne, but also on a wide range of issues such as antisemitism in Poland, Polish-Jewish relations at the time of the profound changes that occurred during and after the turbulent war years, and the question and dimensions of the responsibility for Jedwabne.

Generally speaking, the wide-ranging debate has been concluded in a mood of contemplation. The majority of Poland's 100 Catholic bishops recently held an

unprecedented ceremony in Warsaw to publicly apologize for the Jedwabne massacre and for the suffering of other Jews at the hands of Catholics during WWII. In a public 10 July ceremony marking the 60th anniversary of the Jedwabne massacre, President of Poland, Aleksander Kwasniewski, asked for forgiveness on behalf of his country for crimes committed by the Polish people against the Jews during the Holocaust.

The Polish people's readiness to recognize the fact that Polish history is not a glorious account of heroism and justice, but contains episodes of brutality against weak and innocent people, does not have to signify a spiritual collapse, but can instead

result in the act of self-reflection.

The Polish nation has experienced a long history of bondage and martyrdom. The well-worn self-portrait of Poland has always portrayed the country as a victim fighting for its right to existence. Now is the time—and not only because of the shadow of Jedwabne—to accept the fact that the inter-war history of independent Poland, followed by successive chapters of its history, are stained with crimes against its own citizens who looked to their country for aid and understanding.

Are the Poles, therefore, a nation of incorrigible antisemites? Such a sweeping statement is in itself unjust and bears something of the plague of antisemitism. It is true that antisemitism has embedded itself deeply in the Polish consciousness over the past few generations, that it existed during the war and occupation, and that it made itself sharply felt after the war. It was expressed in the wave of killings in the 1940s, in the Kielce pogrom of 1946, and in the expulsion of Jews in 1968-1969, the result of squabbling between Communist party factions.

At the same time, a relatively large number of Poles occupy an honorable place among the Righteous Among the Nations for helping hunted Jews at the risk, and sometimes with the loss, of their lives and the lives of their families. They did so selflessly, and with ceaseless effort, for people whom they did not know, and consequently lived in constant fear, for as is generally acknowledged, the task of rescuing Jews was especially difficult and dangerous in Poland.

Nor are the institutions representing the

Polish people during the occupation—the government in exile in London and the underground Home Army in Poland—responsible for the Jedwabne atrocity, even if they did little to alleviate Jewish misery and fate.

So is no one responsible for the massacre in Jedwabne? A lot has been said about individual responsibility or limited local responsibility, and various aspects of responsibility and guilt have been examined in detail. It has also been said that the entire nation and its future generations should not be held responsible for the sins of a small, remote town.

Such a manner of gauging responsibility is mistaken. There is such a thing as the

personal responsibility of the perpetrators, but that is only one side of the coin. There is no denying that the evil force of what happened in Jedwabne was nourished by a widespread dislike of Jews. This hostility, which reached its peak in Poland in the 1930s required the Jews, who had lived in Poland for centuries, to be seen as a threat to the state, and a threat that ought to be eliminated. This antisemitism was not just imported from outside, but grew on Polish soil, on Polish home ground.

The regime of lawlessness and disregard for human life imposed by the Germans provoked the massacre in Jedwabne, a tragedy which is but a small part of the enormous devastation of the Holocaust—yet it is a tragedy for the Jews and a bitter chapter in the history of the Poles.

The author is an Academic Advisor at the International Institute for Holocaust Research

On 17 May, Professor Leon Kieres, President of the Institute of National Remembrance, the official body investigating the involvement of Poles in the 1941 massacre of Jews in Jedwabne, visited Yad Vashem. During his visit, Kieres announced the readiness of Poland's secret services to allow the Yad Vashem Archives access to its Holocaust period



declassified materials. Additionally, he collected over 277 Pages of Testimony from Yad Vashem's Hall of Names, recorded by relatives of Jews who were killed in Jedwabne, in the hopes of tracing further witnesses to the atrocity.

While at Yad Vashem, Kieres visited the Valley of the Communities, the Historical Museum, the Hall of Names, the Children's Memorial, and the "No Child's Play" exhibit. He also participated in a memorial service, laid a wreath in the Hall of Remembrance, and signed the visitors' book with a moving and highly personalized message: "My dear God, please remember that I am only a human being, an individual, a man who sometimes feels guilty—guilty for my sins and for the sins of my nation. Please forgive me."

Youth Observe Holocaust Remembrance Day

by Shachar Leven

This year on Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Day, Yad Vashem continued its ongoing efforts to engage today's youth in acts of Holocaust commemoration and education. The International School for Holocaust Studies opened its doors to the general public and held various seminars, tours, and official ceremonies for over 2,000 attending youth. The traditional Ceremony for Youth was held in a new venue, was attended by hundreds of youngsters, and was broadcast live by Israeli Television. As well, Beit Wolyn, Yad Vashem's Center for Holocaust Education in Givatayim, held its first-ever series of large-scale events and ceremonies.

Gallows-shaped wooden structures lined the halls of the International School for Holocaust Studies, exhibiting displays of contemporary artwork created by fifth-grade and university-aged students based upon the educational project "The Holocaust and Us." Posters depicting the current life of Holocaust survivor *Savta* (Grandma) Irma, captioned by the reverberating slogan, "There are things that cannot be seen about *Savta* Irma," decorated the walls.

Throughout the day, groups of school-aged children and soldiers from the Israel Defense Force listened to firsthand survivor testimonies, viewed films dealing with the subject of the Holocaust, toured the Yad Vashem site, and participated in a variety of seminars dealing with topics including: "Daily Life in the Ghetto," "Children in the Holocaust," and "Israeli Society and the Holocaust."

This year, Yad Vashem's Holocaust Remembrance Day Ceremony for Youth underwent a change of venue, taking place in the Valley of the Communities. The ceremony included approximately 500 invitees from members of Israeli student councils and youth movements, and was held in conjunction with the Israel Information Center, the Youth and Social Administration, and the Youth Movement Council of Israel's Ministry of Education. The ceremony was held in the presence of Israeli Minister of Education, Limor Livnat, and with the participation of Israeli singer, Rami Kleinstein; Masters of Ceremony, Michal Yanai and Nativ Robinson; and the Youth Movement Band established in the name of Gilad Larach.

At Beit Wolyn a wide range of activities were also held prior to and on Holocaust Remembrance Day itself. Beginning on 17 April, a gathering was held with Beit Wolyn staff, honoring 20 Holocaust survivors who regularly give their testimonies to soldiers and students visiting Beit Wolyn. That same evening over 300 people attended a lecture by Professor Asa Kasher on "The Ethical Weakness of Memory" as part the Center's year-long continuing education series.

On 19 April, a day-long ceremony was held at Beit Wolyn, during which survivors, students, and soldiers recited aloud names of children who perished in the Holocaust in the framework of "Unto Every Person There is a Name." Volunteers from the Givatayim Rotary Club helped the public fill in Survivor Questionnaires, while volunteers from the greater public aided in the filling in of Pages of Testimony. Videos of survivor testimonies were screened throughout the day, and a nearby Dan bus stop was covered with current articles pertaining to the subject of Holocaust denial.



Director of Program and Curriculum Development at the International School for Holocaust Studies, Michael Fischer, instructs a group of elementary-age students



Dan bus stop in Givatayim



Ceremony for Youth held in the Valley of the Communities

Inauguration of the New Building of the International Institute for Holocaust Research

The new building of the International Institute for Holocaust Research—designed to allow for a steady increase in the scope of worldwide scholarly research relating to the Holocaust—was inaugurated during an 11 April ceremony at Yad Vashem.

Speakers at the official ceremony included former Israeli Prime Minister, Ehud Barak, who attended along with his wife, Nava; the International Institute for Holocaust Research's donor, Danek Gertner, who attended along with Rudolphine Steindling; Chairman of the American Society for Yad Vashem, Eli Zborowski; Chairman of the Yad Vashem Directorate, Avner Shalev; and Head of the International Institute for Holocaust Research, Professor David Bankier. Also in attendance were Hella Gertner, wife of Danek Gertner's late brother, Marian; her children, Alexander and Rita; family and friends of the Gertner family; and heads and members of Yad Vashem Societies from Israel and around the world.

The new building of the International Institute, which accommodates all the related divisions of the International Institute for Holocaust Research, including Yad Vashem's Publications Department and the Yad Vashem Studies Department, was constructed within the framework of the "Yad Vashem 2001" masterplan. Since its establishment in 1993 as an independent academic unit of Yad Vashem, the International Institute has been home to scholars from Israel and abroad. The International Institute is currently headed by Professor David Bankier, with Professor Dan Michman as its Chief Historian, and Professors Israel Gutman and Yehuda Bauer serving in advisory capacities.

Close friend of Yad Vashem, Danek Gertner, donor of the Gertner Center for International Holocaust Conferences and the Conservation and Restoration Laboratory in the Archives Building, endowed the International Institute building in memory of his late wife, Jadzia B. Gertner. Gertner, a descendent of rabbis in eastern Galicia, survived the Holocaust largely as a result of his resourcefulness and bravery, despite seeing members of his family and community murdered. He fled while on a march towards Kolomyja, surviving by hiding among corpses in a cemetery. After once again being captured and forced onto a train bound for an unknown destination, he again saved his own life by leaping from the moving train.

Today, Danek Gertner is based in Vienna where he is a successful businessman and ardent philanthropist for the State of Israel. He is also the co-author of the book *The Home is No More—The Destruction of the Jews of Kosov and Zabie*.



From left to right: Hella Gertner, Nava Barak, former Prime Minister of Israel, Ehud Barak, and Danek Gertner

Transfer of Hungarian Archive Documents to Yad Vashem

At the end of April, Israeli Foreign Minister, Shimon Peres, and Hungarian Minister of National Cultural Heritage, Zoltan Rockenbauer, signed an agreement between the Government of the State of Israel and the Government of the Republic of Hungary allowing copies of Holocaust documents from Hungarian archives to be transferred to the Yad Vashem Archives.

According to Chairman of the Yad Vashem Directorate, Avner Shalev, this documentation is extremely important for research into the Holocaust period in Hungary, as it includes, among other information, that which pertains to the roundup of the Jews prior to deportation, the aryanization of Jewish property, and the deportation of the Jews, as well as legal documents and lists of survivors who returned to Hungary at the end of the war. These documents will be added to the more than 55 million pages of documentation already stored in the Yad Vashem Archives.

The agreement concludes a process begun in January 1995, when a team of researchers, working on behalf of the Yad Vashem Archives, started examining the majority of Hungary's public archives, copying more than half a million pages of Holocaust-era documentation on to microfilm. That same year, a personal data protection act relating to archival documentation was passed in Hungary, thus disabling such documentation from leaving Hungary. In 1997, as a result of Hungarian governmental involvement, a special agreement to ease the restrictions was negotiated. Due to various technical problems—such as the instatement of a new Hungarian government—copies of the archival material could not be transferred to Yad Vashem's Archives until now, through the assistance of the Hungarian



From left to right: Chairman of the Yad Vashem Directorate, Avner Shalev; Israeli Foreign Minister, Shimon Peres; and Hungarian Minister of National Cultural Heritage, Zoltan Rockenbauer

Ambassador in Israel, Dr. Janos Hovari.

Over the upcoming six months, Hungary will publicize the archival transfer of the documents containing protected personal data, in order to allow for all those desiring for reasons of privacy, to object to their names appearing on documentation. Following the six-month period, the microfilm copies will be transferred to the Yad Vashem Archives.

Chairman of the American Society for Yad Vashem, Eli Zborowski, received the degree of Doctor of Humane Letters, *honoris causa* from Yeshiva University in New York at the University's 70th Annual Commencement Exercises in late May. Zborowski was honored for his many years of contribution to Holocaust remembrance and commemoration, in his capacity as a member of the Jewish Fighters Organization, as the founder and Chairman of the American Society for Yad Vashem, and as a member of the Yad Vashem Directorate.



In its April meeting, the Yad Vashem Directorate approved the Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Authority's balance for the year 2000. The Authority broke even in the 2000 work year with a balance of NIS 59,600,000 (with a remainder of approximately NIS 15,700). In comparison with the years 1998 and 1999, both of which were also evenly balanced and the latter of which reached NIS 54,370,000, the current balance reveals a further increase in the expanse of Yad Vashem's activities.

The Nazi "Euthanasia" Program: A Symposium

In light of the recent increase in interest and research carried out on the subject of the Nazi "Euthanasia" Program, Yad Vashem's International Institute for Holocaust Research held its first-ever symposium on "Nazi 'Euthanasia' and its Implications for the Holocaust" on 13 June.

The "Euthanasia" Program or "T4 Operation" was a program of "mercy killings," a term which the Nazis used to euphemistically refer to their systematic extermination of certain groups in order to preserve the purity of the Aryan race. The majority of the victims included the mentally ill, retarded, disabled, and those with physical birth defects.

In 1933, with Hitler's rise to power, the Nazi regime began to carry out the eradication of undesirable segments of its society with the forced sterilization of those who were considered carriers of hereditary diseases, children of black fathers, and criminals.

By late 1939, Hitler appointed his personal doctor, Dr. Karl Brandt, and the head of his office, Philip Bouhler, heads of the "Euthanasia" Program, thereby handing them the power to determine who should die under the guise of supposed "mercy killings." During the first half of 1940, Brandt and Bouhler succeeded in hiring a staff of several tens of SS medical doctors who were committed to keeping the "Euthanasia" Program top secret and in establishing six euthanasia centers in Germany and Austria.

During the years 1940-1941, in full coordination with the Nazi administrative headquarters in Berlin, code-named "T4," some 70,000 Germans were selected as "mercy killing" victims, following superficial classification processes carried out mainly in institutions for the mentally ill and the physically disabled. The victims were then transported to the euthanasia centers where they were shot, gassed, or killed by lethal injection because of apparent medical reasons that deemed them unfit to continue living in the Nazi "People's Community" (*Volksgemeinde*). Following their murders, false death certificates were issued for the deceased.

Despite the Nazi attempt to conceal the true nature of their "Euthanasia" Program, the acts of murder became publicly known and sparked considerable opposition.

In the summer of 1941, Hitler decided to yield to public pressure, including the mass publication of a sermon by Bishop Clemens v. Galen in Münster, and instructed that the "Euthanasia" Program be officially terminated. Most of the gas chambers ceased operations, although the campaign continued covertly until the cessation of the war, via other means, such as poison shots and starvation. By 1945, the continued "Euthanasia" Program had claimed some quarter of a million victims.

The Yad Vashem symposium investigated the nature of the Nazi "Euthanasia" Program from multiple perspectives. Dr. Daniel Nadav, Research Fellow at the International Institute for Holocaust Research and lecturer at the University of Tel Aviv, spoke of "The Brutal Chain: From 'Euthanasia' to the Holocaust." Professor Gerhard Baader from the University of Berlin spoke about "'Euthanasia' in Austria." Dr. Etienne Lepicard of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem lectured on "'Euthanasia' in Alexis Carrel's *Man, the Unknown*, 1935." And Dr. Patricia Heberer of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum spoke about "'Euthanasia' on Trial: Hadamar Trials, 1945 and 1947."

The symposium was co-chaired by Professor Shmuel Kottke of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and Professor Gerhard Baader of the University of Berlin. Professor David Bankier, Head of the International Institute for Holocaust Research, delivered opening remarks and closing remarks were given by Professor Dan Michman, Chief Historian of Yad Vashem.

The author is a Research Fellow at the International Institute for Holocaust Research

Yad Vashem Awards Ceremony for Educational Projects

On 22 May, the Yad Vashem prizes for excellence in the field of Holocaust Education 2001 were awarded at a ceremony held at the International School for Holocaust Studies. The awards ceremony was attended by, among others, the Director General of Israel's Ministry of Education, Ronit Tirosh; award donors, Professor Luba Uveeler, the Najmann family, and the Bergson family; Chairman of the Yad Vashem Council, Professor Szewach Weiss; Chairman of the Yad Vashem Directorate, Avner Shalev; Director of the International School For Holocaust Studies, Dr. Motti Shalem; Holocaust survivors; educators; and students.

The Yad Vashem awards are designed to encourage both educators and students to delve into the subject of the Holocaust in all its many facets. This year, 54 students from throughout Israel submitted projects dealing with a wide range of topics and varied themes.

Prize donors included: Manya and Gershon Bergson, the Luba Uveeler and the late Mark Uveeler Foundation, the Chuno and Blima Najmann Foundation, and the Bruno Brandt Foundation.

Recipients included: Shani Shalev and Orit Atias for outstanding term papers; Mor Sharon (third place), Orly Barad (second place), and Roni Bekman (first place) for outstanding matriculation papers; the Mica Raiser School in Rishon Le Zion for an outstanding study unit; the Ort Arad School for an outstanding educational project; former Director of Beit Wolyn, Avigdor Efron, for excellence in Holocaust teaching; and author, Dorit Orgad, for exceptional achievement in children's literature.

International Conference: Return of the Jews to their Countries of Origin

An international conference on the "Return of the Jews to their Countries of Origin: Expectations and Apprehensions, 1943-1947" took place at Yad Vashem from 22-24 May. The conference was held to mark the 75th birthday of Professor Yehuda Bauer, an Academic Advisor at Yad Vashem's International Institute for Holocaust Research and the Institute's former Head, and was supported by the Gertner Centre for International Holocaust Conferences and the Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture.

Among the aims of the conference was the desire to examine the reactions and treatment Jews received upon returning to their countries of origin following the war, as compared to their expectations and fears. Conference participants included, among others, scholars from throughout Europe and Israel, and sessions focused upon individual countries, including Italy, Holland, Belgium, Poland, France, Romania, Slovakia, and Hungary.

The conference opened with greetings by Professor Shlomo Avineri of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and Professor David Bankier, Head of Yad Vashem's International Institute for Holocaust Research. Dr. Peter Lagrou, of the Institut d'Histoire du Temps Moderne, followed with a keynote address on "Return to a Vanished World, European Societies and the Remnants of their Jewish Communities, 1945-1947."

The following two days consisted of lectures on topics including: "American Intelligence Records on the Future of the Jews in Post-World War II Europe"; "Racial Laws: Abrogation and Reinstatement of Jews in Italian Society"; and "The Experiences of Homecoming: Holocaust Survivors in Poland, 1944-1945." The conference closed with a panel discussion titled "Whither: The Future of European Jewry."

Visits at Yad Vashem

Israel's Minister of Education, Limor Livnat, and the Directorate of the Ministry of Education visited Yad Vashem on 17 April, where they participated in a memorial ceremony at the Hall of Remembrance and visited the Children's Memorial. They also took part in a discussion on the subject of "The Educational Challenge of Instilling the Memory of the Holocaust into Israeli Identity," led by the Ministry's Director General, Ronit Tirosh, with the participation of Professor Yehuda Bauer, Muki Tzur, Professor Shalom Rosenberg, and

Chairman of the Yad Vashem Directorate, Avner Shalev.

During the visit, Livnat announced the Ministry's intentions to increase the number of scholarships it provides to students from low-income families for educational trips to Poland. For this purpose, 500 full scholarships have already been approved for the upcoming academic year.

"The students' trips to Poland provide them with a significant learning experience about the connection and affinity between Judaism, Jewish history, the Holocaust..., Zionism, and the establishment of the state," Livnat stated. "Every student who expresses interest in the Poland trips should be able to partake in the important experience that these trips provide."

Livnat also announced the Ministry's intentions to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of Israeli students' knowledge of the Holocaust, in order to develop additional programs of study on the subject for schools nationwide.



On 17 May, in marking the end of his term as US Ambassador to Israel, Martin Indyk and his wife, Jill, visited Yad Vashem. While at Yad Vashem, they toured the Hall of Names, the Children's Memorial, the "No Child's Play" exhibit, and the International School for Holocaust Studies.



Israel's Chief of Staff, Lt. Gen Shaul Mofaz, visited Yad Vashem along with the Israel Defense Force's General Staff Forum, for a day-long symposium on 16 April, in preparation for Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Day.

The day opened with a series of lectures held at the International School for Holocaust Studies. Avner Shalev, Chairman of the Yad Vashem Directorate, discussed the "Yad Vashem 2001" masterplan; Dr. Hanna Yablonka spoke on the subject of "Foreign Brothers—the Absorption of Holocaust Survivors in Israel and in the IDF"; and Holocaust survivor, Yosef Harmatz,

gave his personal testimony, "From the Killing Fields to the Battlefields."

The IDF General Staff Forum also took part in a ceremony at the Hall of Remembrance, visited the Children's Memorial, toured the Yad Vashem Archives, and participated in a discussion on "The Role of the Holocaust in Present Day Israeli Identity," with the participation of Professor Amnon Rubenstein, Professor Avi Sagie, Tom Segev, and Avner Shalev.

The Third Session of the International Auschwitz Council

The International Auschwitz Council held its third session in Lublin on 7-8 May. Established in January 2000 by appointment of the Prime Minister of Poland, the International Auschwitz Council cooperates with the appropriate individuals, ministries, and institutions to protect, administer, secure funding for and internationally promote the commemoration of Holocaust sites, as well as evaluate the content of exhibits and displays set up on the grounds of these monuments.

The Council is chaired by former Auschwitz-Birkenau prisoner, Wladyslaw Bartoszewski, Poland's Minister of Foreign Affairs and vice-chaired by Academic Advisor at Yad Vashem's International Institute for Holocaust Research, Professor Israel Gutman, and Stefan Wilkanowicz. Among its members are Chairman of the Yad Vashem Directorate, Avner Shalev; and Secretary General for the Central Organization of Holocaust Survivors in Israel and a member the Yad Vashem Directorate, Noach Flug; in addition to representatives of groups from Poland, various other European countries, and the US.

The International Auschwitz Council was preceded by the International Council of the State Museum of Auschwitz-Birkenau that functioned for eight years with the primary goal of securing funding for the safeguarding and development of the Auschwitz site and museum.

The newly formed International Auschwitz Council arose out of concern for the state of other Nazi camps and sites of mass extermination that remained in Poland after the war (Majdanek, Treblinka, Sobibor, Belzec, and Chelmno).

Accordingly, the Council chose to open its third session with a visit to the site of the former Nazi extermination center in Belzec. Council members found Belzec neglected and in need of urgent care. They therefore called for aid in taking steps towards commemorating the victims of Belzec through setting up exhibitions, repairing monuments, and increasing the educative role of the site.

During the two-day session, the International Auschwitz Council members also visited the Majdanek death camp and were informed about the activity of the site's museum; met with the Catholic Metropolitan Archbishop of Lublin, Bishop Professor Jozef Zycinski; and were updated on the development plans of the town Oswiecim, as well as the investigation concerning the Jedwabne massacre.

The next meeting of the International Auschwitz Council is scheduled to take place in Oswiecim on 10-11 September 2001.

Yad Vashem Receives Sermig Prize

Yad Vashem received an award of recognition from the Sermig Arsenal of Peace Organization at a 9 May ceremony in Torino, Italy. The award for worldwide peace and justice was presented to Yad Vashem in memory of all of the victims and heroes of the Holocaust—men, women, and children—and as a call for peace in the Middle East.

Sermig, a volunteer organization aimed at advancing mutual understanding between peoples and furthering the ideals of world peace, functions under the blessing of the Fraternity of Hope of the Sacred Convent of San Francesco in Assisi.

Over 400 people attended the ceremony, among them the mayor of Torino, prominent Italian politicians, members of Torino's municipal government, as well as many educators and school-age pupils.

Correction: On page 3 of *Yad Vashem Jerusalem*, Vol. 22 in the article "From Persecution to Mass Murder," the word Serbia appears in place of the word Bessarabia.

U.S.A.

The American Society for Yad Vashem increased the progress of its Florida Chapter earlier this year with a day of events that included the **Hon. Ehud Olmert**, Mayor of Jerusalem, as a guest speaker. The series of events began in Palm Beach, with hosts **Rhoda and David T. Chase** aboard their yacht. Later in the day, a dinner, followed by a community-wide reception was held at the B'nai Torah Congregation in Boca Raton with the city's



David (left) and Rhoda Chase (right) host Mayor of Jerusalem, Ehud Olmert (center), on their yacht

mayor in attendance. One hundred and fifty people attended the evening program, chaired by American Society for Yad Vashem Board Member, **Daniel J. Katz**. Speakers included **Eli Zborowski**, Chairman of the American Society for Yad Vashem; **Ambassador Michael Arbel**, Israel's Consul General

in Florida; **Rabbi David Steinhardt** of B'nai Torah; as well as the American Society's Florida Committee Members, **Jean Schreiber** and **Lewis Fagen**. This program, coordinated by **Shraga Y. Mekel**, the American Society's Development Director, resulted in a significant increase in membership as well as major support for the "Yad Vashem 2001" masterplan.

Major contributors to Yad Vashem, **Dr. Fred Kort**, West Coast Chairman of the American Society for Yad Vashem, and his wife, **Barbara**, recently visited Yad Vashem where they viewed and were most impressed by the current developments of the "Yad Vashem 2001" masterplan. During their visit they took part in a working meeting with Chairman of the Yad Vashem Directorate, **Avner Shalev**, and Managing Director of Yad Vashem's International Relations Division, **Shaya Ben Yehuda**, where they discussed the West Coast Chapter and the details of a large fundraising event to take place in March 2002. **Avner Shalev** thanked **Fred and Barbara Kort** for their devotion to Yad Vashem and emphasized the importance of their continued support.

Friend of Yad Vashem, **Dr. Felix Zandman**, who, together with his wife, **Ruta**, contributed to the Family Plaza, received the prestigious Electronic Industries Alliance 2001 Medal of Honor at the Alliance convention in May.

The First Annual Spring Luncheon sponsored by the American Society took place on 1 May at the Jewish Museum in New York City. The luncheon



From left to right: Fanya Gottesfeld Heller, Professor Nechama Tec, and Eli Zborowski at the First Annual Spring Luncheon of the American Society

was chaired by **Fanya Gottesfeld Heller**, an officer of the Society, and was coordinated by **Rochel Berman**, the Society's Executive Director. The event honored **Professor Nechama Tec** for her contribution to Holocaust literature with **The First American Society Achievement Award**. Event Sponsors were **Fanya**

Gottesfeld Heller, the **Karten**, **Bookhamer**, and **Toledano Families**, **Elizabeth Wilf**, **Judith Wilf**, and **Diana Zborowski**.

Dr. Marlene Warshawski Yahalom, Education Director of the American Society, conducted a teacher-training workshop for 28 School District Coordinators in Queens, NY, which will reach 28,000 students. Yad Vashem educational materials were presented to the District Coordinators during the session, as part of the American Society's ongoing material dissemination campaign.

CANADA

The Canadian Society for Yad Vashem initiated a fund raising event on 25 June that included both its annual dinner and an event during which former US President, **Bill Clinton**, who was invited by the Canadian Society, addressed an audience of close to 3,000 people.

Israel Asper Q.C. recently visited Yad Vashem together with his wife, **Babs**. An entrepreneur, visionary, and philanthropist both in Canada and Israel, **Asper's** initiatives in the field of Holocaust education are inspiring. His Foundation sponsors a yearly trip for Canadian grade 9 students to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. Yad Vashem looks forward to joint cooperation with **Asper**.

GERMANY

Moritz and Miriam Gertler of Frankfurt unveiled a plaque in Yad Vashem's International School for Holocaust Studies along with their family, in honor of their contribution to teacher-training seminars. Over 600 teachers participate in these seminars annually.

The Prime Minister of Bavaria, **Ministerpräsident Dr. Edmund Stroiber**, headed a large delegation of Bavarian parliamentarians and economic leaders on their visit to Yad Vashem. The plans for the "Path of Hope," commemorating the death marches, which will be built with support from Germany, were presented before the group.

Prince Albrecht zu Castel-Castel organized a memorial service at Yad Vashem, together with the Lutheran order of nuns, during which some 800 people from Germany and around the world expressed remorse and shame for the silence of the Church during the Holocaust.

FRANCE

In commemoration of Holocaust Remembrance Day, the French **Comité for Yad Vashem** in Nice, headed by **Dr. Jacques Eloit**, held two main events and visited two local schools. During the events, several eyewitness accounts were given, recounting the deeds of **Monsignor Paul Remond**, and the rescue of children by the network of **Moussa and Odette Abadi**, and a film titled *Hidden Children in France* was screened.

Serge Klarsfeld visited Yad Vashem at the end of June, with a delegation of 40 members of the Association of Sons and Daughters of Deported Jews in France. The visit took place on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the erection of the monument to the 76,000 deported French Jews in Emek Ha-Ela. While at Yad Vashem, **Klarsfeld** met with Chairman of the Yad Vashem Directorate, **Avner Shalev**, to discuss mutual cooperation.

LATIN AMERICA

A number of friends and supporters from Latin America attended Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Day ceremonies at Yad Vashem. **Frida and David Weisz**, who together with their family are supporting the Spanish translation and publication of the **Wolfsberg Rosh Hashana Prayer Book (mahzor)**, laid a wreath on behalf of the **Venezuelan Society for Yad Vashem**. **Hilo Ostfeld**, Honorary Chairman of the **Venezuelan Society for Yad Vashem**, and his wife, **Klara**, contributors to Yad Vashem's Educational Center in the Valley of the Communities, laid a wreath. **Rabbi Pinjas Brenner** and his wife were present at the memorial ceremony on the eve of Holocaust Remembrance Day. **Fanny and Moises Sevilla**, representatives of **Friends of Yad Vashem in Mexico**, laid a wreath and later in their visit met with Chairman of the Yad Vashem Directorate, **Avner Shalev**. **Dr. Jacobo Polakiewicz**, former Chairman of the Centro Recordatorio del Holocausto in Montevideo, Uruguay, also laid a wreath.

Dr. Jaime Constantiner of Mexico, contributor of the Lecture Hall in memory of **Joan Constantiner**, in Yad Vashem's International School for Holocaust Studies, received the honor of **Ne'eman Yerushalayim (Jerusalem Fellow)**, from Jerusalem Mayor, **Ehud Olmert**, in the presence of former Mayor, **Teddy Kollek**, and **Constantiner's** son, **Dr. Arturo Constantiner** of New York.

SWITZERLAND

Dr. Rolf Bloch of Bern, new head of the Swiss Society for Yad Vashem, chaired the inaugural meeting of the Society in May. A festive event to officially inaugurate the Society will take place in September. Yad Vashem wishes the Swiss Society success in its endeavors.

LIECHTENSTEIN

A celebratory event to inaugurate the Liechtenstein Society for Yad Vashem, under the patronage of Prince Hans Adam II, will take place in September.

AUSTRALIA

For the purpose of the establishment of an Australian Society for Yad Vashem, Solly Kaplinski, Director of the English Desk of Yad Vashem's International Relations Division, recently visited Australia.

In Melbourne, Kaplinski met with Yad Vashem donor, Joseph West, and with two respected figures in the Melbourne Jewish community, Nathan Werdiger and Eva Slonim, who agreed to serve Yad Vashem in an advisory capacity in Australia. Mark Liebler, Federal President of UIA Australia provided invaluable advice. Kaplinski also met with Joseph Brender, one of the leading communal leaders. Pauline Rockman, a seminar graduate of Yad Vashem's International School for Holocaust Studies hosted Kaplinski in Melbourne.

During his visit Kaplinski also established educational links with museums, schools, and universities and enlarged Yad Vashem's database of friends and supporters.

ISRAEL

Helen Gorgiel, Holocaust survivor, member of the French Jewish Underground (M.J.S.), and current resident of the Mediterranean Towers Old-Age Home in Bat-Yam, has decided to make a donation to Yad Vashem.

Fela Shapira, a Holocaust survivor from the Czestochowa labor camp in Poland and current resident of Tel Aviv, has decided to make a donation in memory of her family members who perished in the Holocaust.

On the eve of Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Day, Yad Vashem launched a campaign to increase the collection of Holocaust survivors' testimonies recorded on video. The Yad Vashem Society in Israel took responsibility for the strategic planning of the campaign, the recruiting of the necessary resources for its advancement, and for its implementation in senior citizen homes in Israel. Accordingly, temporary recording studios have been and continue to be set up in the relevant senior-citizen homes, thus enabling survivors to give their testimonies without having to travel to Yad Vashem. The campaign's official launching took place at the Nofei Hasharon Senior Citizen Home in Netanya, with resident, Ruth Goldberg's personal testimony.

Accountant, Nir Kofman, member of the Directorate Committee of the Yad Vashem Society in Israel, initiated and conducted a meeting between Holocaust survivor and author, Ruth Elias, and some 80 accountants from the firm of which he is a partner, Kesselman and Kesselman. During the meeting, Kofman briefed the participants on Yad Vashem's activities, and specifically on the activities of the Yad Vashem Society in Israel, and Ruth Elias gave her personal testimony.



CEO of Africa Israel Hotels and Resorts, Dany Palti (left), lays a wreath in the Hall of Remembrance with Dror Gilboa (right)

In early May, some 40 senior directorate members of the Africa Israel Hotels and Resorts visited Yad Vashem, headed by CEO, Dany Palti. The guests toured the site and were made aware of Yad Vashem's development plans.

Maya Ashkenazi, a lawyer from the Berkman, Waxler, Sahar, Bloom and partners law firm, visited Yad Vashem in May and expressed her willingness to take part in the volunteer activities of both the Yad Vashem Society in Israel and Yad Vashem itself.

Several friends and heads of Yad Vashem Societies worldwide attended Holocaust Remembrance Day ceremonies, as well as dedication ceremonies for Yad Vashem's International Institute for Holocaust Research and Family Plaza in April. Among those in attendance were: Maxi Librati of Paris, donor and longtime friend of Yad Vashem; Jacques Graubart, Chairman of the Belgian Society for Yad Vashem; Joop Levy, Chairman of the Dutch Society for Yad Vashem and his wife; Herman Kahan, Chairman of the Norwegian Society for Yad Vashem and his wife; Yoram Berger, Chairman of the Yad Vashem Society in Israel; Andreas Sefiha, President of the Salonika Jewish Community and his wife; and Joachim Brückner of Brussels.

YAD VASHEM

JERUSALEM
MAGAZINE, VOL. 23, Av, 5761, July 2001

Published by:



The Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes'
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Production: Dfus Kal
Design: Stephanie & Ruti Design

This magazine was published with the assistance
of Canit Hashalom Investments LTD.

Yad Vashem Jerusalem Magazine
P.O. Box 3477, Jerusalem 91034, Israel
Tel: 972-2-6443413, Fax: 972-2-6443409
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www.yadvashem.org
ISSN 0793-7199

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Yad Vashem's activities are supported by
the Ministry of Education
and the Jewish Agency for Israel



Dr. Shmuel Spector (Editor-in-Chief), Geoffrey Wigoder (Consulting Editor), *The Encyclopedia of Jewish Life Before and During the Holocaust*. Jerusalem: Yad Vashem and Washington Square, New York: New York University Press, 2001, 1850 pages.



The Encyclopedia of Jewish Life Before and During the Holocaust features some 6,500 Jewish communities that came under Nazi rule, as well as a foreword by Nobel Prize laureate, Elie Wiesel, and a historical introduction by Editor-in-Chief, Dr. Shmuel Spector, which explains the evolution of the concept of the Jewish community in the Diaspora.

This three-volume book is an abbreviated and updated English version of some 30 Hebrew volumes (some of them yet to be published) that are included in the Yad Vashem *Pinkasei Hakehillot* publications. Each entry outlines the history of an individual Jewish community from its foundation until the present day, with a special emphasis placed on the fate of the Jews under the Nazi regime.

The book contains 600 photographs, never previously published, portraying the lives of the Jews before the Holocaust, as well as some 100 photographs from the Holocaust period. Also included are 15 maps with the main Jewish communities indicated, a selected bibliography, a detailed chronological table beginning with the foundation of the oldest Jewish communities in Cyrenaica in the 4th Century B.C.E, an index of names, and an index of places, including variants.

David Silberklang (Editor), *Yad Vashem Studies* (Volume 29). Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2001, 446 pages.



Yad Vashem Studies is a journal featuring contemporary articles dealing with research and reflection on the Holocaust. The most recent journal, Volume 29, is dedicated to the memory of historian, George Mosse. It includes a section on

WWII and the Holocaust in the USSR, articles on religion and the institution of the church, groundbreaking research on Wehrmacht antisemitic propaganda, examinations of newly discovered documentation, and a section of book review essays. Among the contributors are Yitzhak Arad, Michael Berenbaum, Randolph Brahm, and Christian Gerlach.

To order Yad Vashem publications please call: 972 (2) 644 3505, fax: 972 (2) 644 3506, or e-mail: publications.marketing@yadvashem.org.il



A new model of Yad Vashem has been constructed in order to provide the nearly two million visitors arriving yearly at Yad Vashem with an accurate picture as to how the site will appear following the completion of the multi-year development project, the "Yad Vashem 2001" masterplan. The model, designed by Israeli contractor Adam Brown, will be exhibited on the Yad Vashem campus until the construction at Yad Vashem is concluded.

In order to accommodate visitors during the construction at Yad Vashem, a temporary vehicle bridge has been erected and was inaugurated at a mid-April ceremony. The vehicle bridge was constructed along with a temporary pedestrian bridge and an outdoor lift for the physically handicapped for use prior to the completion of the "Yad Vashem 2001" masterplan, a long-term development plan designed to meet present and future needs and challenges in Holocaust commemoration, preservation, research, and education.



Visit Our New Website at: www.yadvashem.org