

JERUSALEM Yad Vashem

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Central Story:

International conference
at Yad Vashem on
Holocaust & education

Editorial

“Human history becomes more and more a race between education and catastrophe”, said H.G. Wells in his “Outline of History XV”. Within the context of 20th-century history, the words of this master of science fiction are all too real, and as we near the next era, the responsibility of today’s educators appears awesome. 350 teachers and scholars from the world over, who have committed themselves to facing this grand task, gathered at Yad Vashem, Jerusalem, for a three day conference on Holocaust and education. In this issue we would like to present the broad spectrum of emphases and aims of education on the Holocaust throughout the world as presented at the conference.

The Gemara states that “He who saves one life saves an entire world”. During the Shoah, a few brave individuals, non Jews, widely different from one another, risked theirs and, at times, their families’ lives to save Jews. In “2001” we outline the complex and stirring work of Yad Vashem’s Department for “The Righteous among the Nations”.

The “Statute of Limitations” provides legitimacy for many countries to relinquish all responsibility for harboring Nazi war criminals who are responsible for the murder of masses of Jews during World War II. Italy’s “Priebke Affair” is just one example of how a nation’s populace deals with its national conscience and how a legal system may act in a similar spirit.

Finally, the Buchman Prize, the Mauerbach Auction, items from Majdanek, a Hannukiya from the Lodz ghetto, etc, are reviewed.

This Hannuka issue focusses not only on a world which was destroyed, but rather, presents glimmers of hope for a better future.

Yad Vashem Contents

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Cover: A Hannukiya salvaged from the Warsaw Ghetto ruins. (Yad Vashem Museum)

GUARANTEE

Educators from seventeen countries took part

By Michal Morris Kamil

The setting is Yad Vashem's Valley of the Communities. Illuminated Jerusalem stone megaliths, gargantuan, inscribed with the names of Jewish communities, many no longer in existence, encircle the Poland Square which, on this unique night, echoes life and continuity. An array of religions, ages, professions and cultures is present. The atmosphere is electric.

Murmurs of Hebrew, English, Spanish, Russian, Polish, German, Italian, Japanese, amongst others, feed the waxing anticipation of the grand opening of Yad Vashem's first international conference on the teaching of the Holocaust. The Ankor Children's Choir, the IDF Education Corps and Gadna Orchestra's instrumental pieces, Benny Hendel's dramatic reading of Ida Fink's "The Madman" were all part of the event. The opening speeches of Premier Benyamin Netanyahu, Minister of Education and Culture, Zevulun Hammer, the Mayor of Jerusalem, Ehud Olmert, the Chairman of the International Council of Yad Vashem, Dr. Josef Burg, and the Chairman of the Yad Vashem Directorate, Avner Shalev, set the tone for three intensive, stimulating and invigorating days of communication, analysis and exchange of ideas and programs related to Holocaust teaching and studies.

Prime Minister Netanyahu, of Lithuanian origin, and whose father-in-law is the sole survivor of an entire family from the Polish town of Bilgoraj,

aptly summarizes a central theme recurring in the discussions throughout the entire conference:

"Learning the facts undermines our faith in humanity. We must not lose that faith. The educators must continue to maintain that there is no room for despair. The grandeur of the Jewish and non-Jewish spirits within the shadow of the valley of death must be emphasized and expanded upon. The congregation of educators from the four corners of the earth is proof that within us is instilled a joint and common sense of a shared mission to rehabilitate humanity's belief in itself and ensure that our people will no longer know hate and will live in a state of eternal peace and security".

350 Participants spent the next three days questioning and discussing, generally at great depth and with intensity, what the central tenets of Holocaust education are and whether these educators, from Argentina, Poland, Britain, Australia, Germany, Russia, France, Italy, the U.S.A, Japan, Cyprus, Israel, and many others, share common goals. One premise was unanimous: there is a distinct



From Left to Right: Avner Shalev, Benyamin and Sara Netanyahu, Zevulun Hammer, Ehud Olmert, Josef Burg, Leslie and Anna Dan

FOR THE FUTURE

in Yad Vashem's first international conference on Holocaust education

rise in interest amongst the third and fourth generations, Jewish and non-Jewish, in this period, and this interest crosses all disciplines. Thus, Holocaust education can no longer be left up to the individual good will of any one teacher. Minister of Education and Culture, Zevulun Hammer, aptly observes, "This conference on the Holocaust and education is most vital...The issues imparted at this event emphasize that we must not only teach the youth about what happened to their grandparents, but to help mold theirs and their children's futures. Holocaust education is not only about the past, but about what will be in the future".

According to Motti Shalem, Principal of Yad Vashem's International School of Holocaust Studies, the conference focussed mainly on three aspects: What is happening currently in the realm of education, the introduction of and familiarization with new educational programs and tools, and finally, defining the challenges of Holocaust education as we enter the 21st century. The itinerary was structured in such a way that each of these three perspectives was addressed daily by an extremely broad spectrum of educators in the field.

Says Shalem, "There is a tremendous thirst for information, and a need to study and exchange ideas. During the conference, Yad Vashem's role as a central pivot for educational activity became irrefutably clear, not only as a leading educational institute, but also because it is located in Jerusalem, the capital of Israel. This was apparent in the overwhelming number of participants from around the world, from the discussions held during the conference and the many enthusiastic and appreciative letters following the event".

The range and variety of educational programs could be seen in the multitude of workshops that took place on the second day, and from the Educational Materials Exhibition which was on display throughout the entire conference. The exhibition included books, multimedia programs, posters, educational kits and other pedagogical accessories. The workshops, which included presentations and question-and-answer sessions, enabled the participants to gain an international perspective within a forum of raising and sharing problems, and an opportunity to compare the methods, structure and contents of programs.

Imagine the Yiddish song "Zamele" (The Lonely Child) sung by a chorus of Japanese children conducted by the Reverend Takeo Sato of the Holocaust Education Center in Hiroshima, whose director is the Reverend Makoto Otsuka; or the German poet Gertrude Kolmar's words, "You hear me speak, but do you hear me feel?" coming to life in a Yad Vashem lecture by the American Professor Pamela Hope Levin, speaking on the teaching of the Holocaust through the performing arts; or studying the notion "Doctor as God" and the extremely relevant and controversial issue of medical ethics and eugenics in light of the Holocaust, presented by Dr. Louis Flancebaum and Professor Michael Thaler, himself a Holocaust survivor; or combating antisemitism and

Holocaust denial on the Internet, presented by Rabbi Abraham Cooper, the Associate Dean of the Simon Wiesenthal Center, Los Angeles. These are just a few examples of the multiplicity of perspectives within an holistic approach to Holocaust education worldwide, presented and discussed.



350 delegates took part in the Yad Vashem education conference

Lectures, workshops, dramatizations, and a constant flow of formal and informal discussions characterized the event. Religious and philosophical deliberations, expressions of memory, modes of art and literature, multifaceted pedagogic methods and mediums, sociological teaching dilemmas were all part of the intellectual content of these three intensive days. Before you is but a minuscule selection of personalities and focii at the conference:

ISRAEL

Dr. Nili Keren, head of the department of Holocaust Education at the Kibbutz Teaching Seminary and the thematic coordinator of the conference, maintains that in Israel scarcely a day passes without the Holocaust being mentioned in the media, oral and written. The past decade has witnessed the publication of books whose central themes deal with memory, pain, alienation and other traumatic Holocaust material. The cinema, theater, and television capture our attention and imaginations, at all ages, with universal and particularly Jewish messages of the Holocaust. Within the school system there has been an increasing demand, not only by teachers but also by pupils, to delve into the breadth of historical sources in search of personal roots and an in-depth understanding of humanity's limits, for better and for worse. The increasingly growing numbers of youth visiting Poland and Germany are an indication of what Jackie



Feldman, of the Hebrew University, maintains, of a growing need to feel a "sense of oneness, and a need to close circles: by performing this 'rite' the Israeli youths advance from the status of onlookers to that of empowered witnesses, able to identify with the victims and the survivors."

According to Keren, most high and junior high school students dedicate many more hours than is strictly required to prepare "roots" orientated projects. Growing numbers of university students study Holocaust-related courses, the teacher training curriculum includes compulsory studies on the Holocaust; textbooks on the Holocaust in Arabic for teachers and pupils have been published, and in general, the subject "Holocaust" has become part of the daily agenda. Says Keren, "Our major task in education is to set students free from Holocaust-related anxieties so that they can look at it from a broad range of perspectives. The studies provide a warning system against racism and the strength to fight it. Youths become sensitive to humanity as a whole".

GERMANY

The Fritz Bauer Institute was founded in January 1995, thanks to the initiative of the former mayor of Frankfurt, Volker Hauff, who had visited Yad Vashem in 1989. On his return, he immediately investigated the possibilities and feasibility of erecting a museum of the Holocaust in the city where a former Attorney General, Fritz Bauer, had initiated the Auschwitz Trial, and tipped off the Mossad on the whereabouts of Adolf



Eichmann. In 1991 an international forum of historians met to discuss the justifications for erecting such an institute and despite objections raised, including, "Education can be provided in the sites themselves, Dachau, Wansee, etc.", it was decided that Germany needed a framework where Germans can confront their history and the Holocaust.

According to Jacqueline Giere, the Institute's Educational Consultant, there is a growing interest in the Shoah. "It has taken 50 years for this to happen. As a result of the overall feeling of guilt passed down from the perpetrating generation to the second generation, aggressive and shamed, the subject was untouchable. On the other hand, many youngsters of the third generation reject the burden of guilt and for us, as educators, this is the starting point. There is the responsibility to know their history, feel sorrow, and use this knowledge in reference to the future".

The educational emphasis is on two central aspects: the victim (Jewish) / perpetrator (German) experience, and the universal aspects. Through teacher in-service training, the dissemination of educational materials, travelling exhibitions, multifacilitative library and database resources, the center reaches out to educators in the field, pupils, Holocaust survivors, and others.

"Pupils in Germany don't need museums, they have traces all around. They are confronted with their family histories, with which they must cope personally. However, this is not pertinent to all pupils, as Germany is a multi-ethnic and immigrant society. For some, the

identification with the Jews and the Holocaust is a result of the pervasive Neo-Nazism and xenophobia in Germany today. Thus, we must suit our programming so that we may reach as many strata of society as possible".

BRITAIN

Professor Aubrey Newman, Director of the Stanley Burton Centre of Holocaust Studies at Leicester University, opened the session on Holocaust Education in Britain with the humorous statement, "As of ten years ago, I was Holocaust Education in England".

According to Newman, since then the field has expanded rapidly. There is a growing tendency to include Holocaust studies within the curriculum at the different levels. However, in general, there is a strong need to promote cooperation between the various academics and professional educators in the field, and to expand Holocaust studies within the 20th-century history curriculum, which currently is an hour and a half at most at the lower levels. In addition, there is a need for a Holocaust Museum which will serve not only for commemorative purposes, but as a major research and resource centre.

The absence of such a framework was the reason behind the establishment of Beit Shalom in Nottinghamshire.



Stephen Smith was in his mid-twenties and preparing for his thesis on "The impact of the Shoah on Christian thought and practice". Through his studies he became sensitized to three related aspects: the response to human tragedy; his growing frustration having undergone school and high school without mention of the Holocaust ever occurring; and a developing personal anger towards the older generation who neglected their responsibility to respond during the Holocaust, and subsequently continued to do so. In 1993, on completing



R T H E F U T U R E

his studies at the Yarnton Center for Hebrew Studies at Oxford University, he decided, with the support of his family, to establish the Beit Shalom Holocaust Memorial Centre.

The Centre runs intensive one-day seminars on the Shoah. There is no comparison to other mass murders, no generalizations about racism and prejudice. Says Smith, "People are very surprised to see that the focus isn't universal. The Shoah is a very Jewish experience. If you don't focus on the Jewish people's experience under the Nazi regime, you simply can't adequately understand the roots of racism towards others. In addition, by broadening the race issue there is a danger of the relativization of the Shoah. If through the ensuing discussion one leads to universal issues, then we have fulfilled our educational responsibility. I myself, as many others, am becoming increasingly aware that we are still learning how to learn about the Holocaust and learning how to teach about it".

USA

Dr. William Shulman, the President of the Association of Holocaust Organizations, stands at the forefront in the battle for making Holocaust studies mandatory in the state curriculum throughout the United States. According to Shulman it is a process which falls victim to the political machine, political dealings, electoral interests, etc. Currently there are 5 states in the U.S.A. where Holocaust education is mandatory. In 16 states it is recommended. Shulman comments that even within those 5 states the curriculum is not standardized, leading to a lack of uniformity in level, emphasis, and aim. New Jersey is the only state where mandatory Holocaust studies and teacher training are funded by the state. In New York, for example, the mandate depends on individual resources and stipends. This means that there are no funds available for teacher training. Programs depend on self-initiated efforts, for example the highly successful, "Facing History, Facing Ourselves", local Holocaust centers, or the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington. In those states where Holocaust studies

are elective, the choice remains in the hands of the individual principals and teachers.

Shulman believes that the situation will improve by the year 2000 and that more states will make Holocaust studies mandatory, due to the grass-roots pressure of educators throughout the U.S.A. on their local educational frameworks, the increased pressure of Holocaust organizations, and general Holocaust awareness. He adds that a conference such as the one that took place at Yad Vashem is of great value as it provides the stimulus and confidence to push forward. "Bringing us to Israel is extremely important. An event like this brings together a large number of educators from around the world who, for the first time, have the opportunity to exchange ideas and experiences. Education becomes approachable, with the participants becoming familiarized with the facilities, services and richness of material which is concentrated at Yad Vashem. And he urges, "Yad Vashem has to become more involved in sharing its expertise, and exchanging its ideas, materials and experiences with educators outside Israel". This wish is to be fulfilled as in 1997 Yad Vashem will participate in a number of the activities organized by the Association of Holocaust Organizations.

JAPAN



The Christian Friends of Israel, numbering 10,000, led by the Hebrew-speaking Reverends Makoto Otsuka and Takeo Sato, was established, in their words, "38 years after Kristalnacht". In June 1995, under their leadership, The Holocaust Education Center in Hiroshima was opened. Since then over 10,000 students have visited this new and elaborate museum. The purpose of the museum is to show the young Japanese of the 21st century the awful realities of the past century. In the Japanese school curriculum there is no mention of the Holocaust nor of the Japanese alliance with

Germany, when learning about the Second World War. In Japanese there is no word equivalent to "Shoah". However, there has been a rising interest over the past years. Many youths have encountered the subject through literary works and the media: Anne Frank, Sempo Sugihara, Oscar Schindler, etc.

The Rev. Takeo Sato encountered the Holocaust 25 years ago, while touring with the Christian Japanese choir "Hashachar" (The Dawn) in Israel. In the hotel where the choir was due to perform they were asked by a guest to sing a Japanese song. At the song's end the guest introduced himself as Otto Frank, Anne Frank's father. "Anne Frank is well known in Japan, and we were extremely excited". Takeo and Otto visited the Franks' wartime hiding place in Amsterdam, an event that Takeo will never forget. This friendship was the start of a self-taught learning process about the Holocaust, and over the years the Rev. Sato collected photographs and artifacts of the Holocaust. His aim was to establish an exhibition center dedicated to the memory of the million and a half children murdered by the Nazis. The choice of Hiroshima as host city for the center was not accidental. "When I reached Hiroshima I knew that this was the suitable place. In this city 250,000 people were killed, and from an educational context this place symbolizes the saliency of human rights."

The Reverend Otsuka believes that through the museum's focus on the Jewish tragedy the youth will be introduced to broader concepts related to racism, blind obedience to authority and prejudice. He continues, "The new century will be a century of peace. The museum represents this new age, and will teach the children the value of peace, freedom, liberty and human rights".

POLAND

"The Jewish tragedy happened on Polish soil, as the death camps were there. The Poles were witnesses; some helped victims, others, scoundrels, exploited the situation for personal profit, while the majority were terrified into passivity. A significant number of Poles were also victims of the German occupation". According to Professor Jerzy Tomaszewski of Warsaw University, Polish youth encounter the Holocaust on a daily basis. In many towns

and villages the elders still talk of former Jewish residents; many streets were named after prominent Jewish citizens and there are monuments in memory of the Jews strewn throughout Poland.

School textbooks in Poland at the lower levels concentrate on the history of Poland, on war crimes and genocide, but do not speak of national minorities and therefore omit mentioning the Holocaust and the Jews. Three years ago textbooks on National Socialism, the Holocaust and Jewish resistance were introduced in the final grade of high schools, the teacher dictating the manner and strength of emphasis in regards to the Jews. Tomaszewski believes that there needs to be more information placed within the curriculum about the entire history of Polish Jews so that there will be an historic continuum and depth of understanding. In 1989, with censorship removed, the situation became ambivalent: many more books have been published dealing with the Holocaust and with Antisemitism, but this includes Holocaust denials and other "revisionist" material as well.

According to the Educational Director of the Auschwitz Museum, Alicja Bialecka, there is a definite increase in interest in the Holocaust. "For Poles", Alicja states, "it is a great symbol. Many regard it as a symbol of martyrdom, the Polish leadership being the first to lose their lives there". A very large percentage of the visitors over recent years are teenagers who are exposed to the subject through the media and the broadening of the school history curriculum.

With regards to the Israeli youths visiting Poland, Alicja was slightly critical, "There isn't much contact between the Israeli groups and the Poles, although there are exceptions to the rule. Many Polish teachers have expressed a desire for the exchange of youth between



SOUTH AFRICA

"When the Anne Frank Exhibition arrived at the Kaplan Centre last year, it drew in tremendous crowds and served as an exciting trigger to learn about the Holocaust. You will recall that this was a period of renewal following the elections, and the country was opening up. We had many black pupils and Afrikaners visiting the exhibition who had no background knowledge whatsoever on the Holocaust", said Dr. Rolf Wolfswinkel, Coordinator of the Kaplan Centre for Jewish Studies at Capetown University.

The Centre runs teacher training courses and develops educational programs, promotes research and provides a well equipped video library. According to Rolfswinkel, participants at the Centre deal with a number of related issues during the course of their studies: the reality and implementation of evil; a new understanding of the human capacity to commit both acts of good and evil; and the meaning of moral courage.

According to Dr. Wolfswinkel, for the South African people the Holocaust bears a specially pertinent and relevant message within the South African context. Thus, the Special Holocaust Research Program developed by the Kaplan Centre deals with aspects of discrimination, racial hatred, prejudice, and the role of the "bystander", using the particular case of the Holocaust to draw out the universal messages. "In Germany, the extreme of these societal malignities was the Holocaust, whereas in South Africa it was Apartheid".



about the Holocaust. The new building's erection has been partially funded by the state.

"This support is unusual for the Argentinian authorities. Argentina is unique in that it is a country where memory and commemoration is not part of its national tradition. There are no memorials or museums that refer to central local and international historical events or major ideological movements. Nothing related to prejudice and a lack of tolerance."

The aim of the Fund is to present universal messages which will reach Argentinians and Latin Americans who are ignorant about the Holocaust. It will be compulsory for teachers to undergo 30 hours of training on the Holocaust. In February, four non-Jewish teachers will be sent from Argentina to the Yad Vashem teacher training course after having undergone an interview with a panel of the Ministry of Education. In addition, the Ministry will subsidize one-day study visits from schools in the distant provinces to the Fund's museum.



AN INTERDISCIPLINARY SUBJECT: BIOMEDICS AND ETHICS

Over the past years it has become increasingly evident that the Holocaust is a core subject for a multitude of disciplines, and not for historiography alone. One prime example could be found in the lectures of Professor Michael Thaler of the University of California's Medical School in San Francisco. A pediatrician and educator, Thaler is himself a Holocaust survivor from Brzezany, a town near Lvov. For over 11 years he directed the Center for Holocaust Research of Northern California. Professor Thaler tours the world lecturing on medical ethics and the Holocaust.

Thaler's personal experience has been a significant and dynamic motif in his intellectual outlook and in the universal and educational conclusions that he draws from the Holocaust. As he says, "Facing history, facing ourselves"



ARGENTINA

A former teacher in both formal and informal educational settings, Nora Tagemuler is the Director of the Holocaust Memorial Fund. The Fund, established three years ago by the Jewish community, promotes programs aimed at training teachers and teaching students

is not enough. We must overcome history and at times ourselves. As a doctor, I need to deal with issues relating to my life today and to learn to overcome my past experience and history, which at times is in total contradiction to present-day dilemmas. We make a mistake when we view the Holocaust as a separate value system, at its base negating humanity. That's escapism. Unfortunately, it is very much a part of humanity, with an entirely different set of values, and rooted in a different conception of the human being."

For Thaler the question is what transformed German doctors, who were similar to doctors worldwide and leaders in the field of ethics in medicine, into Nazi doctors? According to Thaler, in a way the Third Reich was a giant public health program intended to create the healthiest, most productive, most advanced people on earth, using the most advanced medical technology. At the time it was an object of envy in many countries that were developing their own extended health programs with similar aims. However, in this particular instance, medical and biological concepts were used to legitimize Nazi ideology, and the doctors played a central role not only in implementing these programs, but also in providing the theoretical foundations. Medicine and its related professions became servants to the state alone and the needs of the individual became subservient to those of the state. Thus we come to the role of the doctor and the question:

"Can bioethics exist separately from the general ethics and culture of the society in which they live, or are they major instruments of social control?"

According to Thaler, these questions have their parallels today, when genetic engineering, legalizing euthanasia, doctors as aids of torture, priorities in the allocation of research funds and cost efficient considerations for the terminally ill are a number of the burning issues predominant in the ethical milieu of the medical world. When teaching modern medical ethics, the Holocaust becomes a crucial case study.



YAD VASHEM: THE INTERNATIONAL DIALOGUE WILL CONTINUE

The academic community was represented by a spectrum of professionals, ranging from senior professors to teachers in the field, thus providing a comprehensive overview of Holocaust education at all levels and for students of all ages. There was a general consensus that the value of such an event was not only in its exchange of methodologies and pedagogics, but also in the actual initiation of contact and flow of communication between the participants and that this flow must continue and grow, with Yad Vashem serving as a mediator. The need to present to the pupils an historic and cultural continuum of the Jewish European communities, dealing with the life before, during and after the Holocaust, was another major theme raised at the conference. It became very apparent during the sessions that the Holocaust must be recognized and taught as a uniquely Jewish experience; by doing so, the educator can expand and develop the universal implications of tolerance, coexistence, and the combat against racism. Finally, the necessity to continue and enhance the support, cooperation and educational and pedagogical dialogue with Yad Vashem, making use of its expertise, became the central message of the conference.

1997 will be a rich and productive year for Yad Vashem and Holocaust education. A book of the conference will be published during the year; Yad Vashem's itinerary includes educational conferences and seminars in England, Germany, the U.S.A's east and west coasts, Canada and Poland among many others. Avner Shalev, Chairman of the Directorate of Yad Vashem, declared at the closing session of the conference that there are plans to establish an international forum which will raise and discuss educational problems and dilemmas and initiate educational programs and conferences. Currently the date of the founding session of the forum, its structure and agenda, are being discussed.

Looking to the approaching century, Avner Shalev declared, "The period of building additional memorials and cultivating multicolored symbols on the Mount of Remembrance is over. What we must do now is to concentrate on developing tools which will structure and disseminate knowledge of the Holocaust and its memory for future generations. We shall do this in two ways: by expanding and developing the educational infrastructure, including the completion of the new school building, and by establishing accessible archives for those who seek knowledge and relevant information throughout the world. Thus, the process of reflecting and perpetuating memory will continue to be dynamic and responsive". As a member of the generation of educators responsible for future Holocaust education, Shalev summarizes, "The third and fourth generations feel and know why they cry, are in constant search for ways to connect meaningfully with their history and to define what their personal responsibility towards it should be".

Yad Vashem's first international conference on Holocaust education was invaluable for a number of reasons. It emphasized clearly how the Holocaust is an integrative part of our complex identities wherever and however we may live. It provided the incentive, tools and energy for future work in the field, by demonstrating to each of the participants that they are not alone. Finally, it was generally agreed upon that the Shoah of the Jewish people was incomparable to any other human experience and thus if the future generations are to learn about the history of humanity as a whole, they must face the darkest of its years. Perhaps by doing so the phrase, "Restoring faith in humanity" will contain the philosophical and educational depth that it warrants.



The Educational Materials Exhibition

OBSCURE SENTENCE

By Galit Aberjiell

The three military judges' sentence echoed in the courtroom as it was being read out; "The man is free". Wrath and fury fired the group of young Jews who jam-packed the chambers. The entire Jewish community throughout Italy was outraged, and their reactions reached the highest echelons of government, causing the deferral of the accused's release by the Minister of Justice himself. Erich Priebke, 83, a former SS officer, would remain in custody until the anger dissipated.

The verdict drawn at the Priebke trial served as one of the central cornerstones in the series of events which began over 50 years ago.

On the 23rd of March, 1944, the Italian Underground ignited explosives in the central streets of Rome. As a result, 32 German soldiers were instantly killed. Italy, at the time, was occupied by the German army and the latter's retaliation was immediate and cruel. For every German soldier's life, 10 Italian citizens were condemned to death.

However, the murder of 320 innocent victims did not satisfy the German occupying forces. As a warning, they executed 15 additional people, bringing the sum total of deaths by revenge to 335.

The victims included people randomly and savagely kidnapped from their abodes, political prisoners and of course, Jews. Amongst them were a 16-year-old youth and a 75-year-old man, both Jewish. The prisoners were led in groups of 5 to a crevice in a rock formation, forced to kneel, and then shot in their necks from behind. The remainder of the prisoners meanwhile had to await their turn, listening to the anguished cries of the murdered. The following day those still alive were led to a site outside Rome and were shot in view of the city walls. This site of carnage was later to be named Le Fosse (The Graves of Ardeatine).

The masterminds behind the massacre and its leading executors were two Nazi officers: Lieutenant-Colonel Herbert Kappler and Captain Erich Priebke. Kappler was apprehended in 1948 by the liberation armies and sentenced to life imprisonment. The butcher's mate, Priebke, escaped from a British detention camp prior to trial, and went on to live in Argentina securely and serenely for years under his own name. In December 1995 he was extradited to Italy at the Italian authorities' request.



courtesy of Archive Photos / Reuters

Erich Priebke in Rome for trial in the Italian military court.

In May the Italian military court charged Priebke with "party to those committing acts of violence and cruel murders of innocent Italian citizens". Despite the severity of the accusation, the military court released the defendant. The judges ruled, with a majority of two to one, that regardless of the existing evidence proving Priebke's guilt undeniably, the statute of limitations warrants his acquittal.

The military judge, Agostino Quistelli added, that "the defendant's personality demonstrates neither an inclination nor the ability to

commit such crimes", and, considering his impeccable behaviour for the past 50 years and advanced age, decided that he should be released.

The Priebke verdict caused a storm in both the Italian and international public opinion. Fueling the fire were statements made by Priebke himself to the international press, where he never denied his connection to the crime, and in fact attempted to explain his actions by stating that he was only following orders and partaking in military reprisals ordered by Hitler, which were legal at the time and were in response to the killing of 32 German soldiers by the underground.

The verdict drew opposition and protests from many lawyers and judges who claimed that Italian law does not recognize mass murder as being subject to the statute of limitations, and that although the perpetrators claimed that the act was in response to the Italian sabotage, this was in fact nothing but an excuse for a bloodthirsty massacre.

to and during war; acts of racial and religious persecution even if authorized by the state or international alliances, whether or not the crimes break the internal law of any specific country.

The problematics of acquitting Erich Priebke became even more pronounced in light of the fact that he was not only an active participant in the slaughter (two of the victims were murdered by Priebke's own hand), but that he also played a far greater role by composing the list of victims and crossing their names out as the killing progressed. He did not object to Kappler's suggestion to enlarge the number of those to be "punished" from 320 to 335 people.

As to the claim of fear of repercussion on refusing to carry out orders, Professor Sergio de Pergola cites the fact that when the shooting was at its peak, there were a number of German Catholic soldiers who refused to participate in the act.

The Court of Cassation, Italy's highest court, met in October, and returned the case to the military court, rejecting its acquittal on the grounds of bias. The military court held that it was a civilian matter. Currently, a preliminary examining judge will decide whether to return the case to the court of Cassation. ■

"Israel cooperates internationally to locate Nazis"

The Priebke Affair drew immediate international attention, placing Priebke's acquittal at the center of an essential discussion as to the efforts made by different countries to locate, apprehend and bring to trial Nazi war criminals. Ephraim Zuroff, Director of the Wiesenthal Center in Israel states that currently efforts are being concentrated on capturing Nazi war criminals and bringing them to trial, in particular those who have settled in English-speaking democracies.

The maximum penalty for a defendant, if proven guilty, is the annulment of citizenship and expulsion, in addition to international extradition so that another state can bring the criminal to trial. However, this phenomenon is rare, with

the exception of John Demjanjuk who was extradited by the American authorities and tried in Israel.

Ephraim Zuroff criticizes the State of Israel, stipulating that the latter doesn't do the maximum to catch and bring to trial Nazi war criminals.

Chief Superintendent Avraham Davidowitz, head of the International Section of the National Unit of Criminal Investigation, whose work includes investigating Nazi war criminals, states that the State of Israel cooperates on an international level to locate and apprehend Nazi criminals. This is done through defined legal proceedings and is subject to substantive judicial criteria. There must be clear, unequivocal proof that the suspects were involved in crimes that can be confirmed by reliable witnesses.

Many foreign countries, according to Davidowitz, apprehend and try Nazi war criminals for ideological and practical reasons. The former include a generally accepted view that the Holocaust is not just an Israeli, Jewish concern, but rather a universal moral responsibility that should be shared by all countries, and that each state should deal with war criminals under its jurisdiction. The pragmatics reflect a generally accepted view that legislatively and judicially there is no particular advantage to placing a war criminal on trial in an Israeli court, and that any court empowered with the right to try Nazi war criminals will suffice.



The tremendous public response resulting from the sentencing brought to light a painful and sensitive quandary: Italy's ability to cope with its past history, especially during the Second World War.

Professor Sergio de Pergola, director of the Institute of Modern Jewish Studies at the Hebrew University, Jerusalem, who was present in Italy during the Priebke Trials, states that the Italian public has for years maintained that the Holocaust is a Jewish-German matter. "This was the first time that doubts were being aired concerning the Italian Fascist Regime's role in the war, a past stained with the blood of this and other acts, and a general feeling that there is a need for introspection and soul searching on a national level".

For many in the Italian public the verdict cast a dark shadow over the Italian legal system as a whole, and in particular over this painful period in their national history. There were those who claimed that it was a mistake to bring Priebke to trial in a military court, a framework which would enable the claim to be made that the accused was only acting under orders. Instead, he should have been tried for "crimes against humanity", as specified in the Nuremberg Trials, which is not subject to the statute of limitations.

It was stipulated in the Nuremberg Trials that obeying orders is not a legitimate claim for the defense. Furthermore, it was stated that "crimes against humanity" include murder, annihilation, enslavement, exile and other inhumane acts taken against a civilian population prior



20.10.1996 President of France, Jacques Chirac



19.3.1996 Mayor of Warsaw, Marcin Swieicki



13.3.1996 Minister of Foreign Affairs of Mongolia, Tsernpilin Gombosuren

ALBU



11.3.1996 Prime Minister of Turkey, Suleyman Demirel



19.9.1996 The 55th annual memorial service of the massacre of Babi Yar at Yad Vashem. Attending the ceremony was Minister of Immigrant Absorption, Yuli Edelstein, Holocaust survivors and hundreds of former Ukrainian immigrants



13.11.1996 Governor of New Jersey, Christine Todd Whitman



25.11.1996 Prime Minister of Ukraine, Leonid D. Kuchma



6.6.1996 Their Royal Highnesses Princess Helen Shah & Princess Jayanti Shah of Nepal



29.10.1996 German Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces, General Hartmut Bagger



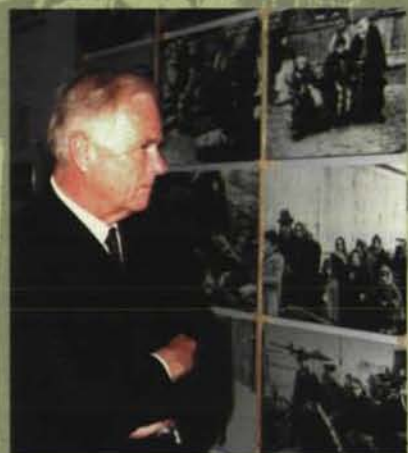
14.1.1996 Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army, General Dennis Joe Reimer

M

1996



22.1.1996 Danish Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces, General Yorgen Lyng



3.9.1996 Mayor of Los Angeles, Richard Riordan



30.1.1996 Prime Minister of Albania, Professor Sali Beriska



6.2.1996 Foreign Minister of Sweden, Lena Hjelm Wallen



16.1.1996 Prime Minister of Holland, Wim Kok

9.10.1996 Minister of Health of Holland, Dr. E. Borst Eilers



1.3.1996 Minister of Foreign Affairs of Hungary, Gyorgy Keleti



GLIMMERS

Close to 14,000 men, women & children have been

by Michal Morris Kamil

A fragment of a moment. The fate of an individual or family in the hands of a person, who in this infinitesimal speck of time, like G-d, has the power to ensure the continuation of life or pave the path to a most certain death. This fatal act, often made with no time for rational thought, has been described as the purest form of human instinct. There are those who deem the outcome fate, others divine will and yet others, the human encounter at its essence, holding the responsibility of the continuation of the species, irrespective of race, religion, nationality or creed.

The nearly 14,000 men, women and children officially recognized as Righteous among the Nations by Yad Vashem, on behalf of the Jewish people and the State of Israel, were challenged by this encounter sometime during the Shoah, throughout occupied Europe. There is no one definitive model of the Righteous among the Nations. Their social, economic, political, religious and educational backgrounds differ broadly; many were products of a liberal education, at home and at school, while others, of an authoritarian upbringing and battered as children. The scholars Dr. Nehama Tec and Dr. Samuel Oliner attempted to isolate particular characteristics in the educational and maturational background of a cross-section of Righteous among the Nations, and reached opposing conclusions. Tec describes these individuals as generally being nonconformists and individualist in character; Oliner on the other hand concludes that they are well adjusted and committed members of society strongly conforming to basic social norms.

Dr. Mordechai Paldiel, the Director of



Chairman of the commission, Yaakov Maltz presents a certificate to Righteous among the nations.

the Department for the Righteous, and a Holocaust survivor who with his family was saved and hidden by a number of such people both in France and in Switzerland, has his own theory:

THE RESCUE OF SUPREME COURT'S PRESIDENT AHARON BARAK

Leah Brik and her 8-year-old son Aharon, hidden in a sack, were smuggled out of the Kovno Ghetto in May 1944, following the children's "aktion" of March 27th, 1944. Rakevicius, a courageous Lithuanian, organized the operation, bribing German soldiers and providing shelter in a leaf-covered canal in his yard. Rakevicius also hid another Jewish family, the Zarkins, for three years. German soldiers, looking for deserters, searched the house but did not discover the families. The Briks moved to the Mazuritis family, a poor peasant couple with 4 children surviving on yogurt, potatoes and bread, which was bought with Leah's money. Mazuritis dug two bunkers on the premises, which was to save their lives during a Katyusha rocket attack. The family enveloped the mother and especially the son, Aharon, with love and warmth until the Russian liberation in October 1944. The Rakevicius family continued to visit during that time. The Rakevicius and Mazuritis families were recommended to the commission for recognition, which they received in 1976. The Brik's 8-year-old went on to become the current President of Israel's Supreme Court, Professor Aharon Barak.



"Each of these people is unique in their own way, as we all are. That is precisely the point. For us Jews, bereft of answers, the Holocaust wound is still raw and throbbing. Many seek immediate relief by painting a world where the majority were either murderers or indifferent, and a few were good. They are perceived as the exceptions. By regarding the Righteous as containing heroically unique and "saintly" qualities, not characteristic of the "average individual", we both ostracize and exonerate a large proportion of humanity from personal responsibility. However, if we regard the Righteous as ordinary people, our perspective becomes complicated and uncomfortable, but nearer to the truth. Ordinary

people can either take or preserve life. This is the crux of the matter. Thus, I personally don't deal with the psychological and sociological features of these people, and don't try to single out any one characteristic".

For Paldiel, there has been no case in history that has epitomized the notion of "Altruism" as in the Shoah, and yet the majority of Righteous, when asked "Why?", respond modestly, "What else could I have done?"

Many speak of facing their conscience, others, admitting that they held certain prejudices, abandoned all such notions when faced with the immediacy of saving human life, while others are unable to formulate their reasons into words.

Yad Vashem has the honor and privilege to be the only body in the world to deal with and commend this phenomenon. Legally empowered by law since 1953, this governmental authority weighs each approach and request to recognize a person as a "Righteous among the Nations" individually. The process entails a written affidavit by the survivor, his family or organizations, describing as specifically and accurately as possible the actions and particulars of the candidate. The report is then verified by the experts of the department and presented to the Commission for the Designation of the Righteous, composed of survivors and scholars and headed by an Israeli

Supreme Court judge. This body, founded by Yad Vashem in 1962, was established in light of the growingly apparent complexities of deciding on the eligibility for this honorable title. Criteria, not outlined in the original law, were set.

The distinction "Righteous among the Nations", by law, is to be conferred on persons who "risked their lives to save Jews". The central criterion is that the individual knowingly and directly saved Jewish lives at the risk of forfeiting his or her own. In Eastern Europe the Germans profusely publicized the execution of the death penalty for those caught in the act of trying to save Jews; in Western Europe the penalty was imprisonment and the con-

OF LIGHT

recognized as Righteous among the Nations

centration camp which, more often than not, was also fatal.

In addition, it has to be proven that the individual involved did not demand any monetary or other compensation as a condition for the life-saving act, apart from that which contributed to the rescue attempt. The rescue

the Mount of Remembrance. As the mountain is filled with trees, and in order to honor all the Righteous, the names are currently inscribed in the Garden of the Righteous among the Nations. Those living in Israel receive state pensions, while the Jewish Foundation for Righteous Gentiles and the Claims Conference,

based in the U.S.A., provide funds for needy Righteous among the nations worldwide.

There are many problems in the determination of eligibility for this honor involving the notions of "personal risk", "initiative and direct involvement", "compensation", and the act itself. The Chairman of the Commission, former Supreme Court judge Yaakov Maltz, who stepped into the position last year in place of the chairman of 25 years, Supreme Court judge Moshe Bejski, outlines the difficulties in the commission's work.

"Realizing the difficulties, I urged for more stringent and codified criteria. It turned out that working with is as difficult as working

without. What happens for example when there is written documentation, say in a journal, but the survivor is no longer alive-only his grandson? Or, the offspring of a Righteous individual who were children at the time, who now claim that they too were involved in the process of saving? We have many cases like this from Eastern Europe. The notion of "risk" differs according to country and time and "danger" assumes many forms. What of the Slovakian MP who publicly condemned the Nuremberg Laws in Parliament? He wasn't recognized. On the other hand, a famous

German writer and poet wrote an open letter to Hitler condemning Jewish persecution, and for this was sent to several concentration camps-he was recognized".

Maltz recalls cases pertaining to children who were saved by monasteries and clergy during the war. These children were baptized



LE CHAMBON - SUR - LIGNON AN ENTIRE VILLAGE SAVES JEWS

In late 1943, with the Germans in full control of France and Italy, many Jews found refuge in France's southeastern region. The village Le Chambon-Sur-Lignon is an outstanding example of how an entire community, led by the Pastor Andre Trocme and his wife Magda, who recently passed away, initiated a mass rescue operation to save Jewish lives. With the additional aid of both Protestant and Catholic organizations and clergy, many Jews were smuggled through the tortuous terrain and crossed the Swiss borders. It is estimated that 5,000 Jewish lives were saved. Trocme's cousin, Daniel, who headed a children's home which hid Jewish children in Le Chambon, was arrested and tortured by the Gestapo, and then deported to Buchenwald where he found his death in April 1944. The village of Le Chambon-Sur-Lignon was commended for its role and many were individually recognized as Righteous among the Nations in 1990.



act must be authenticated by irrefutable evidence of the rescued persons or other eyewitnesses and/or valid documentation. Other aspects examined include the origin of the contact between rescuer and rescued, the nature of the aid, the motivations in so far as they are ascertainable, the type of dangers faced, the age of the person submitting the evidence, etc. On receiving the recognition, the person or family (the title can be given posthumously) receives a specially minted medal bearing his/her name, and a certificate of honor; until 1990, a tree was planted on

TATIANA ZELENSKAYA: A RESCUER WHO BECOMES A MOTHER

In September, 1996, Tatiana Zelenskaya was recognized as a Righteous among the Nations for saving the 4-year-old Luba Kogan by hiding her in her home in the Crimean Peninsula from 1941 until the end of the war. Luba's mother and brother were murdered by the Nazis. Following the war, Tatiana, a professional singer and actress, and her husband Pavel Chariuta, afraid that the Russian authorities would take the child on finding out that she was Jewish, left the area. On turning 16, Luba was told of her origins by the Zelenskayas, whereupon she was officially adopted by them. In 1965 it was discovered that Luba's natural father had survived and raised a new family. In an exciting reunion, Luba met her father, but decided to remain with her adoptive parents. Luba married and raised two sons who live in Israel. Last year she immigrated to Israel with her rescuer Tatiana, and they live near Hifa.



and raised as devout Christians. At the end of the war, the church claimed that they were legally adopted and thus the surviving parents took them to court. Dilemma: did they save a human or a potential Christian soul? On the other hand there were clergy, who, in defiance of their superiors, sought out the parents and returned their children to them. Judge Maltz doesn't believe that these cases can teach us major lessons in human behavior. However, sitting on the commission has enabled him to witness exceptional acts of humanity. "Take the case of the non-Jewish

19-year-old factory manager who attempts to obtain medicine to save his ill Jewish workers and is refused. Subsequently, he inflicts himself with the illness and receives medication, which he then passes on to them. I wonder how I would have acted in the same situation?"

Maltz expands, "Each individual is at liberty to judge only if he were faced with an identical situation. As head of the Commission, I face this problem regularly, as I am the only member who is neither a survivor nor part of a direct family who perished in

the Holocaust. I, as Chairman, and by virtue of being a legal expert, must be neutral and objective. And yet, during the discussions I sense the depth of emotion of my associates and their empathy and identification with each particular case".

According to Paldiel, Yad Vashem is committed to continue this program, which presents invaluable lessons and whose heroes provide role models for future generations. ■



On the 7th of August, 1996, the dedication of the Garden of the Righteous among the Nations took place at Yad Vashem, in the presence of the benefactors, the second generation of the Sultan family in honor of their parents, Abraham Sultan and Dora Abadi de Sultan, from Caracas, Venezuela. The walls of the Garden contain the names of the Righteous among the Nations according to countries.

Lexicon

An extensive and important project of the International Institute of Holocaust Studies at Yad Vashem is the Righteous among the Nations Lexicon, covering

approximately 10 volumes, which documents thoroughly and succinctly the names and stories of the thousands of non-Jews who risked their lives to save Jews during the Holocaust. Professor Yisrael Gutman, who heads the project's steering committee, explains, "The Lexicon is divided by countries, with the Righteous among the Nations appearing in alphabetical order. A scientific editor is responsible for each country. The main corpus of the Lexicon will appear in English, while the individual volumes are translated in accordance to the country of the particular Righteous among the Nations. The volumes of each country contain an historical introduction".

The volumes covering France, edited by Dr. Luciene Lazare, are nearing completion, while those on Holland, edited by Dr. Yosef Michman, and Poland, edited by Dr. Nahum Bogner and Irit Caerniavsky, are currently in production.

The Yad Vashem Authority has received initial funding from an Israeli source, and recently the Dutch government has promised its support in the production of the volumes on the Righteous among the Nations of Holland. Yad Vashem continues to seek financial backing from the European Community, from individual countries and various foundations.

Avner Shalev, the Chairman of the Directorate of Yad Vashem, says, "As part of "Yad Vashem 2001", this project is a means by which the Jewish people can thank the Righteous among the Nations who were sources of light in those abysmally dark years. It is important as a major source for research and has monumental value as an educational tool of historical and humanitarian significance for the generations to come".

KARSKI AT YAD VASHEM

The Chief Historian of Yad Vashem, Professor Israel Guttman, said of Jan Karski, a Righteous among the Nations; "He is the symbol of humanity during the dark and inhuman years of the Holocaust. For the generations following the Holocaust, his name is legendary".

In October 1942, Karski, a local and international emissary of the Polish underground, covertly met representatives of the Bund and Zionist organizations in Poland. They pleaded with Karski to "let people know how we feel about what is being done to us and how helpless we are...tell them that the earth must be shaken to its foundations, the world must be aroused" (Karski's book, "Story of a Secret State", 1944). Thus he was twice smuggled into the Warsaw ghetto, and once into a transit camp in the vicinity of the Belzec death camp. In both places he was witness to "the most terrible things", as he profoundly described to an audience of hundreds at his lecture in Yad Vashem in October 1996. It was then that Karski began his campaign to save European Jewry. "I couldn't do anything else other than what I actually began to do".

Karski described his meetings with American President Roosevelt and British Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden among many others, where he repeated the messages of the Polish Jewish leaders and provided his own incisive impressions of what he had seen at first hand.

But Karski's central message at the lecture was to warn against those who attempted to universalize the Holocaust by claiming that it parallels other mass murders. "I quote Elie Wiesel, 'All nations under Nazis had victims, but all Jews were victims'. Holocaust is Jewish. Holocaust means the destruction of Jews during the Second World War. Let no nation, church nor government dare to appropriate this Jewish experience". Karski denounced the complacency and passivity of the religious, intellectual, academic and governmental hierarchies in Poland before and during the war in the face of widespread Antisemitism. However, he urged the remembrance of those who did act to save Jews. "Thousands upon thousands tried to help Jews, who were not abandoned by humanity. In Poland the Zegota saved thousands of lives, as did the village of Chambon-sur-Lignon in France and the Danish people among others. The Jews were not abandoned by humanity. I don't want Jewish boys and girls to grow up feeling everybody hated them- I want them to have courage, to extend helping hands. For me this is important as I am an educator".



NEWS

EDUCATORS FROM FORMER EAST-GERMANY STUDY AT YAD VASHEM

The Second World War ended over 50 years ago. Since then it has been a subject of research and study throughout the world. Yad Vashem has stood at the forefront of attempts made to grasp the historical and personal experiences of the Jewish person's strife for survival as his world collapsed. Some of the unique and intriguing events that took place at Yad Vashem this year were the educational seminars for schoolteachers and other educators from the city of Sachsenhausen and the State of Brandenburg in the former East Germany.

Academically, the Holocaust was presented from the victims' perspective, as members of a nation selected by the Germans to be totally annihilated. This angle enabled a process of empathy and identification with the victims, which was strengthened by the encounter with survivors, whose recall of their personal experiences contributed to a deeper understanding of the historical events.

From the pedagogical and didactical perspectives, the seminar provided professional tools for both the schoolteachers and the educators so that they would individually be able to handle the complex subject matter of the Holocaust and aim to educate an entire generation which is attempting to cope with its own difficult national history.

THE FIRST GATHERING OF SACHSENHAUSEN SURVIVORS

"... In Sachsenhausen we couldn't imagine that we'd remain alive, but as a result of our instinct to survive we did, and lived to see our lives spent here in Israel."

These were the impassioned words of Avraham Lanzman, who spoke on behalf of the Sachsenhausen survivors in Israel, at their gathering which took place at Yad Vashem in October, 1996.

The President of Israel, Ezer Weizman, spoke emotive words of a very personal nature at this first-time event. The gathering was also addressed by Dr. Yosef Burg, The Chairman of the International Council of Yad Vashem, Eli Carmel of the Jewish Organization of Survivors of Sachsenhausen in Israel, and Werner Handler, the Secretary General of the International Committee of the Prisoners of Sachsenhausen.

The Sachsenhausen camp was one of the first concentration camps to be established by the Germans in Germany itself. Erected in 1936, 200,000 prisoners from all over Europe, especially the Soviet Union, passed through the camp until its liquidation in 1945. The approximate number of Jews incarcerated in the camp lies between 15,000 and 18,000, over half of whom were murdered. Many of the prisoners arrived at the camp in 1944-1945 after surviving the brutal conditions at other camps. Amongst the chilling events that took place at Sachsenhausen were the medical experiments committed on a group of 11 children picked from the Auschwitz selection process and dispatched to the camp. The 11 children survived the torturous acts and 4 currently live in Israel.



The final perspective is rooted in the Israeli-German dialogue. Israel's collective memory is laden with the traumatic experiences of the savage annihilation of its people. Parallel to that stand Germany's younger generations, who although being born to a new reality, still bear the collective memory of another period, that of Nazi Germany. This memory is sharpened by the activities of the Neo-Nazis and other racist groups in Germany today. The foundations of this harsh reality create an extremely difficult starting point for an Israeli-German dialogue to take place.

In addition, since the unification, the educators from East Germany bring a special element to the encounter which may result in further introspection: many of the teachers were influenced by the Soviet-style anti-Zionist propaganda, which at times compared Zionism to National Socialism, both enemies of the Communist regime. With the fall of the Berlin Wall Israel became approachable and clearly human, breaking hardened stereotypes amongst the East Germans.

These seminars attempt to locate modes of communication between the younger generations of the two countries. This dialogue is aimed at overcoming ingrained prejudices and mental barriers, thus producing a vital cultural and social dialogue, and by doing so, combating racism.

The fact that these encounters, which are recorded, take place in Israel, sharpens the significance and meaning of the history of the state, its culture and its uniqueness.

Other teachers' seminars have taken place this past year, including delegations from Poland, the C.I.S. and the U.S.A. amongst others, and for the first time, from Denmark.

25th VOLUME OF YAD VASHEM STUDIES APPEARS ON SHELVES



In keeping with its forty-year tradition, the recently published issue of Yad Vashem Studies includes stimulating scholarly articles on a wide range of subjects. The geographic and thematic scope of the articles and

memoirs in this 25th volume is very broad, from the philosophical articles by Eliezer Schweid (on Jewish identity fifty years after the Holocaust) and Jan Blonski (on Polish-Catholic identity in the face of the destruction of the Warsaw Ghetto), to Duro Schwartz's chilling memoir on the Jasenovac camp. Reactions to the Holocaust around the world are addressed by Gulie Ne'eman-Arad (American Jewry), Jeremy Harris (BBC), Judith Tydor Baumel (Palestinian Jewish parachutists), and Graciela Ben-Dror (Argentinean Catholic Church). Other articles examine aspects of the Holocaust in the Breslau area (Karol Jonca, Alfred Konieczny), Transnistria (Dalia Ofer), Italian-held Yugoslavia (Yitzhak Garti), Hungary (Asher Cohen), and Vilna (Dina Porat), while a collection of testimonies reflects the hope and the tribulations of liberation. The next issue of Studies, under new editor David Silberklang, will continue the high standards maintained by outgoing editor Aharon Weiss, while also introducing several new features, such as an in-depth book review section. A number of the articles scheduled for inclusion in this issue break new ground in Holocaust research.

ISRAELI EDUCATORS IN AUSCHWITZ MUSEUM'S SEMINAR

In August 1996 an official delegation composed of 24 educators from leading Holocaust education institutions from throughout Israel visited Auschwitz's Museum and Education Center. Thirteen professionals were from Yad Vashem.

The aim of the visit was to become better acquainted with the educational program and staff of the Center, and to promote a professional working relationship with their colleagues in Poland. The visit, well organized and varied, included guided tours in and around the camp. The teachers were introduced to the particular educational problems and dilemmas arising in the field in Poland, and joint problems were raised by the two groups. The delegation was highly impressed with the efficiency, warmth and intellectual level of the hosts.

THE Words &

The Buchman Memorial Prize was awarded to Ruth Bondy

By Jeremy Swimer

The Jacob Buchman Fund was established in Paris in 1988 to commemorate Jacob Buchman's wife and daughter, Esther and Hannale, who perished in the Holocaust. The Buchman fund annually awards two prizes to authors, artists and historians working in relation to the Holocaust. One is presented in Israel by Yad Vashem, and the other in Paris.

At the ceremony on the 27th of November at Yad Vashem, the Buchman Prize was presented to Ruth Bondy and Dr. Daniel Fraenkel. In commending Ms. Bondy's contributions, the judges, Professor Lenny Yehiel, Professor Yehuda Bauer, Professor Yisrael Guttman, and Avner Shalev stated, "Outstanding in all of Ruth Bondy's broad and varied writings is her deep interest in man's soul and his fate, and in the place which he acquires for himself in the society in which he lives of his own volition or out of coercion." The judges' summation of Dr. Fraenkel's work, "On the Edge of the Abyss", noted, "...it refrains and distances itself from preaching and applying wisdom in hindsight. As a result, the book allows the examination in a rational and considered manner of the balance of the achievements and weaknesses of Zionism in its organized actions and the attempts to save German Jewry." Ruth Bondy arrived in Israel in 1948, having survived the Terezin ghetto, Birkenau and Bergen-Belsen. Working successfully as a journalist for thirty years she collected an impressive array of accolades. Bondy's early writing on the subject of the Shoa touched on themes she was later to develop with a sharp insight and in a direct manner. In the essay "Remembered as From a Distance" (1969) Bondy confronted the dilemma of honoring six million Jews in an Israel which set the formula "be an Israeli outside and a camp survivor in your own home, and perhaps not even there."

In 1976, with "The Emissary - The Life Of Enzo Sereni", Ruth Bondy's attention turned to the biography, and to the period of the Holocaust and the birth of Israel. Bondy charts Sereni's life from his birth in Rome, through his instrumental role in the founding of Kibbutz Givat Brenner, to his courageous return to what had become Nazi-occupied Italy and finally to his death in Dachau.

Bondy's fascination is clear, "there was no reason for a man nearing forty, a father of three children and without any experience as a parachutist, to undertake a mission..But Enzo did.."

Thirteen years later Bondy published the monumental "'Elder of the Jews's; Jakob Edelstein of Theresienstadt". This was written "to make younger Israelis understand...to refute the stereotype of Jews going like 'sheep to the slaughter' and the cliché that the 'Elders

of the Jews' sold their souls to Satan." Its style is lucid, at times ironic, but always unhampered, in keeping with Bondy's belief that "the facts are so big you don't have to use big words, only small words can do them justice."

The strength of this work lies in the detailed descriptions of an impoverished world that is not militant but culturally rich (in 1943 there were 423 theatrical performances in Czech), combined with the question this raises of "the Elders'" complicity. Ruth Bondy rejects the notion of Edelstein, head of the Judenrat, as a collaborator with foreknowledge of Terezin's fate. Instead Bondy offers a judgement that is more general and less dogmatic, defining Edelstein's chief error as that of all Jews "true to their education and reasoning...it never dawned on them that the hatred Hitler and his Nazi ideologues bore [them] ...took precedence even over their desire to win the the war...Had the war ended in 1943...or even in 1944...the stubborn optimism shown by the Jews would not have seemed so painful or so naive."

Having received the Buchman Prize for her lifetime's work, Ruth Bondy explained, "I have always been aware of my obligations to those who did not survive, and I hope that the prize that has been given to me will allow me to continue as long as my strength allows me to, in the study of the events of that dreadful period."

Dr. Daniel Fraenkel received the award for his book "On the Edge of the Abyss". Fraenkel considers the Zionist response both in Germany and mandatory Palestine to the fate of the German Jews between January, 1933 and 1938. Fraenkel perceives this period to be "the last historical crossroads at which the course of events, both in Europe and in Palestine, still seemed to permit different outcomes." The question is whether the fate of the Jews of Europe was the uppermost Zionist consideration while the Zionist movement still enjoyed some freedom of choice and maneuver.

Fraenkel provides compelling evidence detailing the problems inherent in Zionism's perception of the Diaspora when faced with an Antisemitism of an unprecedented, dangerous sort. This is embodied in Ben Gurion's statement to the Jewish Agency Executive after Kristal-

RUTH BONDY



Ruth Bondy was born in Prague in 1922. She received her early education, in her words, "from life and books" as a result of the Nazi ban on education for Jews in Czechoslovakia in 1939. Bondy is currently engaged in a project

researching and translating "Kamrad" a children's newspaper that was published in the Terezin Ghetto in 1942-44.

The following excerpt is taken from "'Elder of the Jews' Jakob Edelstein of Theresienstadt".

"There were no teaching aids, no notebooks, no pencils and no textbooks, apart from what the craftsmen from the other camps brought as gifts: Avi, the instructor of the group of older boys, had at his disposal a Russian-language text book, a geometry book, and a Bible. The counselors taught from memory, and drew on personal accounts from the past. A favorite speaker with the boys was an athlete who had participated in the 1932 Olympics. It was sometimes difficult to teach the children, particularly the younger ones who did not remember any other sort of life, concepts from yesterday's world; to speak to them of money, when the only means of payment they knew was cigarettes or bread; to tell them of a famous athlete who came from a family so poor that they lived on bread and potatoes, things which at Birkenau were signs of wealth."

MEMORY

and Dr. Daniel Fraenkel

nacht, "If I knew it was possible to save all the children of Germany by transferring them to England and only half of them by bringing them to Eretz Yisrael, I would choose the second." And so Fraenkel identifies a historical paradox, "Zionism, which had always warned of the danger of Antisemitism" was "caught unaware and unprepared in the face of the mounting Nazi assault on Jewish existence." In his explanation of this paradox Fraenkel's work is outstanding.

Fraenkel has clearly laid out his careful and thorough research, building an informed picture of events crucial to our understanding of German Jewish history. Consequently his book has been acknowledged as an important text for those interested in the difficult dilemmas and insoluble problems that faced the Zionist movement on the eve of World War II. ■

DR. DANIEL FRAENKEL



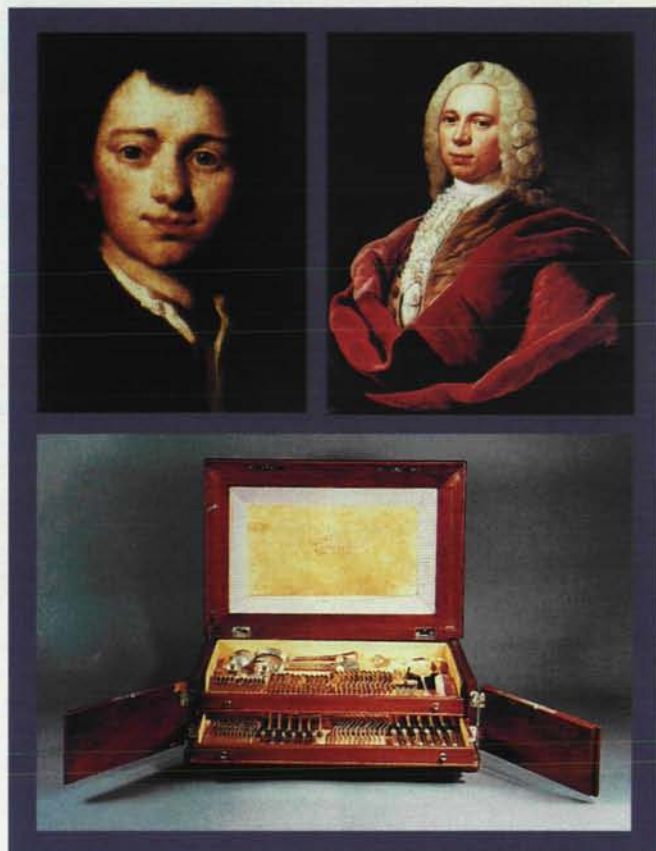
Daniel Fraenkel was born in Haifa in 1945. His father was born in Germany and his mother in Russia. Fraenkel's background is academic. He has attained a BA in English Literature and History, MAs

in English Literature and Contemporary Judaism and a Doctorate of Philosophy.

31 ITEMS FROM THE "MAUERBACH COLLECTION" AT YAD VASHEM

At Christies recent auction of the Mauerbach Collection, held in Vienna, Ambassador Ronald Lauder, who co-chairs the International Auction Committee with Edgar Bronfman, President of the World Jewish Congress, purchased 31 items on behalf of Yad Vashem, which include paintings, sketches, and silver cutlery. Lauder himself, and Marjorie Federbush, Executive Vice President of the Ronald S. Lauder Foundation, both greatly committed to this project, were present throughout the entire auction and purchased beyond their original intentions. The collection, stored by the Austrian Government in the 14th-century Mauerbach Monastery for the past 50 years, is composed of 8,000 items which had been looted by the Nazis, mainly from Austrian Jewish homes between 1938-1945. Proceeds of the sale, which was carried out on behalf of the Federation of Austrian Jewish Communities, are currently standing at \$14 million, and are to benefit needy Austrian survivors and their families both at home and abroad, the rebuilding of communities that suffered from the Holocaust, and Holocaust institutions.

The "Yad Vashem 2001" masterplan includes the expansion and development of the museum. One particular focus of the museum will be the presentation of impressions of Jewish life before the Shoah, which will emphasize the extent of the desecration, destruction and vacuum that was created in the Jewish people and culture by the Nazis. In this spirit, the Mauerbach Collection is a representative of the bourgeois Jewish community that existed in Central Europe prior to the Shoah.



THE IMPERIAL WAR MUSEUM WILL OPEN A HOLOCAUST WING

London's Imperial War Museum will open a Holocaust Wing.

Field Marshall Lord Edwin Noel Westby Bramall, former Commander-in-Chief of the British Armed Forces and current Director of The Imperial War Museum in London, visited Yad Vashem.

Lord Bramall was the personal guest of the Chairman of Yad Vashem's Directorate, Avner Shalev, who volunteered Yad Vashem's active support in establishing the new Holocaust wing at this important British museum. The plans for the new wing, the first of its kind in any European Museum, were initiated during the celebrations of the 50th anniversary

marking the Allied victory over Nazi Germany. They include the establishment of a permanent Holocaust exhibit covering 1400 square meters of floor space.

Lord Bramell indicated that Holocaust Studies have been declared an integral part of the educational curriculum in Britain, and that the new wing will provide the crucial historical testimony needed to supplement the academic studies.

Avner Shalev stated that he regards, "the decision taken by the British Government to dedicate an entire wing to the Holocaust in one of Britain's leading national museums with the upmost importance. It is a statement

as to the centrality and significance of the Holocaust within European and British history along with what is to be learned from it; this wing's establishment signifies the universal dimensions of the Holocaust and its being the darkest and grimmest of ages in human history".

Shalev accepted Lord Bramell's invitation to join the Board of Deputies of the museum's new wing. This body includes members of the international community from the fields of communication, the arts, and the academic establishment; various organizations commemorating the Holocaust, representatives of different synogogue movements, etc.

ARTICLES FROM MAJDANEK ARRIVED AT YAD VASHEM

FROM THE LODZ GHETTO TO JERUSALEM

A tiny Hanukkah lamp, palm sized, was donated to the museum at Yad Vashem by the Belkovski family, survivors from Lodz. The lamp is part of the museum's exhibition, "Lodz-the Last Ghetto", which documented the daily life of the ghetto, the last to survive on Polish soil.

The folding silver Hanukkah lamp, shaped like a closed book, contains 9 miniature oil ducts, along with tongs. It was presented as a gift to the head of the Lodz Judenrat, Chaim Romkovski.

The lamp brings to life the essence of the struggle to survive by the ghetto inhabitants, which was characterized by small-scale industry, numerous workshops, and the determination to continue despite widespread famine, cold and a high mortality rate. Ghetto life included social, cultural and political activities, mainly centered around the political parties, and youth movements, and included clandestine studies, lectures and libraries.

There were approximately a quarter of a million Jews in Lodz on the eve of the Second World War, making it the second largest Jewish community in Poland. Lodz was known for its rich Jewish cultural life and tradition.

On the 1st of May, 1940, the Lodz Ghetto was hermetically sealed off with 164,000 Jews living under extremely crowded conditions. Over time, thousands of Jews from other areas of Poland and elsewhere were crammed into the ghetto. Many thousands died as a result of the poor sanitation, causing typhus and starvation.

From January, 1942, the first ghetto deportations took Jews to the Chelmno death camp, the site where tens of thousands of Jews were sadistically murdered. The Ghetto was finally liquidated in August, 1944, when the Germans sent the remaining 70,000 to their deaths in Auschwitz.

by G.A.



A Wooden Clog and Brush



An Urn for the ashes
of Non Jewish victims



Cannisters of Zyklon

Prisoner 1609 at Majdanek concentration camp was both a Jew and a political criminal. The right leg of his navy-blue trousers bore a Magen David composed of two triangles, a yellow above a red. His trousers were made from a heavy material, paint had lightly splattered the front pocket areas and patches had been needed to cover holes about both knees.

Majdanek, like Auschwitz, was both a death camp and a concentration camp. Close to 500,000 people passed through Majdanek, of which it is estimated that 360,000 died. Today the remains of Majdanek, which is located in a suburb of Lublin, Poland, have been preserved as part of a permanent museum. With the assistance of the director of Majdanek, Haviva Peled-Carmeli, Yad Vashem's Director of Artifacts' Retrieval, has managed to bring a shipment of objects to Yad Vashem for a 10-year loan period. The collection will feature in Yad Vashem's plan to build a new museum for the year 2001.

The container included 4000 shoes, barbed wire, clothes, a "Shulchan Aruch" and the unexpected quantity of 30 kilos of Zyklon B gas. The status of the gas was unknown until the staff at Majdanek confirmed that the German authorities had detoxified it in June of this year.

One of the suggestions for the exhibition is that two large but equally-sized cases will be erected in the entrance, side by side. In one will be 3999 shoes, and in the other one shoe. The emphasis to run through the presentation of these objects is the personal. That is, that these are not items to be collectively attributed to an anonymous 6 million victims, but that they are to be remembered as the private belongings of individuals. A particular pair of trousers was worn by a particular person, who was part of a specific family, and had led his own individual life.

By J.S.



Pants of a Jewish
Political Prisoner

THE CORNERSTONE-LAYING CEREMONY OF THE CANADIAN WING

On October 14th, 1996, with a breathtaking backdrop of Jerusalem's hills, the cornerstone-laying ceremony of the Canadian Wing of the International School for Holocaust Studies took place. Present to address the important event were Dr. Joseph Burg, the Chairman of the International Council of Yad Vashem, Mr. Hank Rosenbaum, the Chairman of the Canadian Society for Yad Vashem, and Avner Shalev, the Chairman of the Yad Vashem Directorate. Also present was Canada's Ambassador to Israel, H.E. Mr. David Berger. The special guest and speaker of the occasion was Mr. Leslie Dan, who through his generosity enabled the initiation of this important project. A delegation of the Canadian Society for Yad Vashem was also present.

The Canadian Wing will develop innovative multimedia and learning programs. It will house a pedagogic center, including a guidance and counselling section, an educational library, and a wealth of learning programs and teaching aids on the Holocaust, from Israel and the world over.

From left to right, Leslie Dan, Yosef Burg
and Avner Shalev laying the cornerstone.



1996: a fruitful year for
the Yad Vashem Societies
around the world

■ The **American Society** of Yad Vashem, led by **Eli Zborowski**, held its annual dinner in November, 1996. The festive dinner, titled "2001 Vision and Remembrance" had an attendance of over 900 guests, and was very successful. The General Chairman of the occasion was **Edgar M. Bronfman**. The senior guest of honor was **Rabbi Dr. Israel Miller**, President of the Claims Conference. Representing the young leadership were the other guests of honor **Cheryl and Moshe Lifshitz** and the dinner's chairmen **Israel Singer and Mark Wilf**. The guests commended and reaffirmed their commitment to "Yad Vashem 2001", stating the need to prepare for the coming generations, and expressing their readiness to accept responsibility for the education and perpetuation of the legacy of the Holocaust. At the dinner, Yad Vashem's stirring new video presentation was screened.

□ A senior and loyal **friend** of Yad Vashem paid a visit recently with his wife. During the impressive and inspiring tour, an agreement was drawn between the Chairman of the Directorate of Yad Vashem, **Avner Shalev**, the Chairman of the American Society, **Eli Zborowski** and this close **friend** in which a major gift was promised for the erection of the Visitors' Center at Yad Vashem. This building at the entrance of the Mount of Remembrance shall prepare future visitors for their visit to the site. The Center will be dedicated to those who survived the Shoah, who through the authentic testimony of their tragedies serve as history's living witnesses and who stand alongside the historians in relaying the Holocaust. As part of "2001", the Visitors' Center will span 400 square meters and will be built parallel to the erection of the new museum.

□ **Sam Skura**, the **American Society's** Deputy Chairman, enlisted significant support for the establishment of a computerized learning center, which will be part of the new museum complex. He, and **Joe Wilf**, the Chairman of the campaign for building the new museum, arrived in Israel to participate in the presentation of the various concepts of a number of leading architects for the design of the new museum complex and the Visitors' Center.

■ The **Canadian Society's** mission, led by **Hank Rosenbaum**, within the framework of a three day intensive study tour of Israel last October, visited Yad Vashem. They were guests of honor at a dinner hosted by Israel's 5th President, **Yitzhak Navon**. Navon expressed his appreciation of the Society's activities and support.

□ Back in **Canada** during November, **Simcha Salach** participated with the members of the Society in "Holocaust Week", which included the presentation of Yad Vashem's new multimedia program. Salach's visit included meetings with leading community personalities who expressed keen interest in supporting Yad Vashem.

■ Following a number of meetings between Yad Vashem and **David Gorodzinsky** on the revival of the **Mexican Society**, **Shlomo Lahat**, Chairman of the Yad Vashem Foundation, together with **Simcha Salach** and **Yoel Embon** visited **Mexico** to promote activities. A number of dominant figures within the Jewish community's leadership agreed to become involved in the executive committee of the society and a generous gift was promised for the Lecture Hall of the new International School of Holocaust Studies.

□ **Ida Feldman** has promised to support the new school significantly. The Society is currently deliberating on the adoption of the school as its central project.

■ Last October, **Shlomo Lahat**, together with **Simcha Salach** and **Yoel Embon** visited **Panama** where they met **Panama's** Minister of Education, **Dr. Pablo Thalassinis**, community leaders and students. A new executive committee was elected with **Dr. Zehava Rubin** as its Chairwoman. The Associations **Beth El** and **Kol Sherit** have promised to establish 2 separate scholarship funds. **Rabbi Zion Harrari** has taken upon himself and the community to support Yad Vashem's efforts to transfer, restore and relocate within its new museum complex an Eastern European synagogogue which survived the Holocaust.

■ The **Dutch Society** recently opened the exhibit "A Day in the Warsaw Ghetto" at the Hague City Hall, in the presence of a large audience including Jewish community leaders and political figures.

■ The President of the **French Society**, **Samuel Pissar** was one of the special guests at the recent American dinner. **Simcha Salach** and **Zvi Dana** recently visited France where they met the leaders of the **French Society** and other friends who had expressed their desire to intensify their Yad Vashem activities. A number of gifts were received throughout the duration of the visit from new friends.

■ The **Israeli Society** has raised support for a number of educational and literary projects of Yad Vashem within the framework of the Yad Vashem Foundation.

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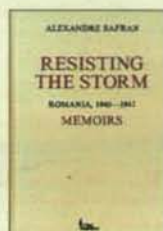
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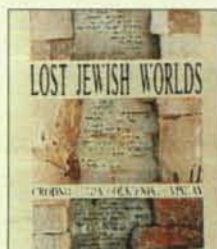
PUBLICATIONS AND EVENTS

NEW PUBLICATIONS



Alexandre Safran, Resisting the Storm, Romania 1940-1947, Memoirs, (French translation), Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1996.

Alexandre Safran was the chief Rabbi of Romania during the most turbulent years in the community's history. A young man in his thirties, Rabbi Safran, along with other Romanian Jewish leaders, sought to protect the Jews from the murderous actions of both Romanians and Germans, and later from Communist persecution. His memoirs cast light on attempts to rescue children from Transnistria, help given to Jewish refugees from Hungary, and efforts to revive Romanian Jewry after the war. This is a significant work for the French-reading public.



Shmuel Spector (Editor) and Bracha Freundlich (Co-editor), Lost Jewish Worlds, The Communities of Grodno, Lida, Olkieniki, Vishay, Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1996.

Especially for people born after the Holocaust, acquiring a sense of what was destroyed is difficult. This volume, which presents the political, social and cultural history of four communities in encyclopedic detail, is an important source for such understanding. The communities differed vastly in size, from Grodno with nearly 50,000 residents to Vishay with roughly 1,000. Yet for long periods, the Jews comprised at least one third of the population of each. Not only the text, but the many accompanying photographs, express the variety of Jewish life in Eastern Europe before the war. A special thanks should go to Dr. Felix and Ruta Zandman for making the publication of this book possible.



Miroslav Karny (ed.) Terezinska Pametni Kniha, Praha: Terezinska Inicijativa, 1995.

This two-volume work contains over 150,000 names of Jews who were imprisoned in the Terezin ghetto, between the time of its establishment in autumn 1941 and its liberation in spring

1945. Most were deported to ghettos in Poland and the Baltic States, or to the death camps Treblinka and Auschwitz-Birkenau, from where only a handful returned. Thousands more died in Terezin itself. The preservation of their names in these volumes serves as their lasting memorial, and underscores the need to continue the sacred task of gathering and commemorating the names of Holocaust victims.

EVENTS

■ On the 5th of August, the 54th annual commemoration service of Janusz Korczak and the orphan children sent to Treblinka took place at Yad Vashem. The participants included a number of Holocaust survivors who were fellow colleagues of Korczak, and orphans cared for by Korczak himself. The event was held in cooperation with the Janusz Korczak Association in Israel.

■ Aharon Galuska and Moshe Kupferman were presented with the Zussman Prize, bequeathed by the late Heinrich Zussman. The ceremony, which took place on the 4th of December at Yad Vashem, commended the two artists for their works relating to the Holocaust. Prof. Motti Omer, Director of the Tel Aviv museum, and Dr. Michael Levin of the Bezalel Academy of Art, members of the panel of judges, spoke at the event.

■ On the 22nd of December, for the first time at Yad Vashem, a memorial service was held for the tens of thousands of Jews massacred in the Bogdanovca death camp in the Ukraine. This event, which from now on will take place annually, was in cooperation with the Association of Immigrants from the Ukraine and the Ministry of Immigrant Absorption. The Minister, Yuli Edelstein, addressed the participants, many of whom are survivors from the Ukraine and a few from Bogdanovca itself. At the ceremony, the film "Transnistria-Hell on Earth", including testimonies from the massacre and descriptions of the horrors of Transnistria, was shown.

FROM JANUARY TO APRIL

■ On the 2nd of January, 1997, an evening will take place dedicated to the musician and poet Mordechai Gebirtig from Cracow. Gebirtig, originally a carpenter, wrote songs and poems in Yiddish which were performed in theaters, concert halls and on radio. He was murdered in the Cracow ghetto in 1942. His best known song which became the anthem of the Jewish Polish underground, "The Town in Flames", and many other works, will be performed by the Jewish Norwegian singer and actress Bente Kahan whose multilingual repertoire includes mostly Jewish themes.

■ The new exhibition, "Art in the Shadow of Death" opened in the beginning of December in Yad Vashem's Museum of Art, and will continue until April, 1997. Over 90 drawings from the Holocaust, including 30 done by children, were chosen from the permanent collection of Yad Vashem. Shown are the works of artists Samuel Bak, Yehuda Bakon and Esther Lurie, among many others. The exhibition includes the screening, for the first time in Israel, of the 1990 animated film, "Imprisoned Dreams", created by Milos Zerina. The film is based on the children's drawings from the Terezin ghetto.

■ The 11th International Conference of the International Institute of Holocaust Studies of Yad Vashem, in cooperation with the Leo Baeck Institute, will take place between the 10th-14th of February, 1997 at Yad Vashem. This year's theme will be "German Society's Responses to Nazi Anti-Jewish Policy 1933-1941".