

Yad Vashem Honored with Prince of Asturias Award for Concord

On the eve of *Rosh Hashanah*—the Jewish New Year—Yad Vashem was honored with the news that it had received the international Prince of Asturias Award for Concord. This prestigious annual award is bestowed by Prince Felipe, son of King Juan Carlos, upon “the person, persons or institution whose work has made an exemplary and outstanding contribution to mutual understanding and peaceful coexistence amongst men, to the struggle against injustice or ignorance, to the defense of freedom, or whose work has widened the horizons of knowledge or has been outstanding in protecting and preserving mankind’s heritage.”

This year, 47 candidates from 28 countries competed for the Prince of Asturias Award for Concord. Yad Vashem’s nomination was proposed by German chancellor Angela Merkel, and supported by eminent public figures from around the world, including former Mexican president Vicente Fox Quesada, former UN secretary-general Kofi Annan, former European Parliament president and 2005 Prince of Asturias Award laureate Simone Veil, German parliamentarian Joschka Fischer, Nobel Peace Prize laureate and Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel, US senator Hillary Rodham Clinton, Holocaust researcher and Nazi hunter Serge Klarsfeld and Israeli president Shimon Peres. In her letter of candidature, Chancellor Merkel said: “Yad Vashem is a unique place; a memorial and place for commemorating, a cultural and education center... Yad Vashem is also a place for hope: the hope for reconciling and understanding, for tolerance and humanity, for peace and good coexistence.”

Chairman of the Directorate Avner Shalev expressed his appreciation to the Foundation and the jury for recognizing the work of Yad Vashem. “I am deeply moved, and very proud, that Yad Vashem has been honored with the Prince of Asturias Award for Concord,” he said. “My sincere appreciation goes to the Prince of Asturias Foundation for this singular honor. This prestigious international award recognizes that the memory of the Holocaust—the systematic murder of the Jews that took place in the heart of Europe—has profound significance for the coexistence of the family of nations, today and through the ages. The receipt of the Prince of Asturias Award inspires us to continue in our efforts to build a better future through our confrontation with the past, and emphasizes the awesome responsibility that Yad Vashem bears. As the generation of the witnesses to these horrors dwindles, Yad Vashem will continue to transform their memory into building blocks for a better world—one characterized by tolerance and mutual respect amongst all peoples.”

The Award will be presented on 26 October in Spain, in the presence of the Spanish royal family. Previous winners of the Prince of Asturias Award for Concord include: UNICEF, Médecins sans Frontières, King Hussein of Jordan, Stephen Hawking and J.K. Rowling.

First-ever International Holocaust Conference in Spain

In line with the rising quest for knowledge about the Holocaust in the Spanish-speaking world, the International Institute for Holocaust Studies at Yad Vashem, headed by Prof. David Bankier, organized the first-ever international conference on the Holocaust in Spain from 24-26 September.

Under the heading, “The Holocaust and its Significance Today,” the conference—supported by the Marc Rich Foundation for Education, Culture and Welfare (Switzerland)—took place at the CSIC (Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas – The High Council for Scientific Investigations) in Madrid, the largest public multidisciplinary research body in Spain. The conference, held in partnership with Casa Sefarad-Israel, featured prominent experts in the field from Israel, Spain, Germany and Belgium, who held round-table discussions and workshops covering a range of topics, including: “The Singularity of the Holocaust;” “Why does Spanish Historiography Ignore the Holocaust?” and “Spanish Refugees and Jewish Refugees: the Case of Mexico.”

During the conference, a special pedagogical workshop dedicated to Spanish teachers also took place. The workshop was run by Mario Sinay of Yad Vashem’s International School for Holocaust Studies, and included presentations of the School’s didactic material available in Spanish.

The Names Database

Next Generation discovers family of descendants lost in the Holocaust



After embarking on a journey of discovery to Poland in search of family roots, Arnie Perlstein from the United States and his son Ethan (right) searched the online Central Database of Shoah Victims’ Names and

discovered a Page of Testimony commemorating Arnie’s (maternal) great aunt. The page was submitted to Yad Vashem in 1996 by Yoav Harel from Israel (left), who turned out to be Arnie’s second cousin. Yad Vashem staff member Limor Bar-Ilan (center) assisted in bringing the families together and guided them at Yad Vashem this summer. Nurit Mittlefehldt, Yoav’s sister, was overjoyed. “For someone whose family only ever consisted of a father, mother, brother and sister, finding new family members is the greatest gift I could ask for.”

Appreciation for Names Recovery Efforts



Thirty-five members of Congregation Shir HaMa’alot (Irvine, CA)—one of the first synagogues to pilot a names collection campaign in 2005—came to Yad Vashem this July. During the visit, Cynthia

Wroclawski, Outreach Manager of the Names Recovery Project presented Rabbi Richard Steinberg (left, with synagogue congregants and Cantor Arie Shikler, right) with a certificate of appreciation for the outstanding efforts of the synagogue membership to collect the names of Shoah victims. Synagogue member Toni Rois, who was unable to attend, was also honored for her leadership role in this undertaking, which so far has resulted in the submission of over 200 Pages of Testimony.

Australian efforts pay off



The Australian Friends of Yad Vashem organized a special Names Registration Day in June. Fifteen recently returned “March of the Living” participants volunteered to assist 31 individuals who attended the event. In total, 215 Pages of Testimony

were submitted, and a further 50 in the days following. The Names Recovery Project continues in Australia with further Registration Days being planned.

Pictured, left to right: Ellie Brautberg and Mulia Bereszowski. Mulia spent four hours at the Registration Day and managed to name complete class photos from before the war.

“Recording the Names” International Workshop



Thirteen participants from six eastern and southern European countries attended the Fourth International Workshop on Documenting and Commemorating Holocaust Victims’ Names held at Yad Vashem in September. During the workshop, co-sponsored by the Zantker Charitable Foundation Inc., representatives from Holocaust Museums and documentation and research centers and institutes presented paradigms for collecting and computerizing names of Holocaust victims, and discussed the establishment of standards and formats of data and knowledge exchange. Pictured: Prof. Ruvin Ferber (second from left), University of Latvia, and Inna Gerasimiva, The Jewish Museum, Minsk, receiving certificates of appreciation from

Director of the Hall of Names Alexander Avraham (right) and Cynthia Wroclawski, Outreach Manager of the Names Recovery Project (left), for their outstanding work in collecting and documenting Shoah victims’ names from their communities.