

# YAD VASHEM

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JERUSALEM



## "Before My Very Eyes"

The New Yad Vashem IDF Educational Center for Holocaust Remembrance ([18-23](#))

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# HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE DAY

## 2022 MARKING THE TRANSPORTS TO EXTINCTION

Leah Goldstein

This year's Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Day was held on 27-28 April 2022 under the banner: "[Transports to Extinction: Deportations of the Jews During the Holocaust.](#)"



Prime Minister Naftali Bennett addresses the audience at the Holocaust Remembrance Day State Opening Ceremony, Warsaw Ghetto Square

The [events held on the Mount of Remembrance](#) and across Israel mixed customary and innovative ceremonies.

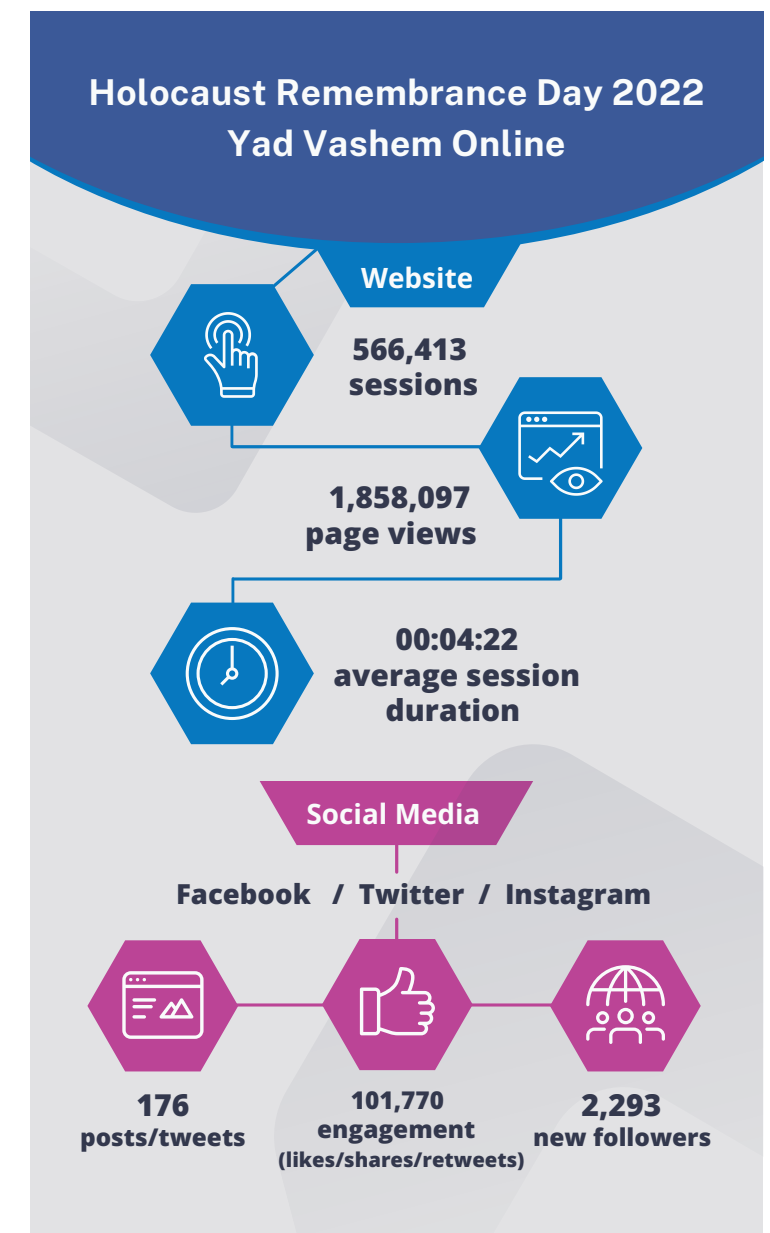
[Educational materials](#) developed by the International School for Holocaust Studies (with original podcasts, testimonial films and historical videos) were uploaded to Yad Vashem's website, and all of Yad Vashem's social media channels in various languages shared a variety of content dealing with the central theme and the [stories of the torchlighters](#) – Zvi Gill, Shmuel Blumenfeld z"l (the torch was lit by his son, Aryeh), Olga Kay, Arie Shilansky, Shaul Spielmann and Rebecca Elizur.

In addition, the public who visited the Mount of Remembrance were offered tours of the Holocaust History Museum, as well as "Behind-the-Scenes" presentations by Yad Vashem staff across the campus. Online, a 360-degree tour of the Holocaust History Museum was accessible to members of the public around the world, as well as a free webinar, entitled "The Abuse and Trivialization of Holocaust Memory" – which addressed how the Holocaust is being misused and abused in everyday references, to the point where it

is losing significance. Holocaust historian Efraim Zuroff addressed the more than 200 participants on current manifestations of Holocaust distortion.

Additionally, Yad Vashem

was honored to welcome many leaders of countries around the world, including [President of the Bundestag Bärbel Bas](#), who filled out a Page of Testimony for a Holocaust victim.



## HOLOCAUST MARTYRS' AND HEROES' REMEMBRANCE DAY 2022: IMAGES FROM THE MOUNT OF REMEMBRANCE



Youth Movement Ceremony in the Valley of the Communities



Wreaths were laid in Warsaw Ghetto Square



Names Reading in the Hall of Remembrance



The six Torchlighters at the Opening Ceremony



Above, clockwise from left: Behind-the-scenes presentations of the "Gathering the Fragments" campaign, the "Flashes of Memory" exhibition, the Art Collection and the harnessing of technology for the sake of memory

# DEPORTATIONS OF JEWS DURING THE HOLOCAUST

NEW ONLINE EXHIBITION FEATURES STORIES OF THE LAST DEPORTEES

Yona Kobo

In advance of Holocaust Remembrance Day 2022, under the banner "Transports to Extinction: The Deportation of the Jews During the Holocaust," Yad Vashem uploaded to its website a new online exhibition that brings the stories of the last deportees during the Holocaust – Jews that were transported from June 1944 until April 1945 from the Netherlands, Hungary, Greece, France, Poland, Italy, Czechoslovakia and Germany.

On 30 August 1944, Avraham Benkel and his 14-year-old son Shmuel were deported from the Lodz ghetto on the last transport to Auschwitz. "The Germans addressed us, and said that in Germany, too, they would establish a fur workshop and that we would work there in the same way we worked here," Benkel testified. "Later on, it became clear that this was false, and that they were sending us to Auschwitz, not to Germany... As soon as we arrived at Auschwitz, we heard from the Jews unloading us from the cars that here, people

were sent to the crematoria... they separated me from my son... I saw him standing on the other side, waving to me. I waved back. I never saw him again." Benkel was the lone survivor from his family.

By the summer of 1944, the demise of Nazi Germany seemed inevitable, but despite this, the machinery of extermination relentlessly continued to operate at full strength. While parts of Europe had already been liberated, the last Jews were being deported from areas still under the control of the Germans.

Utilizing documentation, photographs, artworks and testimonies from Yad Vashem's Collections, the online exhibition tells the heartbreaking stories of individuals, families and communities who were brutally pushed into cattle cars and transported on a journey full of unbearable torment, degradation, abuse and pain. Masses of Jews from across Europe were deported in the last months of the war from their homes, transit camps and the last ghettos still standing, and were taken to

Mendel Grossman (right) photographing the deportation of Jews from the Lodz ghetto, Summer 1944  
Yad Vashem Archives



>> DEPORTATIONS OF JEWS DURING THE HOLOCAUST  
NEW ONLINE EXHIBITION FEATURES STORIES OF THE LAST DEPORTEES

The exhibition tells the heartbreaking stories of individuals, families and communities who were brutally pushed into cattle cars and transported on a journey full of unbearable torment, degradation, abuse and pain



Paula Kaufman-Welt (left), Alfred ("Zippi") Frenkel (center) and their fellow resistance activists. Paris 1944  
Yad Vashem Artifacts Collection,

concentration and death camps, sometimes just days before the liberators arrived.

On 17 August 1944, a day before the evacuation of the Drancy concentration and transit camp near the French capital by the Germans prior to their retreat from France, a group of 51 Jews was taken out of Drancy. They were Jewish underground members, who had been caught by the Germans in April and July 1944: members of L'Armée Juive (AJ), the Jewish Communist underground, the Dutch-Jewish Underground Hechalutz and others. The Germans gathered them clandestinely, for fear that

their comrades would try and rescue them, and attached them to a German evacuation train bound for Buchenwald.

Alfred ("Zippi") Frenkel, a member of Hechalutz was on from the train. "The French resistance wanted to prevent the train's departure, and they bombed the railway tracks," he related. "From the first days, we considered escaping from the train, and made arrangements after we figured out how it could be done. Ours was the last train car. The police were in the car in front of us... We opened one side of the rear section of the car, and prepared to jump out in order. We held a lottery. I got number 23;

somebody jumped out every five minutes until we reached number 19." Unfortunately, the escape was halted because the railway tracks had been bombed and the train came to a standstill. "Zippi" survived Buchenwald and other camps, and immigrated to Israel.

The exhibition also features the story of the last transport from the Terezin ghetto to Auschwitz, on 28 October 1944. Among the deportees was Kurt Gerron, one of the most successful artists in Germany in the interwar period. He had starred in and directed dozens of films, plays and cabaret performances. On 1 April 1933, the day of the national boycott

on German Jewry, Gerron and his Jewish colleagues were thrown out of the UFA cinema studio in Berlin. Gerron was in the middle of directing a film. Before the day's shooting began, the production manager gathered the workers and told the Jews to leave the studio. Gerron left in tears, his back visibly shaking. The same month, he moved to Paris. Some two years later, he went to Vienna and then to the Netherlands. He settled in Amsterdam, where he continued to direct films. Even after the German occupation of

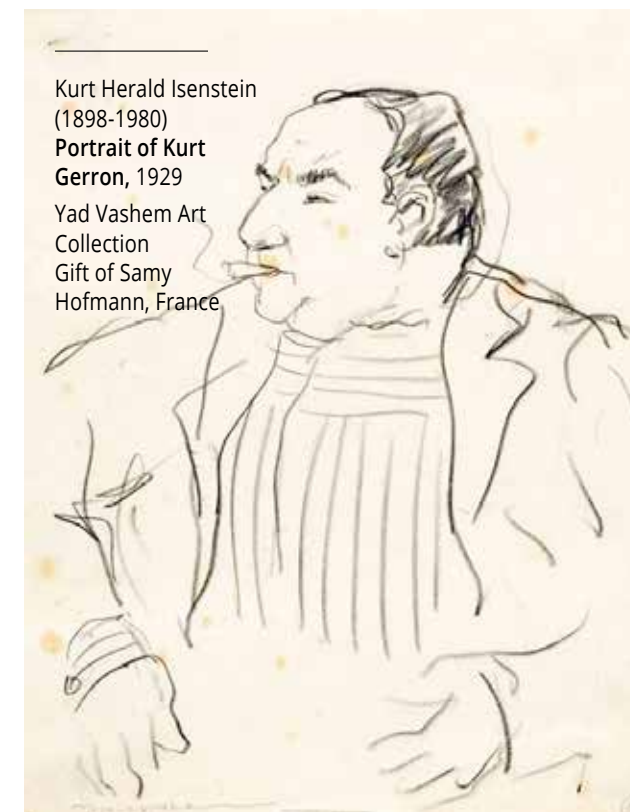
the country, he continued to work in his field. In September 1943, he was arrested, and sent with his wife Olga to the Westerbork concentration and transit camp in northeastern Netherlands, where he continued his theatrical-cabaret activities. In October 1944, he was deported to his death at Auschwitz.

Most of the deportees had been murdered by the end of the war. Few survived against all odds and managed to return to life in the shadow of loss and harrowing memories. By revealing their stories, sharing and disseminating

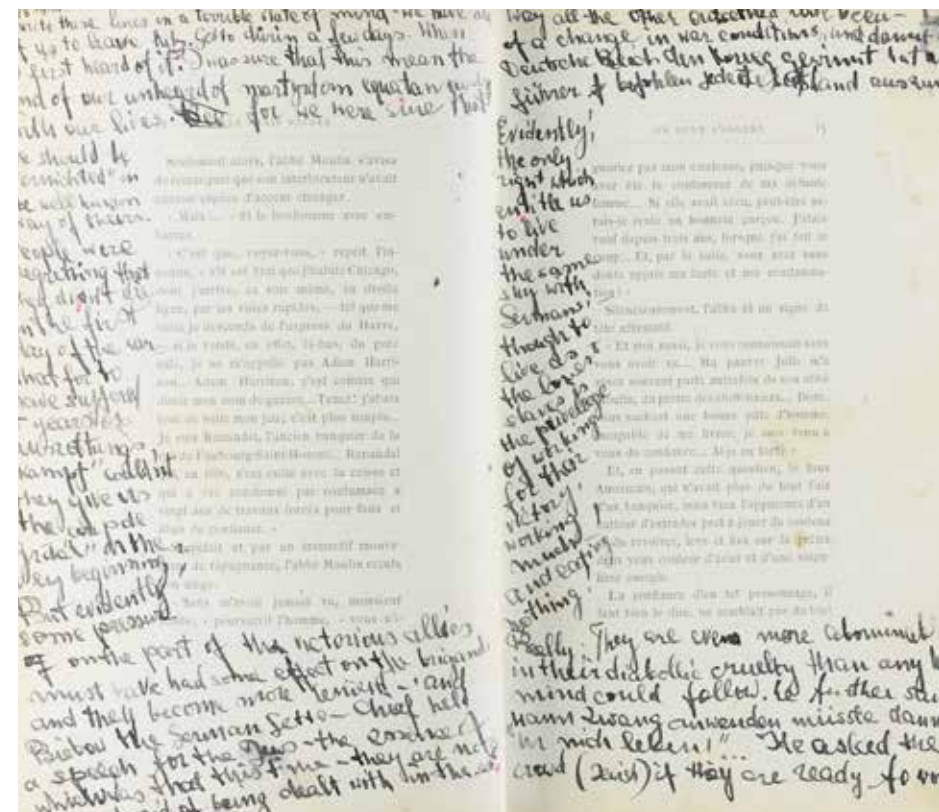
them online, they are remembered as people, each unique in his or her own way. No longer anonymous, no more a face in the crowd, but people each with a name, identity and life story.

*The author is a researcher and Online Exhibitions Coordinator in the Communications Division's Digital Department.*

Page from Avraham Laski's diary, found by Lodz ghetto survivor Avraham Benkel on the site of the former ghetto  
Yad Vashem Archives



Kurt Herald Isenstein (1898-1980)  
Portrait of Kurt Gerron, 1929  
Yad Vashem Art Collection  
Gift of Samy Hofmann, France

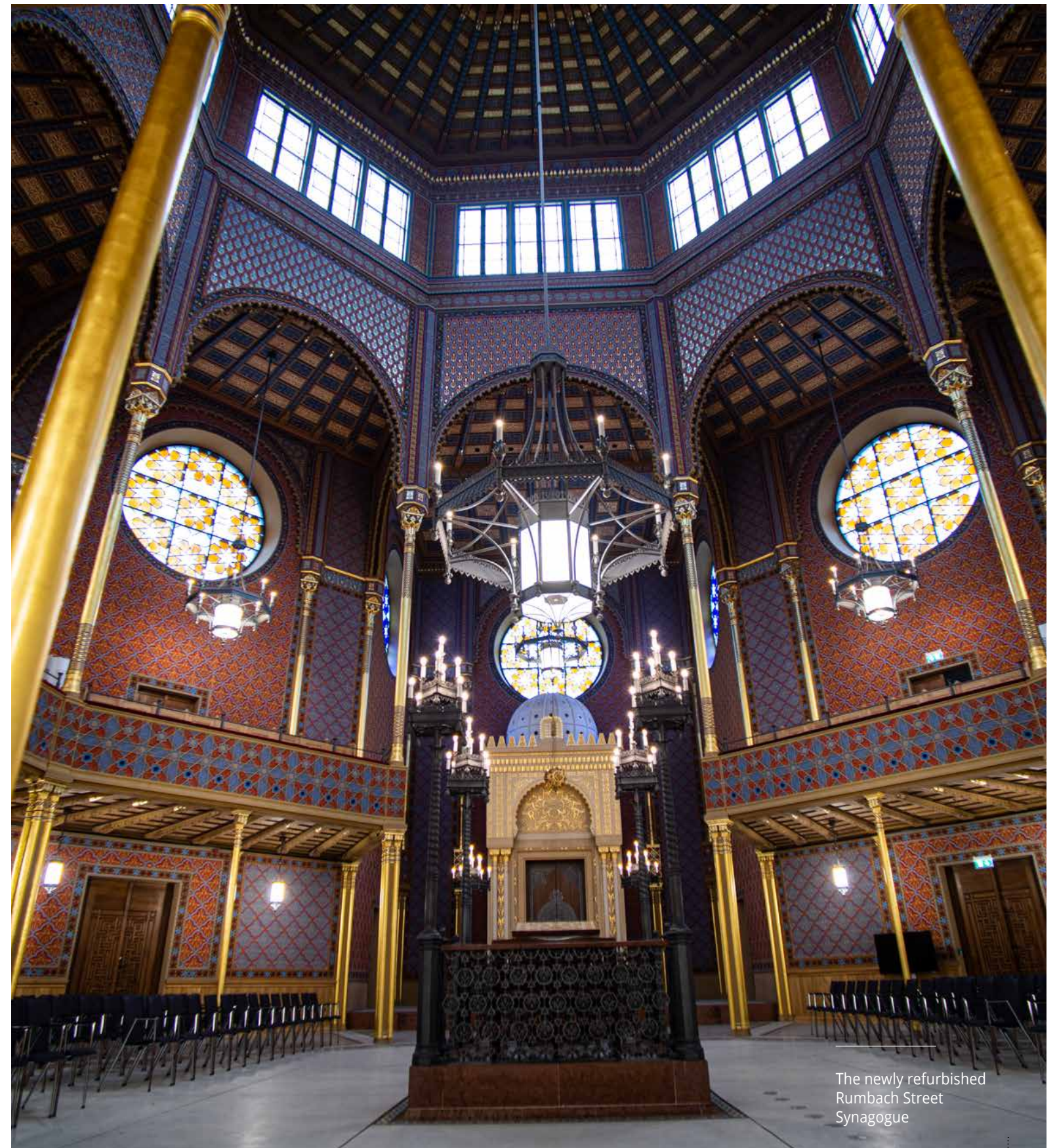


# REMEMBERING AND RENEWING HUNGARIAN JEWISH LIFE

## THE RUMBACH STREET SYNAGOGUE

Szilvia Pető-Dittel

After more than six decades of decay and long years of renovation, the Rumbach Street Synagogue is one of the most outstanding Jewish monuments in Hungary, and home to a Yad Vashem exhibition on children in the Holocaust.



The newly refurbished Rumbach Street Synagogue

>> REMEMBERING AND RENEWING HUNGARIAN JEWISH LIFE  
THE RUMBACH STREET SYNAGOGUE



Hungarian schoolchildren participate in a Yad Vashem course based on its exhibition "Stars Without a Heaven"

Built according to the plans of Viennese architect Otto Wagner (the genius behind many Art Nouveau buildings in Vienna) and inaugurated in 1872, the Rumbach Street Synagogue stood in the Jewish Quarter (the area that would become the Jewish ghetto during WWII), just a few corners away from the Neolog Great Synagogue on Dohány Street and an Orthodox Jewish place of worship on Kazinczy Street. The Rumbach was designed for the Status Quo Ante community (a combination of sorts of the former two streams of Judaism), not to outshine the neighboring Great

**The students were posed with dilemmas from their everyday lives corresponding to the main themes of the exhibition – family, friends, education, identity, life events and more**

Synagogue, but at the same time, with stunning features. The result was a unique Jewish house of prayer with Byzantine and arabesque

elements, including octagonal, minaret-style columns, similar to those of Jerusalem's Dome of the Rock.

WWII hit the synagogue hard. In 1941, almost 20,000 Jews were gathered there before Hungarian authorities deported them to Nazi-occupied Kamenetz-Podolsk in Ukraine, where they were murdered. During the siege of Budapest, the building suffered significant bomb damage. However, the real devastation began under state control in the late 1970s, with a collapsed dome, allowing rain, snow and birds to enter the interior space. The synagogue wasn't used for religious purposes after 1959, and was only returned to the Jewish community's ownership in 2006, to be completely closed down in 2017.

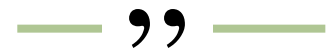
The revamping of the now breathtaking synagogue was completed in the summer of 2021, supported by the Hungarian Prime Minister's Office and the Human Capacities Ministry. In its new incarnation, the Rumbach also serves as a community and cultural center, as well as a conference venue.

"The government rescued this building from ruin, hoping that life would return within its walls," said Katalin Novák, now the President of Hungary, at the opening event. András Heisler, President of the Federation of the Hungarian Jewish Communities, expressed his thanks that "a new multifunctional space has been built where prayers will be heard and the Jewish

community can develop; it will also house important cultural, public-education and tourism events."

Heisler's words are being fulfilled as new cooperation was recently formed between the Rumbach synagogue and Yad Vashem. The multifunctional building is hosting Yad Vashem's ready2print exhibition ["Stars Without a Heaven: Children in the Holocaust"](#) in Hungarian. A related wide-scale online educational program was carried out, with twenty high schools joining from across the country. After a brief introduction about the historical background of the Rumbach, as well as an overview of the educational activities of Yad Vashem, the students were posed with dilemmas from their everyday lives corresponding to the main themes of the exhibition – family, friends, education, identity, life events and more. As the workshop continued locally in the classrooms, student groups discussed these dilemmas from the point of view of the Jewish children presented in the 27-panel exhibition.

"'Stars Without a Heaven,' which features personal stories of children facing the hardships of the Shoah, turned out to be a perfect starting point for deeper discussions with youngsters about paying attention to and taking responsibility for each other, loyalty, empathy, the power of relationships, the



**The government rescued this building from ruin, hoping that life would return within its walls**

Hungarian President Katalin Novák

importance of a strong identity, and more," said Noa Mckayton, Director of the International School's Overseas Education and Training Department. "These values were crucial not only in the lives of those children affected by the Shoah, but also today, in an often fractured and dissonant society."

*The author is the representative of the Hungary Desk in the Overseas Education and Training Department, International School for Holocaust Studies.*



# "THE DOUBLE GEOGRAPHY OF DISLOCATION"

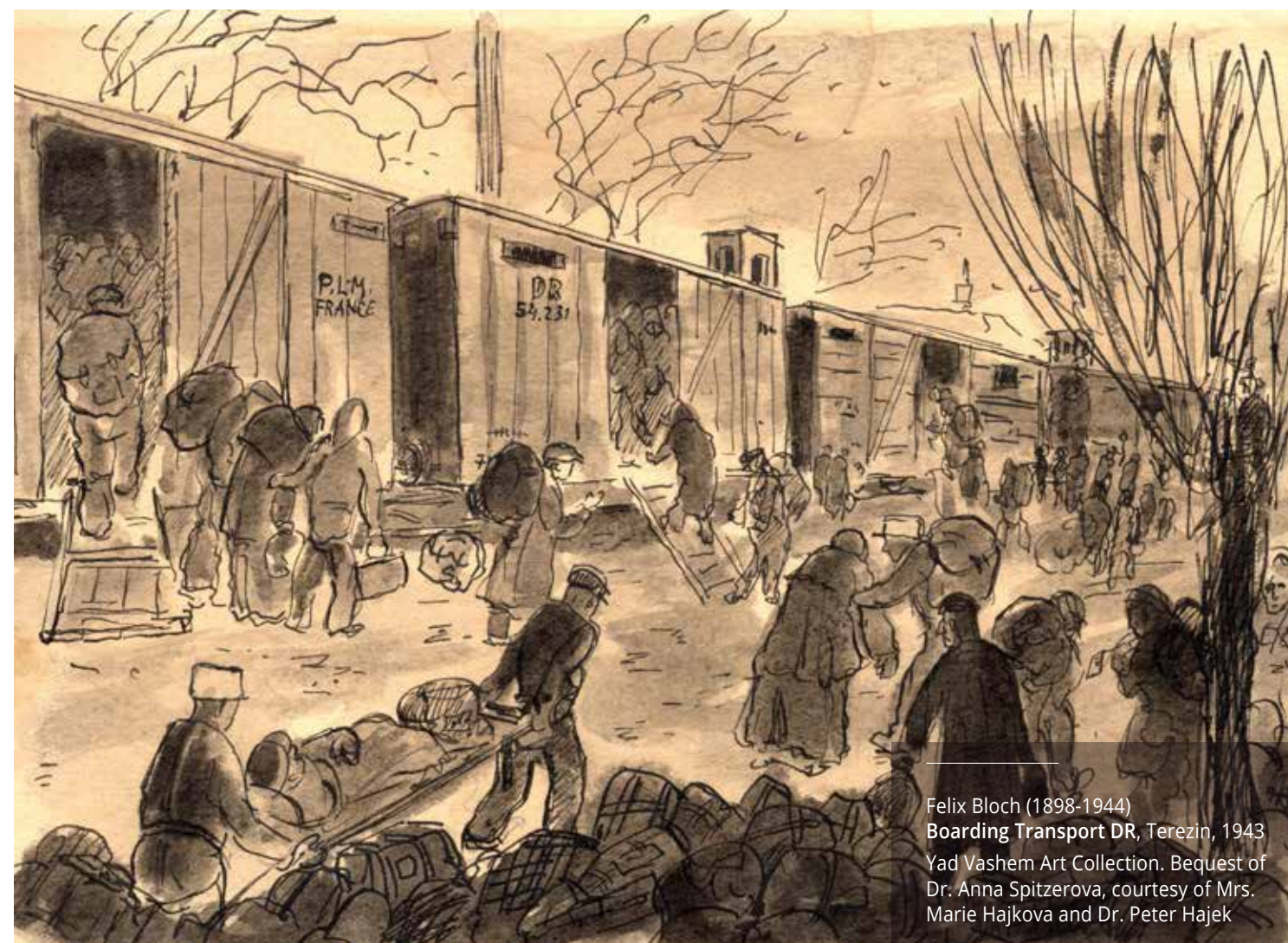
## DEPORTATIONS DURING THE HOLOCAUST: RESEARCH AND MEMORY

Leah Goldstein

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In such a car, which was designed to transport 'eighteen horses' according to the sign on the door, were a hundred of us – adults, children, sick, elderly, in indescribably crowded conditions... In every car there was a bucket with water for everyone and another bucket for toilets; so much of the water reserve was soiled as we boarded the train."

Simon Grinbaud, deported from the Drancy transit camp in France to Auschwitz-Birkenau in September 1942



Felix Bloch (1898-1944)  
Boarding Transport DR, Terezin, 1943  
Yad Vashem Art Collection. Bequest of Dr. Anna Spitzerova, courtesy of Mrs. Marie Hajkova and Dr. Peter Hajek

In line with the [annual theme for Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Day](#), on 12 May 2022 Yad Vashem's International Institute for Holocaust Research held an online daysymposium on the subject of "Deportations during the Holocaust: Research and Memory." Moderated by Dr. Joel Zisenwine, Director of Yad Vashem's Righteous

Among the Nations Department and former Director of Yad Vashem's "[Deportations of Jews](#)" online research project, the symposium featured opening remarks by Yad Vashem Chairman Dani Dayan, and fascinating presentations by veteran Holocaust historians as well as emerging researchers in the field.

The topic of deportations is,

as Prof. Christopher Browning (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill) explained in his lecture, a relative "latecomer" to Holocaust historiography. At first gaining little focus in the shadow of Nazi war crimes trials and the unprecedented phenomena of mass concentration and death camps, only after many decades did deportations begin

## "THE DOUBLE GEOGRAPHY OF DISLOCATION" DEPORTATIONS DURING THE HOLOCAUST: RESEARCH AND MEMORY

### The previously-held notion that deportations occurred during specific years of WWII alone and that they were only used to transport victims to their ultimate deaths is being challenged

to be investigated – mostly as the "machinery of destruction," playing a necessary function in the overall Nazi genocidal vision of the "Final Solution to the Jewish Question."

But more recently, the subject has been investigated from many other angles – spatially, geographically and chronologically – and the findings have deepened the once-scant understanding of this critical component of the Holocaust.

In his keynote lecture, Prof. Tim Cole (University of Bristol) first looked at the geographical chronology of Holocaust historiography. Citing Prof. Raul Hilberg's monumental contribution to understanding the Holocaust, he pointed out that the first chapters to be investigated by researchers were actually the closing chapters of the Shoah: the concentration and death camps that were liberated by the Allies at the end of the war. The Jewish victims, he explained, had been transported en masse to these factories of murder.

After the fall of the Iron Curtain, many historians shifted their focus

to the Holocaust in the East: the mass shootings carried out by the Nazi mobile killing forces and their local collaborators. In other words, before most of the death camps had begun their notorious function, the accepted picture was actually reversed: murder was brought to the Jews.

Prof. Cole then turned to the critical element that has only recently been added to many historical studies: the introduction and inclusion of the voices of those who experienced it. Using survivor testimonies as well as the rare pieces of evidence left behind by a handful of victims, he explained that as well as their displacement, deportations involved the victims' disorientation in both time and space. This "double geography of dislocation" was thus both physical and emotional, and historians – such as those working on the ["Transports to Extinction: Holocaust \(Shoah\) Deportations Database"](#) – are endeavoring not only to map out the exact routes of an estimated 2,000 deportations that

span the entire Holocaust period, but also to understand – and give voice to – the experience of them from the victims' viewpoint, as their world was reduced to the inside of a wagon, boat, horse-drawn cart or line of marching, dying prisoners. This is made all the more challenging by the dearth of official documentation and testimonies from Eastern Europe, as Cornelia Shati-Geissler, who currently heads the Deportations of Jews research project, as well as other researchers on the project (Avi Kotsere-Burg, Chaim Moykopf, Marta Marzanska-Mishani and Dmitry Kolotilenko) so ably demonstrated in their presentations.

Chronologically speaking, too, the previously-held notion that deportations occurred during specific years of WWII alone, and that they were only used to transport victims to their ultimate deaths, is also being challenged. Victims – including a minority of non-Jews as well – were transported before the outbreak of WWII and, towards its conclusion, were taken out of the death camps to provide much needed slave labor for the failing German war machine. Historian Deborah Hartmann illustrated this new perspective in her fascinating look at how the Memorial and Educational Site at the House of the Wannsee Conference has exhibited the topic of deportations over the last three decades, most recently spread throughout the exhibition



Jews boarding a deportation train, Lodz, Poland, 1944  
Yad Vashem Archives

to reflect it being "part of the entire process... a crucial element that connects forced immigration to mass annihilation."

Further, claimed Prof. Cole, the deportations themselves became sites of murder, as many victims suffocated or starved to death, or were shot, clubbed, bayoneted or bombed along ever-decreasing distances as the war drew to its inevitable end. The unique case of Greece – with one of the highest murder rates in Europe during the Shoah, and its three separate occupations zones – was brought by Yad Vashem educator Lea Micha in her lecture "Down to the Last Jew:

The Deportation of Greek Jews to Auschwitz." Although many of the witness accounts collected by the Deportations Project staff upon which Micha bases her teaching are patchy and confused, they are nevertheless, as Micha concluded, "a source of information and confirmation, and a way to record the psychological milieu of the deportees."

"Deportation as a procedure was indispensable for the killing of over half of the victims of the Holocaust, but on an individual basis it took many forms depending on place and time," concluded Prof. Browning, "Each was a discrete event and deserves to be

identified and researched, and its historical record preserved."

The Symposium took place with the generous support of the Gutwirth Family Fund.

The "Transports to Extinction: Holocaust (Shoah) Deportation Database" is generously supported by: The Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany; The estate of Isaac Jacques Cohen of France, survivor from Thessaloniki; SNCF - Société Nationale des Chemins de fer Français; The Canadian Society for Yad Vashem; and other partners.

# "BEFORE MY VERY EYES"

THE NEW YAD VASHEM IDF EDUCATIONAL CENTER FOR HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE

Leah Goldstein

On 25 April 2022, "Before My Very Eyes," the new Yad Vashem Educational Center for Holocaust Remembrance at the Ariel Sharon IDF Training Campus in the Negev, was officially opened. Created in cooperation with the IDF Educational Corps, the Center aims to teach Israeli soldiers about the Holocaust, inspire them by the ways in which the Jews dealt with the challenges during that period, and encourage them to reflect on their own roles in society - today and in the future.

What are your moral obligations to your country and people? How can you best handle the responsibility of national service and leadership? In which ways can you become a constructive contributor to society - today and in the future?

These deep, personal and conceptual questions offer a microcosm of those encountered by young people in Israel and around the globe, who today are flooded with information and often struggle to find their place in a complex world. When talking about soldiers serving in Israel's Defense Forces, these issues become all the more focused.



>> "BEFORE MY VERY EYES"  
THE NEW YAD VASHEM IDF EDUCATIONAL CENTER  
FOR HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE

In advance of the official opening, the Center's Pedagogical Director Shani Lourie-Farhi and Director of the IDF and Security Forces Department in the International School for Holocaust Studies Osnat Nir gave an interview to *Yad Vashem Jerusalem Magazine* on the Center's mission, challenges and opportunities.

### What was Yad Vashem's role in the creation of the Center?

Osnat Nir (ON): IDF educational programs aim to help shape rounded citizens as well as motivated, effective and moral soldiers. Holocaust studies are an integral part of its educational programs, and Yad Vashem, through the International School for Holocaust Studies, has educated hundreds of thousands of members of the IDF and security forces in partnership with the IDF Education Corps.

In April 2017, Yad Vashem opened the Holocaust Remembrance and Heroism Educational Center in the Ariel Sharon Training Campus: "The Human Image in the Shadow of Death." This was both the first center Yad Vashem opened outside of its Jerusalem campus and also the first time the IDF allowed an external organization to operate a permanent educational

program from within an army base. The single room could host approximately 30,000 soldiers annually. In contrast, the new Center enables around 60,000 soldiers to participate in programs per year, with multiple groups able to participate in activities simultaneously and flexible spaces which allow for different focuses and repeat visits.

### Which main elements define the Center?

Shani Lourie-Farhi (SLF): The new Educational Center was created to give an educational response to the needs of the young soldiers and their commanders, and is centered on a value-based discourse regarding the central issues in the prewar Jewish world, as well as how they coped during the Holocaust.

The architecture and design bring soldiers from their physical,

exhausting training into an experiential learning space. Soldiers arrive with a range of religious, ethnic, cultural and socio-economic backgrounds, not to mention levels of familiarity with the Holocaust. As young people today typically consume information in a less hierarchal, less formal way, the displays allow an active learning experience, using technology to reveal more information throughout the visit.

"Before My Every Eyes" is a cutting-edge educational facility, utilizing innovative pedagogical models to educate and inspire young people. After the initial IDF groups, the Center will be opened to civilian groups from the Israeli south, helping to create new and effective educational models for the young people of today and tomorrow, in Jerusalem, throughout Israel and around the world.

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"The Center will be a platform for the discussion of authority and ethics arising from Holocaust commemoration, as well as the importance of Jewish continuity." Dani Dayan



The discussion rooms allow officers to delve into topics with their soldiers

### How is the visitor experience enhanced?

SLF: In designing the Center, decisions were made based on how much time the groups would spend there, at what points they would be sitting, standing or moving around, and how much they would be actively participating or speaking, or passively listening or watching a screen.

ON: Furthermore, the eight stories presented in the Center are not

solely representative of geography or specific groups, but rather were created to speak to the soldiers – a young adult population – so they focus on either young adult leaders or those that influenced them.

### In what ways does the Center make use of the latest in museological displays?

SLF: Within the space dealing with

the different historical figures, for example, animated films describe what happened during the Holocaust to each of the characters on whose stories we focused. Likewise, the centrality of the subject of antisemitism is expressed using visual elements of light: The Jewish world is darkened, and gradually antisemitic elements appear both in the spaces and in the panels located above the display.

The video presentation of the events of the Holocaust that follows has three simultaneous layers – German actions and the development of the "Final Solution"; the Jewish response to these actions; and the general course of WWII – which are seamlessly intertwined with testimony and illustrative animation. The video is not available outside of the Center for viewing so that it is a unique encounter for any first-time visitor.

### What is the aim of the Discussion Rooms?

ON: The events of previous generations hold enormous sway over social and political discourse, which is all-too-often loud and confusing, hate-filled and hate-fueled. Four interactive learning spaces – Discussion Rooms – allow an opportunity to delve further into specific topics (The Righteous Among the Nations, The Human Image in the Shadow of Death, The Return to Life and Resistance

>> "BEFORE MY VERY EYES"  
THE NEW YAD VASHEM IDF EDUCATIONAL CENTER  
FOR HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE



The interactive displays center on historical figures from the Holocaust

some voices of the survivors that are presented in the Center: The entrance stairway depicts their encounter with the destruction of their families and communities, and the void they felt immediately after the Holocaust; and a special presentation portrays their return to life, with special emphasis on the choice made by many survivors to contribute to, and take part in, the establishment of the State of Israel. This is a very inspirational message – especially for soldiers who may be overcoming their own personal challenges or crisis of identity.

Can you explain the thought behind the exit ramp?

ON: As the soldiers reach the end of their visit, a ramp returns them to ground level, the design of which encourages introspection. The architecture and design of the ramp is shaped to help the participants decompress and return to their normal framework, with new knowledge and insight regarding the fate of the Jews during the Shoah, alongside an enhanced sense of their responsibility towards and ability to shape the world around them.

"Before My Very Eyes" was opened in the presence of Head of the IDF Technological and Logistics Directorate Major General Michel Yanko; IDF Chief Education Officer Brig. Gen. Ofir Levius; Commander of the Ariel Sharon Training Campus Lieut. Col. Chai Kfir Magnezi; Yad Vashem Chairman Dani Dayan and his predecessor Avner Shalev; Yad Vashem CEO Brig. Gen. (res.) Tzvika Fayirizen and his predecessor Dorit Novak; Holocaust survivor Dr. Giselle Cycowicz; Yad Vashem Pillars David and Sharon Halpern; Director of Yad Vashem's International Relations Division Dr. Haim Gertner and his predecessor Shaya Ben Yehuda.

"Before My Very Eyes" is generously sponsored by founding donors: Bob and Amy Book and Family, USA; The Wilf Family, USA; and David and Sharon Halpern, USA. The new Educational Center was also supported by: Rebecca and Harold Finger, Australia; Sam and Nancy Shamie and Family, USA; Genesis Philanthropy Group; The Shnay Family, USA; Deborah and Martin Vine and Family, USA; Nicole Ligeti, USA; The Graham and Rhona Beck Foundation Israel; Isy Danon, South Africa; Tony and Cara Herbert, UK; The Itkin Family, USA; Jonathan Feldman; The Samson Charity Foundation, Germany; Stuart Ferster, UK; and anonymous donors.

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**When we teach soldiers about ethics, we don't just get better soldiers, we get better citizens."**

Col. (Ret.) Avi Motola, Former Commanding Officer of the Ariel Sharon IDF Training Campus in the Negev

in the Ghettos) with commanders leading a guided discussion with their soldiers.

How are the voices of the survivors represented?

SLF: In general, the Center does not focus on survivor stories, because they were the exceptions in relation to those who were murdered. The faces on the opening wall are also all victims of Nazi German ideology. There are, however,



Left to right: Yad Vashem CEO Tzvika Fayirizen, Head of the IDF Technological and Logistics Directorate Maj. Gen. Michel Yanko, Yad Vashem Chairman Dani Dayan, Sharon and David Halpern (representing the Center's donors), International Relations Division Director Dr. Haim Gertner

# NEW DIRECTOR FOR INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL



In April 2022, Dr. Gilad Olshtein began his new role as Director of the International School for Holocaust Studies and Lily Safra Chair for Holocaust Education, replacing Dr. Eyal Kaminka, who headed the School since 2013.

An experienced and broad-minded Israeli educational leader, Dr. Olshtein, the son of Holocaust survivors, holds a PhD in Education from Ben-Gurion University, and has served in a wide range of key teaching and leadership positions within several important educational institutions across Israel. Dr. Olshtein, son of Polish Holocaust survivors, also served as an educational emissary to the Jewish community of Thessaloniki, Greece.

Dr. Olshtein is one of the founders of Israel's pre-military academies, and for over two decades directed the Nachshon Social Leadership Academy, while spearheading significant breakthrough educational projects elsewhere.

A longtime resident of Modi'in in Central Israel, Dr. Olshtein is on the board of the pluralistic Yahad School in the city, which is committed to the educational integration of pupils from a wide spectrum of backgrounds and communities.

He is no stranger to Yad Vashem, having directed the School's course for guides of Israeli groups visiting Poland and other projects.

"I enter my position as the School Director with a sense of mission and with a deep understanding of the importance of the International School at Yad Vashem, and of bringing the story of the Holocaust to the State of Israel and to the whole world," said Dr. Olshtein. "As a student and participant in various educational programs and projects here, I always felt a sense of belonging, professionalism and commitment. The day-to-day work of the International School is an invaluable asset, and my role is to assist, nurture and promote its vital activities."

# EXPANDING INTO THE SPANISH-SPEAKING WORLD

In addition to its [comprehensive and growing website in Spanish](#), Yad Vashem is continuing to expand its network of partners in South America, in order to enhance its endeavors and groups of "ambassadors" throughout the Spanish-speaking world.

In February 2022, the International School for Holocaust Studies signed an agreement with the Buenos Aires Holocaust Museum, which will see, among other developments, the expansion of educational programming, the sharing of archival resources, the promotion of academic research and the display of Yad Vashem traveling exhibitions throughout Argentina. The two institutions later held a joint event marking Holocaust Remembrance Day, with Chairman Dani Dayan - a native Argentinian - and Museum President Marcelo Mindlin both presiding over the event. The International School is also in the final stages of drafting an

agreement with the Argentine Ministry of Education and, following the visit of the Argentine Minister of the Interior in April 2022, Yad Vashem is now drafting an archival agreement with Argentina as well.



"We are delighted that we have been able to reach such impactful agreements with our Argentinian partners," said Richelle Budd Caplan, Director of the International Relations and Projects Department at the International School for Holocaust Studies. "We are currently preparing similar agreements with governmental bodies in El Salvador, Honduras and Peru - all of whom are keen to adopt our tailor-made programs for their own learning populations."

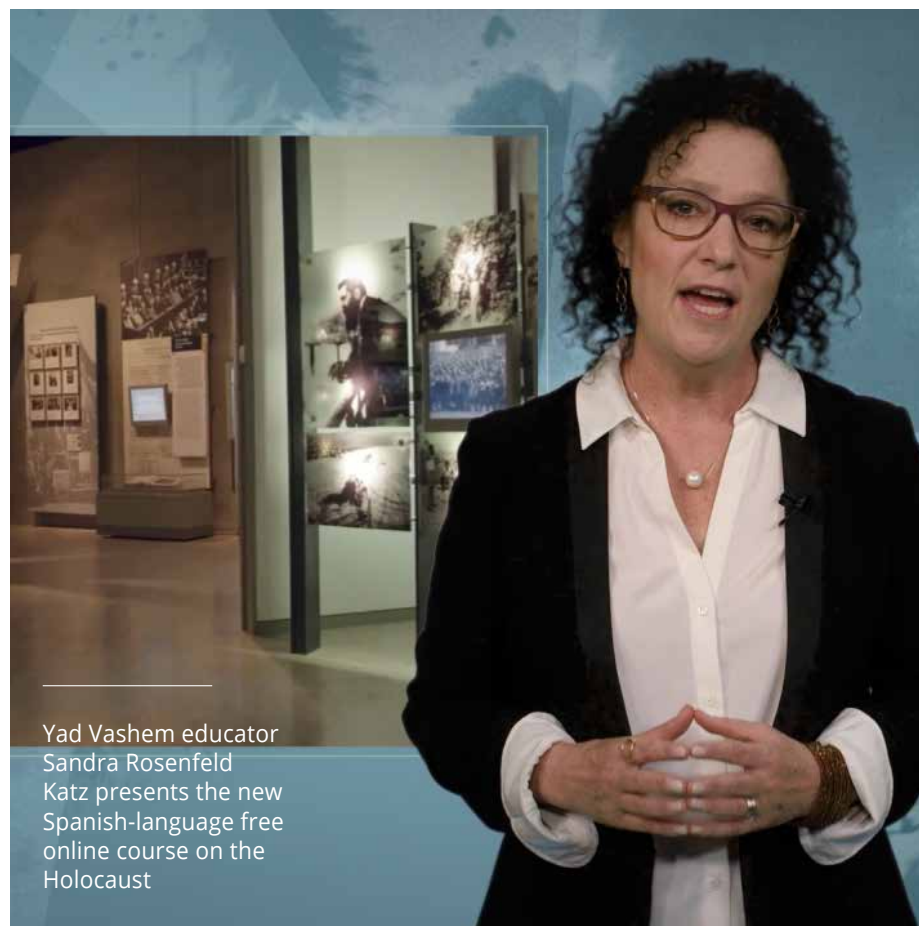
An online event held by Yad Vashem and the Buenos Aires Holocaust Museum featured Spanish-speaking Holocaust survivors Lea Novera and Moshe Ha-Elion



# "THE HOLOCAUST: THE ABYSS OF HUMANITY"

## NEW FREE ONLINE COURSE IN SPANISH

Sandra Rosenfeld Katz



Yad Vashem educator Sandra Rosenfeld Katz presents the new Spanish-language free online course on the Holocaust

Bracha Wiener was twelve years old when WWII erupted. She spent the war years hidden in the forests of Poland, in the vicinity of her hometown of Staszow. Bracha is one of the survivors who share their personal stories on Yad Vashem's new Spanish-language free online course (MOOC): ["The Holocaust: The Abyss of Humanity."](#)

The new course will enrich participants' understanding of the history of the Holocaust through the participation of Spanish-speaking experts from Israel, Spain, Latin America and the US. In addition, Yad Vashem expert educators share their innovative pedagogical approaches to Holocaust education, and present ready-to-apply workshops for the classroom.

The video-based course, the first of its kind completely in Spanish, exposes learners step by step to the ideology and developments that lead to the systematic mass murder of 6,000,000 Jews – men, women and children. This is aided by the presentation of archival materials, visuals and footage, timelines, maps, artworks and specially developed materials, all of which aid in the understanding of main historical concepts and figures of the Holocaust.

In addition, the course discusses the impact of the Holocaust in Spanish-speaking countries, both during and after WWII: the migration processes of survivors; how they were received in different countries by governments and society; their adaptation to their new homes; and Holocaust commemoration in the Spanish-speaking world.

"Having worked extensively with partners in Latin-America and Spain for many years, we are aware of the need to continue to develop professional and high-level training



From the testimony of Bracha Wiener, featured in "The Holocaust: The Abyss of Humanity"

I didn't even understand what the war was, why there was a war,

The course discusses the impact of the Holocaust in Spanish-speaking countries, both during and after WWII

programs in Spanish that present Shoah education in a relevant and accessible way, and that will serve to increase the reach of Holocaust education in Spanish-speaking environments," explains Dr. Na'ama Shik, Director of Yad Vashem's E-Learning Department. "This new course will provide access to Yad Vashem unparalleled resources for teaching the Holocaust, and provide opportunities for follow-up and mentoring in Holocaust education by Yad Vashem's Spanish-speaking experts."

"The Holocaust: The Abyss of Humanity" was developed in cooperation with the UNESCO Latin-American Network for Holocaust and Genocide Education, with the support of Steven Baral (USA) and the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany. It is available with Spanish subtitles, and soon with English subtitles as well.

*The author works in the e-Learning Department, International School for Holocaust Studies.*

# GRADUATE SPOTLIGHT

## CRISTINA DIAZ YAMPEY: PARAGUAY

Eliana Rapp Badihi



Middle-school students in Paraguay working on the project "Discrimination Kills"

— ” —

**What hurts the victims the most is not the cruelty of the oppressor, but rather the silence of the bystander.**

Yad Vashem graduate Cristina Diaz Yampey



At the Teresiano School in Asunción, Paraguay, Cristina Diaz Yampey, a middle-school Spanish Language and Literature teacher, and her colleagues carry out a project called "Discrimination Kills." Based on the *Diary of Anne Frank*, this interdisciplinary project addresses the issue of discrimination: the work is read and discussed in Spanish lessons; manifestations of discrimination are analyzed in Ethics classes; and in History courses, the historical context of WWII is dissected.

After examining the characters in the diary and the situations they experienced, the students develop an audiovisual project in which they integrate the knowledge they have acquired during the project, bolstered by their own personal reflections.

Since Yampey participated in a Yad Vashem educational seminar in January 2020, "Discrimination Kills" has been conducted differently; the textbook *I Wanted to Fly Like a Butterfly*, which relays the story of Holocaust survivor Hannah Gofrit to younger students, is studied – either

in the place of the *Diary of Anne Frank*, or in a complementary fashion – using the pedagogical approach of Yad Vashem, which teaches the Holocaust from the perspective of Jews before, during and after the Holocaust in an age-appropriate manner.

"My participation in the seminar at Yad Vashem enabled me to contact survivors, or their close relatives, who kindly agreed to relay their experiences to the children who take part in the project," explains Yampey. "This encounter is an impactful and emotional experience for both the students and the staff at our school." Reflecting on the words of Elie Wiesel, that "What hurts the victims the most is not the cruelty of the oppressor, but the silence of the bystander," Yampey relates: "This expression is sadly a reality in which we still painfully live: one of indifference, which today is still latent in our society, because we are afraid of speaking the truth and being rejected for it. Unfortunately, we have not learned enough from history."

Abigail Park, an eighth-grade student at Yampey's school, agrees.

"The project showed me that we are habitually discriminating against each other to the point that we are even unaware of it," she comments. "This project helped me reflect on the different types of discrimination that happen everywhere, and my exposure to them on a daily basis."

"We are proud of the work of our graduates and their projects across the world, and we are always ready to provide professional and material assistance and to make the meanings of the Holocaust relevant to every community," said Dr. Noa McKayton, Director of the International School's Overseas Education and Training Department. "We thank Cristina Diaz Yampey and the "Discrimination Kills" team for their dedication and commitment to this effort, and their sound approach that follows our tried-and-tested pedagogical guidelines."

*The author is Head of Educational Programming for Spanish and Portuguese Countries, International School for Holocaust Studies.*



# "THIS HATRED MUST END"

## BATTLING ANTISEMITISM IN COLOMBIAN SECURITY FORCES

Noah Diller-Schatz

**Following a serious antisemitic incident at a police training college in Colombia, Yad Vashem recently held a series of educational seminars for police cadets across the Latin-American country.**

In November 2021, a group of police cadets in the city of Tuluá, Colombia, donned Nazi paraphernalia, including swastikas and SS uniforms, during what was intended to be a cultural exchange event between Colombian and German police forces. Photos of the event uploaded to Facebook were quickly discovered and removed, with the German and Israeli consulates condemning the actions, and requesting that the event be thoroughly investigated. The President of Colombia offered a formal apology and the head of the Tuluá police training academy was fired.

But for Yad Vashem, this was not enough, and, at the request of Israel's Foreign Ministry, acted to make a deeper change in the Colombian police. Through diplomatic channels, and with the support of the Confederation of



Police cadets at a Yad Vashem educational seminar, Colombia

Jewish Communities of Colombia, the International School for Holocaust Studies' Educational Programming for Spanish and Portuguese-Speaking Countries – headed by Eliana Rapp Badihi, and alongside Educational Coordinator Yechiel Chilewski – suggested a series of educational seminars for police cadets in the Latin-American country. The pilot program, focusing on police-in-training, has its parallels with a similar program conducted by Yad Vashem with cadets in Germany.

A number of hybrid seminars and workshops took place between

mid-March and the beginning of May 2022, focusing on the Jewish people, historical antisemitism, the "Final Solution," Holocaust denial and distortion, and testimonies from Holocaust survivors residing in Colombia. The workshops, in particular the unit on Bialystok, examined the acts and decisions of uniformed perpetrators during the Holocaust in addition to the dilemmas of the persecuted Jews, and the reactions of their non-Jewish neighbors. After analyzing these different actions and reactions, the participants were invited to reflect

upon the dynamics of violent events and symbols today, and their role within contemporary events.

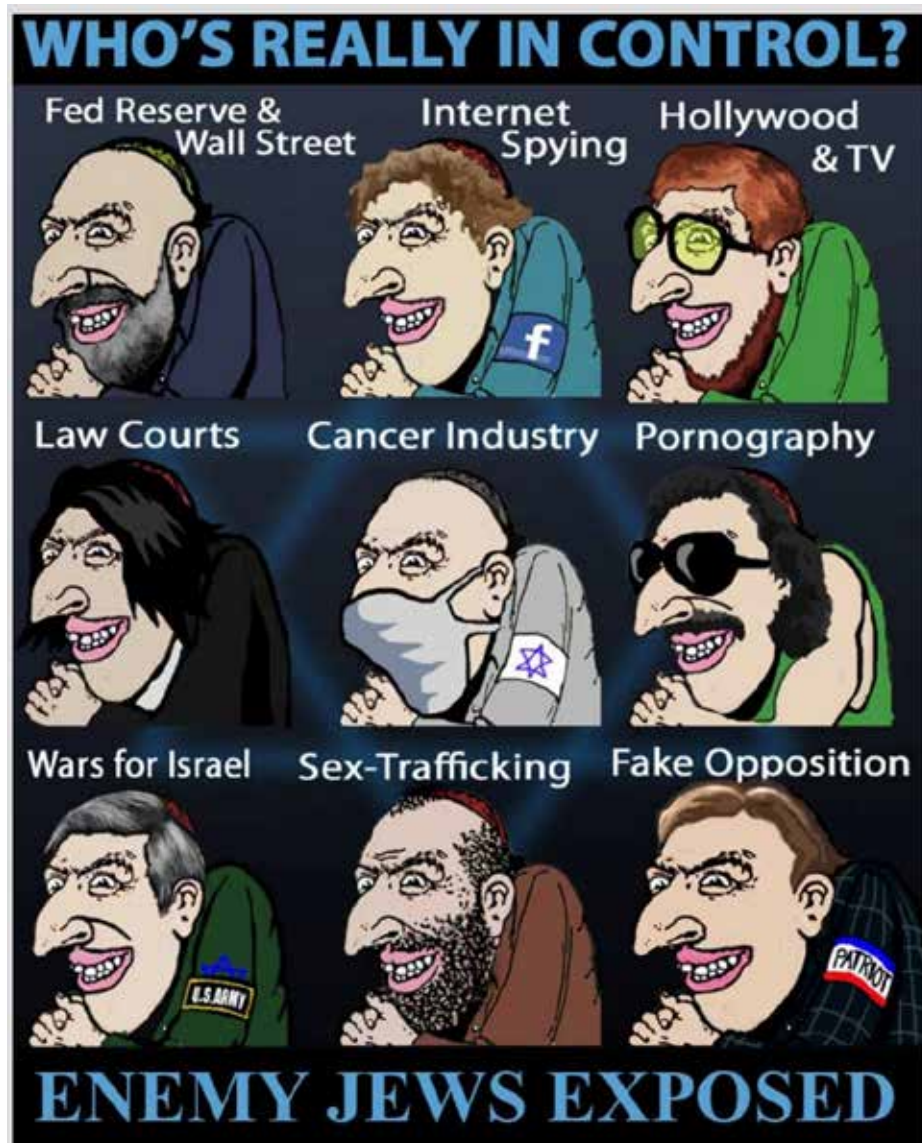
The cadets responded in particular to the testimony of Gitel Chajikowski-Plac, a Jewish educator in an orphanage in Bialystok, by comparing their own experiences with her courageous actions. While Chajikowski-Plac saved children from her orphanage, risking her life under Nazi occupation, the cadets viewed their work as dedicating their own lives to the protection of Colombians.

"We are willing to do what takes to go out, risking our lives... helping others. This is an important value for us, as police officers, to have," said one cadet. Another, echoing messages of "Never Again," said: "This hatred must end. We, as public servants, and I, as a police officer, must ensure this revolution."

"We hope that this series will serve as merely the beginning to something greater," said Rapp Badihi. "Our aim is that other countries, not only in the region, but also around the world, will see it as a basis upon which to build their own training programs and engage more thoroughly with Holocaust education, in order to combat antisemitism in the training of their police forces."

*The author is Administrative Assistant in the International Relations and Projects Department, International School for Holocaust Studies.*

# FELLOW'S CORNER:



From Dr. Topor's forthcoming book: *Phishing For Nazis: White Supremacy Conspiracies and Communities on the Dark Web* (Routledge)

Leah Goldstein

During a recent three-month fellowship at Yad Vashem's International Institute for Holocaust Research, Dr. Lev Topor focused on the topic of online Holocaust denial on anonymous platforms such as the dark web – online content that isn't indexed by search engines and that requires special software or authorization to access.

# ANTISEMITISM ON THE DARK WEB

Dr. Lev Topor is an academic researcher who focuses on the study of antisemitism, anti-Zionism, Holocaust denial and cybersecurity. His doctoral research topic was antisemitic trends in the British Labour Party; he then co-authored *Why Do People Discriminate Against Jews?* (Oxford University Press, 2021). More recently, Dr. Topor has combined his research topics to study online antisemitism, for which he has won several awards, including the annual Robert Wistrich z"l Award from the Vidal Sassoon International Center for the Study of Antisemitism at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

"Focusing on Holocaust denial on the dark web is a natural extension of my ongoing research," says Dr. Topor. "Since I deal with cyber-related issues outside academia, I have encountered significant amount of mis/disinformation about the Holocaust online. I want to expose this phenomenon, and present it to the research community as well as the general public."

Dr. Topor raises several interesting insights from this line of study. First, Holocaust denial is very similar in nature to mis/disinformation, or "fake news," online. Indeed, he claims, the same tactics are used to disseminate antisemitic propaganda as to spread fake news. Second, while Holocaust denial originates mostly in antisemitic or neo-Nazi circles, it is frequently espoused by non-extremists – members of the public who consume pseudo-scientific and pseudo-authentic information from the dark web. "This information is perceived by many as a "red pill" [a gateway to the truth] simply because it was published or leaked on the dark web, and so they chose to believe it over reliable academic research," explains Dr. Topor. "Even if they do not blame Jews or deny the Holocaust, they still believe distorted information that, generally and over time, will downgrade the scale and extent of the Holocaust."

With all this in mind, Dr. Topor stresses that "Holocaust education, even from a young age, is crucial. Once a person



Yad Vashem Research Fellow Dr. Lev Topor: "Holocaust education is crucial"

is more aware and educated about the topic, they will be less likely to believe mis/disinformation about the Holocaust spread by antisemites and neo-Nazis."

Dr. Topor suggests that his research could even enhance studies of antisemitism, racism and genocide. "I can see how my investigations may be further developed through psychological study," he concludes. "This could also contribute to the general study of mis/disinformation about minority groups that suffer from hate – mainly Jews, but also others."

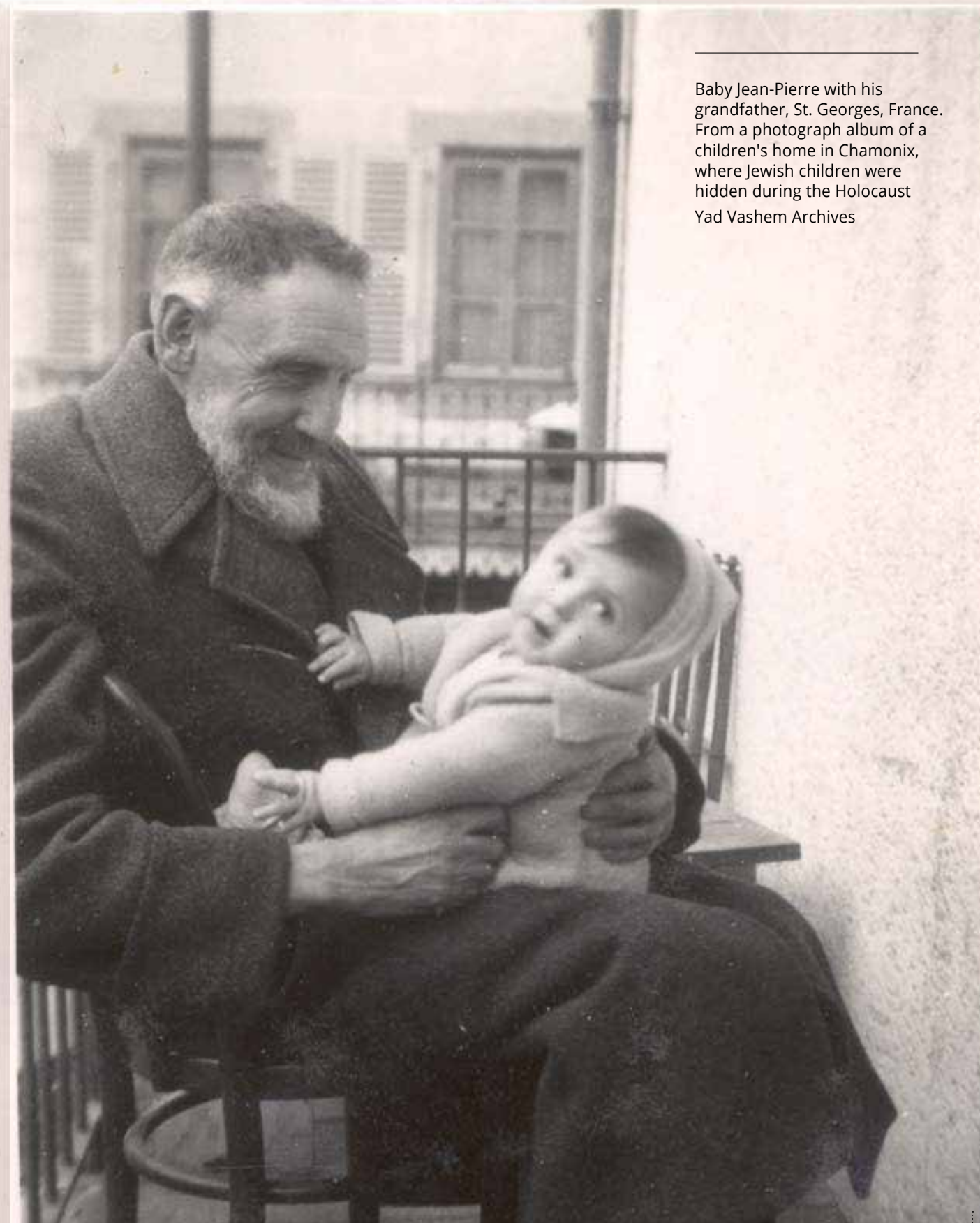
# GIVING A VOICE TO THE VULNERABLE

THE FATE OF THE ELDERLY  
DURING THE HOLOCAUST

Leah Goldstein

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In honor of its fiftieth volume, [Yad Vashem Studies](#) is producing two special issues on the topic of the experiences and fate of the Jewish elderly before, during and after the period of Nazi persecution.



Baby Jean-Pierre with his grandfather, St. Georges, France. From a photograph album of a children's home in Chamonix, where Jewish children were hidden during the Holocaust  
Yad Vashem Archives

The first issue of this volume (50:1) features a number of articles on the topic, including the fate of elderly Jews in Nazi Germany as well as in German-occupied Polish and Soviet territories, and how elderly survivors were received in the United States. Emmanuelle Moscovitz, who works in Yad Vashem's Archives Division, is the author of a previously unresearched topic: the General Chaplaincy of the Jews of France and the efforts of its rabbis in aiding the elderly during WWII. These rabbis, who were all French citizens, had served as military

chaplains during the 1939-1940 campaign against Germany. With the fall of France in June 1940, the chaplains were sent to the southern unoccupied zone to serve the demilitarized Jewish soldiers and the dispersed communities bereft of religious guidance. Very soon, however, their efforts were focused on the thousands of Jews of foreign nationality detained in French internment camps.

The article brings to the forefront the specific plight of the elderly Jews in the South of France during the Holocaust from 1940-1944. The reports written by the rabbis illustrate the specific challenges

faced by the elderly Jews in France's southern zone, and help to fill a void that has yet to be the topic of any in-depth research – mostly due to the dearth of sources dealing specifically with this group. Considering the advanced age of the subjects, postwar testimonies and memoirs are scarce; among those who had survived the war, most died before testimonies began to be recorded systematically in the 1960s. And yet, the topic of the elderly Jews during the Holocaust in France warrants a particular focus, as this group was among the first and last of the detainees in French internment camps and hospices.

Among the 7,000 Jews deported from the German provinces of Baden and Palatinate to the French unoccupied zone on 22 October 1940, forty percent were over the age of sixty, and over 200 were over the age of eighty. The advanced age of the first detainees prompted Rabbi René Kapel to make a plea for help to the Chief Rabbi of France as early as September 1940: "The sick and the elderly will never be able to adapt to existence in these conditions." Indeed, a month after the arrival of the Jews to Gurs camp, a chaplaincy report stated that 118 burials had taken place in Gurs, an average of five deaths a day.

The onset of the deportations from France's unoccupied zone in August 1942 would mark a turning point. During this first wave of deportations in the summer of 1942, the elderly Jews (those aged over sixty) were – at least on paper – meant to be exempt from the deportation measures. However, the lists of exemptions were not always respected, and, for example, the first transport from Gurs comprised, as reported, "exactly 1,000 individuals, men and women aged 18-86."

The conditions in the camps after the deportations of 1942 remained dire, and efforts were made to transfer the elderly Jews to hospices more suited to their specific needs. While the conditions in the hospices were an improvement, however,

**The reports written by the rabbis illustrate the specific challenges faced by the elderly Jews in France's southern zone, and help fill a void that has yet to be the topic of any in-depth research**

many elderly Jews felt even more isolated than ever, and letters of complaint were sent to the Chaplaincy. In one case, a request was made to return to the camp where at least there was "a sense of community life." Nevertheless, the dispersal of these elderly Jews was likely a factor in their survival, as towards the end of 1943, all exemptions for deportations were nulled, and the hunt for the Jews in the southern zone had led to the arrest of Jews of all ages, including many elderly refugees.

"The study of this specific group exposes shifting policies towards the Jews during the Holocaust in France, as well as the role of the Chaplaincy and other organizations in catering to the needs of the aging Jews," concludes Moscovitz. "Additional research still needs to be conducted, first on the situation of the elderly in the Northern Zone, as well as more in-depth research on some of the aspects presented in the paper. If very little has been written on the

elderly during the war, even less has been written on their situation in the immediate postwar period, a particularly challenging period for the elderly survivors left alone and destitute in a country that now remained foreign to them."

"The elderly and the children were the most vulnerable populations during the war and suffered the highest death rates," says Dr. Sharon Kangisser Cohen, Editor-in-Chief of *Yad Vashem Studies*. "As a result, most of what is known about their experience and their fate has been conveyed through the reflection of others, by means of observations, reports and postwar testimony. Elderly people were an integral part of the Jewish population before and throughout Nazi rule, and their fate is inextricably connected to the development of Nazi anti-Jewish policy. We hope that the two issues of Volume 50 of *Yad Vashem Studies* will spur further interest and scholarship into this important yet painful topic."



Elderly Jewish men with armbands sitting on a park bench in France during WWII  
Yad Vashem Archives

# GETTING A FULLER PICTURE

## NEW PLATFORM FOR MURDER SITES PROJECT

Shlomit Shulchani

**The transfer of the "Untold Stories" research project to a new digital platform now makes it possible to search for supplementary information about the fate of communities destroyed during the Holocaust in the Soviet Union.**

Unlike in Central and Western Europe, during the Holocaust most Soviet Jews were shot to death near their places of residence by firing squads composed of Nazi Germans and local collaborators. Nevertheless, at the same time, and in the same regions, other murder methods were also carried out, such as the use of gas vans.

Such was the cruel fate of some 50 Jewish children evacuated by the Soviet authorities, along with about 200 medical personnel and 1,500 other sick children, from convalescent homes in Ukraine as well as on the Crimean Peninsula to a convalescent home in the city of Teberda. In the summer of 1942, Teberda was occupied by Romanian forces, and in November 1942, the Germans entered the city. The Jewish children were forced to wear a badge on their arm with the Star of David emblem. On 11 December, all Jewish faculty members were informed that the next day they, along with the Jewish children, would be sent to forced labor in the mines. The next day, 54 Jewish children were gathered in a hall, where they were held for two days under inhuman conditions and then put in a gas van that drove away. An hour later it returned, empty. The bodies of the murdered children had been thrown into the Gonachkhir River.

The story of the gassing of the Jewish children and medical staff from the Teberda Convalescent Home is one of 1,850 accounts of 1,017 communities in the Soviet Union presented in the

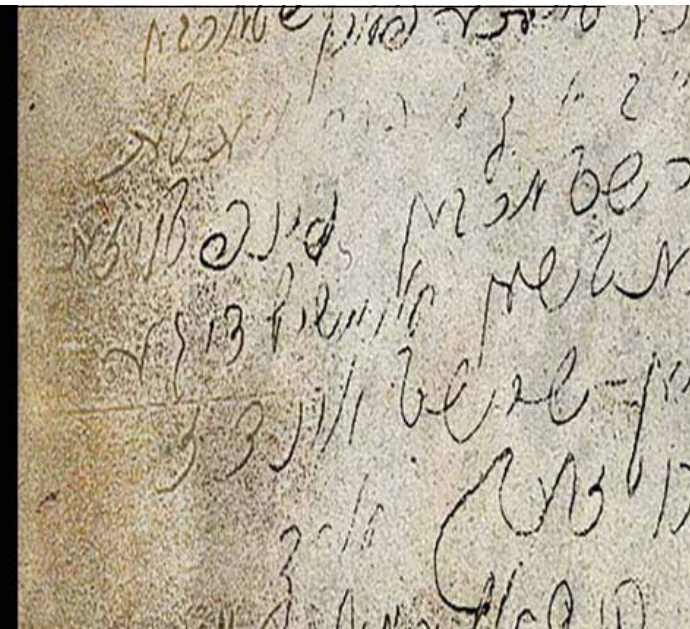
International Institute for Holocaust Research's online project "Untold Stories: Murder Sites of Jews in the Occupied Territories of the USSR during the Holocaust."

The project researches and presents the history of the Jewish communities before and during the war in the territory of the Soviet Union, and also describes the many efforts made by Holocaust survivors and future generations to commemorate the memory of their loved ones at the places of their murder. Along with the concluding texts in the project, thousands of documents, photographs, video testimonies, press clippings, as well as current research on the subject are presented.

Recently, the project has undergone a fundamental change: a move to a new technological platform, which houses all of Yad Vashem's other databases, such as the Names Database, the Righteous Among the Nations Database and the Yad Vashem Collections Databases. In addition to the updated design of the site, a much higher response speed and information retention within Yad Vashem's central digital system, this transition opens up a wide range of options for users: the ability to perform extensive searches across databases; specific divisions according to a variety of parameters such as time, geography, witness names and methods of murder; and a useful cross-referencing of the relevant information. Now, for example, a user can search the site and see the full results: the stories



My dearest,  
Before I die,  
I am writing  
a few words,  
We are about  
to die,  
five thousand  
innocent people,  
They are cruelly  
shooting us,



Photograph of a (Yiddish) note, written in pencil, found in the clothes of a female corpse, during an exhumation carried out in October 1944, at the mass murder site of Jews near the village of Antanase, near the townlet of Obeliai, Rokiskis District, Lithuania

of 44 murders in gas vans. The same cases can be analyzed by geographical data, time periods, number of murders, operations and other data.

"The connection of this important project to other Yad Vashem databases allows for the most comprehensive results possible," explains Director of the Research Institute, Dr. Iael Nidam Orvieto. "For example, although most of the Jews of the Soviet Union were not sent to central extermination areas, this issue still comes up from time to time while researching murder sites. Thus, in the Belarussian capital of Minsk, Jews lived in the ghetto alongside others who had been deported from Western countries, Germany, and the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia. They were concentrated in a separate area called the 'Hamburg Ghetto' – and the link to the relevant page in the Deportations project is a natural progression."

In addition, alongside 23 murder sites in the vicinity of Minsk, the "Untold Stories" project displays

other murder sites that were found some ten kilometers from the town of Dzerzhinsk. At the beginning of March 1942, five thousand Jews from the Minsk ghetto were transported by train to the area between Dzerzhinsk and Stankovo, where they were shot to death in pre-prepared pits. Even during the liquidation of the ghetto – which began in June and lasted until October 1943 – a number of deportations to the Majdanek and Sobibor death camps took place. Here, too, the connection to the Deportations Project helps give a more complete picture of the history of the Jews in Minsk during the Holocaust.

*The author is a researcher and Coordinator in the Moshe Mirilashvili Center for Research on the Holocaust in the Soviet Union, International Institute for Holocaust Research.*

Jewish Red Army soldiers  
and a local survivor  
near the mass grave of  
Lachwa Jews, 1944  
Yad Vashem Archives



# "TWO STOOD NEXT TO ME – AND I SURVIVED"

TESTIMONIES IN RUSSIAN  
WIDEN PERSPECTIVES

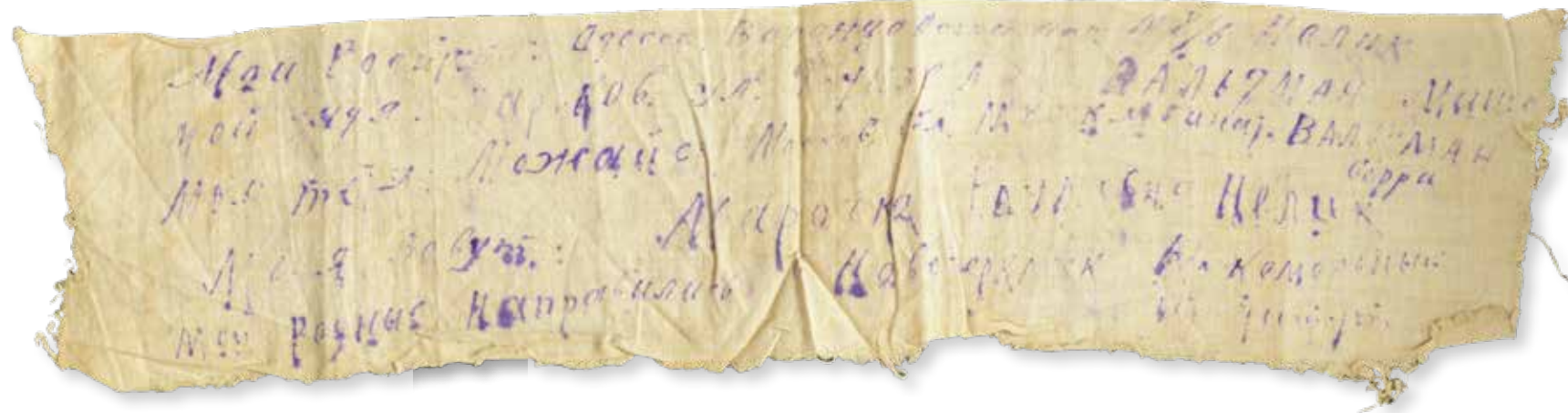
Ofer Lifshitz, Ilona Angert and Olga Litvak

In recent years, the voices of Holocaust survivors originally from the Soviet Union have been heard more clearly in Yad Vashem's testimonies. The war raging in recent months in Ukraine, in areas where the systematic mass extermination of European Jews began, triggers memories from those days. These voices are an opportunity to listen to the memories of the Holocaust from a different perspective.

>> "TWO STOOD NEXT TO ME - AND I SURVIVED"  
TESTIMONIES IN RUSSIAN WIDEN PERSPECTIVES



Each one held a small child. Two more children clung to their skirts. And they both cried out... they had each lost a child.



Cloth label tied to the clothing of Mara Piratinsky, bearing her relatives' addresses, in case she should be separated from her family during their evacuation  
Yad Vashem Artifacts Collection

At the end of WWII, Jews in the Soviet Union were not recognized as a group with a story – and pain – of their own. In Israel, too, given the centrality of the Holocaust in consciousness, little attention was paid to narratives that deviate from the one already shaped regarding Jewish life before the war, the experiences of the Holocaust and its commemoration. Testifying in Russian allows people from the Soviet Union to share their memories – often, for the first time in their lives. This is how their story is given a voice in the history of the Holocaust. The documents and photographs accompanying the testimony provide it with the context and illustration that is almost beyond words.

"The Great War of the Homeland" – this is how WWII was burned into the consciousness of the Jews of the USSR, as part of the general

ethos of the society in which they lived. This "Great War" began, for many of them, on 22 June 1941, the day Nazi Germany invaded the Soviet Union. Along with the German invasion, the mass extermination of Jews began in the newly occupied territories. The murders lasted from the summer of 1941 until the liberation of the eastern territories during 1944. Russian Jews were led to their fate, usually at killing pits. Communities were wiped out in their entirety – sometimes leaving no trace. Less than three percent of those left in the territories occupied by the Germans in 1941 survived until the war's end.

Mikhail Portnoy, born in 1936 in Kiev, was brought to Babi Yar in September 1941. His testimony is a window into the massacre, from the point of view of a five-year-old boy: "Two stood next to me:

one older, one younger, tall men, then they started firing from that side. I fell with them and the earth covered me... I have this question – is it possible that this German did not shoot me? He shot above me... and murdered these two... and I survived."

With the advance of the German army, some 16 million Soviet civilians – about 1.5 million Jews – were evacuated from the front: the organized withdrawal of the industrial, administrative and human infrastructure to the still unoccupied territories in the heartland of the Soviet Union. The chaos among the mass population movement exposed the evacuees to harsh living conditions. The plight of the children is evident in survivor testimonies – youngsters who raise themselves while their parents are absent or preoccupied with daily survival.

Mara Piratinsky (née Nelik), born in 1934, Odessa, was seven years old during the German invasion. She and her mother were evacuated to the city of Saratov on the banks of the Volga River. On the way, she saw those who had been killed and wounded by the bombings. In [part of her testimony](#), Mara recreates the cries surrounding her during that harrowing journey: "Leave, throw away the dead, take the wounded!" Mara describes two terrified women she and her mother encountered on their way: "Their eyes were wild! Each one held a small child. Two more children clung to their skirts. And they both cried out... they had each lost a child."

Eva Vexler, born in 1936 in Kiev, fled with her family to Mordovia in the center of Russia's European territory. In [an episode during her testimony](#), she refers to expressions



Eva Vexler emphasized the "compassion among strangers."

of compassion among strangers even during the evacuation: a lone girl who was taken under their care, until she was located by her relatives.



A Jewish man on Sabbath eve, USSR, prewar  
Yad Vashem Archives

## Soviet Jews were led to their fate, usually at so-called killing pits. Communities were wiped out in their entirety – sometimes leaving no trace

As long as they were not under occupation, Soviet Jews therefore faced the reality of war – the scarcity and the suffering – as part of general society. Even before the war, a mosaic developed that was different from the familiar one of Jewish identities in the Soviet Union as a result of Sovietization and the dismantling of Jewish life frameworks. The threats of war

also sharpened the question of the standing of Jews within Soviet society. In Vexler's testimony, these tensions and complexities emerge through the controversy surrounding Soviet propaganda and the credibility of its claims about the Germans. Her grandfather allowed himself to express skepticism towards the "Bolsheviks who do not believe in God." In response,

his granddaughter, Eva's sister, was quick to warn him that she would have to report him to the authorities. This, while still addressing him in Yiddish as *Zeidka* (Grandpa). Her grandfather was ultimately brutally murdered by the Germans.

The "Great War" left many war orphans and widows. While the majority of the Jews in the German-occupied territories were murdered and a few managed to escape, in many families the fathers, and sometimes the mothers as well, enlisted in the war against the Nazis. About half a million [Jewish soldiers fought in the Red Army](#). Many of them won titles of heroism and took part in

As long as they were not under occupation, Soviet Jews faced the reality of war – the scarcity and the suffering – as part of the general society

the continued liberation campaign of Europe. About 200,000 of them did not return. Mikhail Portnoy, whose father was killed fighting in the Red Army, concludes his testimony with the experience of deprivation and pain typical of war children: "If Father had stayed alive, I would have been a different person."

"The testimonies of Mikhail, Mara and Eva are joined by numerous testimonies of survivors and evacuees from the USSR collected on behalf of Yad Vashem in recent years," says Director of Yad Vashem's Archives Division Masha Pollak-Rozenberg. "In this way, our databases of knowledge about the fate of the Jewish people in the twentieth century are enriched with new documentation, which illuminates life before, during and after the Holocaust from wider perspectives."



Mikhail Portnoy, aged 19, serving in the Red Army, 1950s  
Courtesy of the Portnoy family



Mara Piratinsky related her experiences as a wartime evacuee.

For more information on giving testimony: +972-2-6443888; [testimonies@yadvashem.org.il](mailto:testimonies@yadvashem.org.il)

Ofer Lifshitz is a researcher, Ilona Angert is Head of Testimony Collection and Olga Litvak is Head of the Russian-language Public Enquiries Section, Archives Division.





# PROTESTING ERASURE

NEW YAD VASHEM AWARD FOR  
CINEMATIC EXCELLENCE IN  
DOCUMENTARY FILMMAKING

Leah Goldstein

The newly established Yad Vashem  
Award for Cinematic Excellence in  
Holocaust Documentary Filmmaking  
was presented to director Bianca  
Stigter, at the "Docaviv" international  
film festival in May 2022.

The new prize was awarded to Stigter for her film *Three Minutes: A Lengthening* (2021), which, according to the judges, is "a meditative and visually and narratively rich film that brings back to life three forgotten minutes filmed in 1938 in the Polish village of Nasielsk, as a result of the comprehensive and profound research that focused on the circumstances of the film's production. The film tells the story of the village and its Jewish residents, who held a variety of world views, and lived together side by side, while returning to life the names and voices of some of those who appear in the film."

"This film presents the kind of detective work in which Yad Vashem researchers and historians engage as they seek to identify people and places, and create meaningful context for otherwise obscure and opaque historical fragments," said Liat Benhabib, Director of Yad Vashem's Visual Center. "The choice to use images appearing in the original film exclusively, and the focus on the preservation and identification process creates a visual essay that also deals with the fascinating relationship between sound and image. *Three Minutes: A Lengthening* is a tight and unique work that places in the forefront the 'archeological excavation' of a film, from the first generation of the history of filmmaking, as well as of victims and survivors of the Holocaust."

Stigter, a respected author, cultural journalist and critic in the Netherlands,

— ” —

**My film ensures that something remains, something that can be seen... It was important for me to perpetuate the memory of everyone in it.**

Bianca Stigter

first came across the story in a Facebook post. The post noted that the footage was available to watch through the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, DC. Stigter contacted writer Glenn Kurtz, Guggenheim Fellow and the grandson of David Kurtz, who shot the 1938 footage. The younger Kurtz had set out to restore the film and wrote a book based on his journey called *Three Minutes in Poland: Discovering a Lost World in a 1938 Family Film*. Stigter began by creating a video essay about the Kurtz material, by invitation of the International Film Festival, Rotterdam. The essay evolved into the full-length documentary that was screened at the prestigious film festivals of Venice and Toronto, receiving critical acclaim and public attention.

"I was amazed by the immediacy of the images, the color, and the joy in the footage," said Stigter on receiving the award. "On the other hand, the knowledge that only a year or so later, all of this would be erased, would disappear, was devastating. I wanted those three minutes to go on longer.

That's how this whole project started."

Regarding the creative process, Stigter added: "I needed to construct a memory for each of the people in the film, based on all that was left: an image. My film protests against this erasure; it ensures that something remains, something that can be seen. At the end of my film, it was important for me to perpetuate the memory of everyone in it. It means the world to me that this effort has been recognized by Yad Vashem."

The film premiered in Israel in May 2022, at Docaviv, the leading international documentary film festival in Israel, where Yad Vashem Chairman Dani Dayan presented the new Yad Vashem Award. "Cinema – both in feature films and documentary form – continues to play a definitive role in Holocaust remembrance and awareness," said Dayan. "With the rise of Holocaust distortion and misappropriation, this role will be even more crucial for today's youth as they navigate the relevance of Holocaust memory in their own lives."

# VATICAN ARCHIVES HELP REVEAL FATE OF INDIVIDUAL HOLOCAUST VICTIMS

Emmanuelle Moscovitz

**In March 2020, the Vatican opened the WWII Archive for the Pius XII period, and made it accessible to researchers for the first time.**



The Pius XII pontifical period spans from 1939 to 1958, making these archives vital for understanding of the events of the Holocaust.

The newly accessible collections are dispersed throughout several archives, notably: the Archives for the Relations with the States (ASRS); the Archives for the Doctrine of the Faith (ACDF); the Archives for the Congregation of the Eastern

Churches (ACO); the Archives of the central government of the Society of Jesus (ARSI); and the Vatican Apostolic Archives (AAV). Yad Vashem has been surveying the material in these archives since the opening of the Pius XII collection in order to map out the documentation relevant to the Shoah.

Among the important collections of the Pius XII pontificate is that of the Commissione Soccorsi (Rescue

Commission) held in the Vatican Apostolic Archives. The Commissione Soccorsi commenced its work in September 1939 in order to deal with the request for aid and relief sent to the Holy See by individuals, organizations and institutions. Comprising approximately 800,000 pages of documentation, the Commissione Soccorsi collection contains a multitude of relevant materials regarding individual Jews requesting

aid from the Vatican; the war in various countries; humanitarian relief; and displaced persons, abandoned children and other postwar issues. For Yad Vashem, these documents will help piece together individual fates of victims.

Recently, the Vatican Apostolic Archive and Yad Vashem signed an agreement, through which the entire collection will be digitized. The project will span four years, with the World Holocaust Remembrance Center receiving 200,000 scanned pages of documentation at the end of each year. The digital copies of this important collection will then be made available to researchers at Yad Vashem, enabling thorough and innovative exploration on a variety of topics relating to the Vatican, from micro-histories of individual victims to humanitarianism in general, as well various other Holocaust-related topics related to Italy and the Vatican.

"The digitization of the Commissione Soccorsi records is an exciting first acquisitions project by Yad Vashem of the newly opened Pius XII Archive, one of the most significant corpuses of Holocaust-related documentation in the world," says Masha Pollak-Rozenberg, Director of Yad Vashem's Archives Division. "We eagerly anticipate utilizing these records for the sake of accurate Holocaust research, and look forward to even more Vatican collections being made available to historians in the near future."



## YAD VASHEM CHAIRMAN MEETS WITH POPE IN THE VATICAN

On 9 June 2022, [Dani Dayan met with Pope Francis](#) – the first private audience of a Yad Vashem Chairman with a Pope in the Vatican.

Pope Francis last visited Yad Vashem [in 2014](#), but this historic meeting had a different focus – to bolster collaborative activities between Yad Vashem and the Vatican in areas of Holocaust remembrance, education and documentation, and to discuss efforts to fight antisemitism and racism worldwide.

"During this historic meeting today with His Holiness Pope Francis, I felt the weight of responsibility as someone who represents not only himself, and not only the present, but rather the entire Jewish people throughout history," said Dayan. "This is why I offered the Pope all of Yad Vashem's expertise and influence - our abilities, materials and scholarship - in order to address the issues related to the Holocaust and the Church in particular, and on the worldwide stage in general."

*Yad Vashem's "Acquisition of Archival Materials from the Vatican Archives: Digitizing the Commissione Soccorsi Collection" is generously supported by The David Berg Foundation.*

*The author is Head of the Archival Acquisitions for Western and Southern Europe Section, Archives Division.*

INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR HOLOCAUST RESEARCH

## PUBLICATIONS

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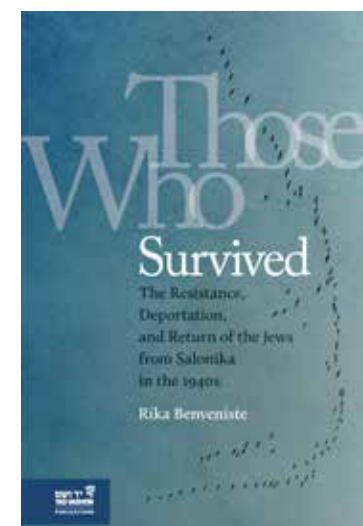
**Search and Research:  
Lectures and Papers, Volume 34**  
*Holocaust Historiography Between  
1990 to 2021 in Context(s):  
New Insights, Perceptions,  
Understandings, and Avenues –  
An Overview and Analysis*

Dan Michman  
NIS 52- NIS 39

The central area for Holocaust research was, and remains, that of “the core period”: the years of the Nazi regime, 1933–1945, and of the regimes of Nazi Germany’s close allies and satellite countries. In this treatise, Prof. Dan Michman, Head of Yad Vashem’s International Institute for Holocaust Research and John Najmann Chair for Holocaust

Studies, surveys and examines the major developments and changes in research on this period of the Holocaust since 1990 until today, and analyzes the various factors that paved their way – politics, memory policies and interests, social psychological needs, generational changes, value transformations, and new scholarly methodologies.

Citing hundreds of references in many languages, the broad picture presented leads to conclusions that erode several assumptions that became entrenched in earlier stages of research and are still commonplace in popular discourse. Consequently, according to the author, there is a need to redefine our understanding of the anti-Jewish campaign unleashed by Nazism, for which we use the terms “the Holocaust” or “the Shoah,” and finetune it. The essay, which concludes with such a redefinition, is a “must” for those who are interested in the most updated picture of the state of historical research on the Holocaust.



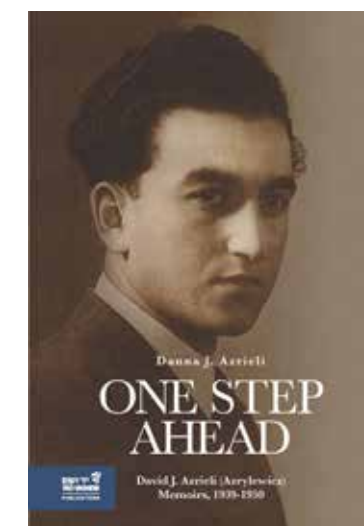
**Those Who Survived: The Resistance,  
Deportation, and Return of the Jews  
from Salonika in the 1940s**  
Rika Benveniste  
NIS 169- NIS 127

Before WWII, more than 50,000 Jews lived in Salonika (Thessaloniki), Greece. More than 46,000 of them were deported to the Nazi death camps, and around 96 percent of them were murdered. The book tells the story of a few of the survivors. Using a vast wealth of personal testimonies and archival documents, it traces the trajectories of three groups of people – a group of about twenty young Jews from Salonika who joined the partisans; 100–200 Jews from Salonika who survived the Nazi concentration and death camps, subsequently becoming DPs in the Feldafing camp, Germany; and the fate of one family deported to Bergen-Belsen.



**Years of Defiance: The Herbert  
Baum Group and Jewish  
Resistance in Berlin**  
Charlotte Holzer  
NIS 94- NIS 68

Charlotte Holzer was a nurse by training. Her efforts to improve the working conditions at the city’s Jewish hospital led her to establish contacts with Communist activists. Following a chance encounter with Herbert Baum, Holzer joined his resistance group. The Baum Group organized and executed an arson attack, and although it caused only minor damage, the Nazis hunted down, tortured, and murdered most of its members. Holzer managed to evade the initial wave of arrests, survived imprisonment, and made a daring escape from a Nazi camp on the eve of her execution. Hiding under false identities, she was subsequently reunited with her daughter and eventually remarried.



**One Step Ahead: David J. Azrieli  
(Azrylewicz) Memoirs, 1939-1950**  
Danna J. Azrieli  
NIS 94- NIS 68

David J. Azrieli was born in Maków Mazowiecki, Poland. This gripping account of survival describes his travels, always one step ahead of life-threatening danger, which took him to the Soviet-occupied zones of Poland and later to Ukraine, Tashkent and Buchara. He subsequently served in the Anders Army, before making his way from Baghdad to the frontiers of British Mandatory Palestine. The memoir chronicles his studies at the Technion, his experiences as a soldier in the War of Independence, and his realization that most of his family had been lost in the Holocaust. This story is all the more remarkable given Azrieli’s later achievements as a successful real estate developer and philanthropist.

# NEW BENEFACTORS:

## ANN (ANIKO) AND GABOR (GABY) NEWMARK z"l

**Ann (Aniko) Newmark, together with her children George (Monique, Hudson and Marielle) and Susan Winthrop (Marc, Jackson and Kaitlyn) became new Yad Vashem Benefactors through their generous support of the Names Collection Center in memory of their beloved husband, father and grandfather, Gabor (Gaby) Newmark z"l.**



**G**aby and his parents were the only members of his extended family to survive the Holocaust, and he believed passionately in remembering not just his own Hungarian family members who were murdered, but also all those whose names may have been forgotten.

Gaby was an agile 13-year-old teenager when he was deported to Auschwitz. His strength and physique helped him survive; he was chosen by the barbaric Dr. Mengele to be put to

work instead of being sent to his death. He maintained this athletic passion throughout his life, first playing for the Hungarian national soccer team, and then as a soccer official and a lifelong New York sports fan.

Gaby built a successful business based on honor, integrity and respect. In his early years in the US, he did not speak about the atrocities he endured during his childhood, instead choosing to express pride in his family, his business, his love of Judaism and his community. Only

when his grandchildren entered their curiosity-filled teenage years, did Gaby begin to tell stories of his time in Hungary and his experiences during the war. In November 2017, Gaby was called to the Torah along with his eldest grandson Jackson in a shared Bar Mitzvah – completing the Jewish circle of life which the Nazis tried in vain to sever.

**Yad Vashem is honored to welcome the Newmark and Winthrop families to its esteemed circle of friends.**

## THOMAS GUTTMAN

**Yad Vashem welcomes Thomas Guttman as a New Benefactor in the Yad Vashem circle of friends.**



Margit Guttman, z"l

**T**he Guttman family's support of Yad Vashem's Art and Book Store, located in the Square of Hope at the exit of the Holocaust History Museum, honors Thomas's parents, Ladislav and Margit Gutman.

Having survived the Holocaust, they carried great burdens and were able to overcome unimaginable hardships, and ultimately succeeded in building a new life in the United States.

Thomas is grateful to be able to generously support various

philanthropies, such as the American Friends of Magen David Adom.

Thomas Guttman chose Yad Vashem's singular commitment to commemorating and studying the Holocaust as the most significant place to memorialize his parents' remarkable journey from Nazi terror to freedom.

# RECENT VISITS FEBRUARY-MAY 2022

Yad Vashem recently welcomed distinguished guests from around the world, who toured its extensive campus and reaffirmed their commitment to expanding Holocaust remembrance and education in their respective countries.



President of the Austrian National Council Wolfgang Sobotka, 16 May 2022



German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, accompanied by Prime Minister Naftali Bennett during his visit, 2 March 2022



Bundestag President Bärbel Bas, 27 April 2022



Austrian Foreign Minister Alexander Schallenberg, 30 March 2022



Kosovo Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Donika Gërvalla-Schwarz, 9 May 2022



President of European Parliament Roberta Metsola, 23 May 2022



Slovak Foreign Minister Ivan Korčok and Speaker of the Slovak National Council Boris Kollár, 13 April 2022



Georgian Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili, 30 May 2022



Norwegian Foreign Minister Anniken Huitfeldt, 23 March 2022



Slovak Foreign Minister Ivan Korčok and Speaker of the Slovak National Council Boris Kollár, 13 April 2022



Singapore Foreign Minister Dr. Vivian Balakrishnan, 21 March 2022



Estonian Foreign Minister Eva-Maria Liimets, 2 May 2022



Delegation of Yad Vashem leadership meeting with NYC Mayor Eric Adams, May 2022



Yad Vashem Chairman Dani Dayan met with Governor of New York Kathy Hochul during his visit to New York in May 2022



# ARCHIVAL AGREEMENT WITH UZBEKISTAN

Masha Yonin

**On 6 April 2022, Yad Vashem hosted a high-level Uzbek delegation led by Uzbekistan's Ambassador to Israel H.E. Mr. Feruza Makhmudova and Chief Archivist Ulugbek Yusupov, which culminated in signing an important agreement regarding access to Holocaust-era archives.**

Following the German invasion of the Soviet Union on 22 June 1941, a government operation began to evacuate eastern industrial centers, military establishments and professionals required to continue the war effort against the Nazi forces. At the same time, an organized evacuation of a civilian population to the east of the country began to the Soviet territories that were outside the scope of the threat of Nazi occupation, including Uzbekistan. Among the approximately 1.5 million Soviet citizens who fled to Uzbekistan in 1941-1942 were also many Jews.

The delegation to Yad Vashem included directors of historical museums and universities, as well as heads of the Jewish community in Uzbekistan and representatives of the Israel-Uzbekistan Friendship Association. The guests toured the Holocaust History Museum and the Yad Vashem Archives, and at the end of the visit, the representatives of the parties signed an agreement for archival cooperation.

The new agreement will allow Yad Vashem to map and photograph valuable documentation that is not yet available to the general

public, and to advance research on evacuation of Jews during the war and their absorption into Uzbekistan. The collection of documentation in the Uzbekistan archives is expected to take several years, and will be done in partnership with the United States Holocaust History Museum in Washington, DC.

During his speech at the signing ceremony, Archivist Yusupov stated: "The Uzbek people helped the Jewish people during the war. In the history of our people, there are many common pieces of history. Our visit today, which was unique, has paved the way for a close rapprochement between the peoples." Yad Vashem Archives Director Masha Pollak-Rozenberg said: "In the fall of 1941, my grandmother escaped from the German occupation of the city of Kharkov in Ukraine. She came to Uzbekistan and survived. Jews left in Kharkov were murdered in the winter of 1941-1942. For me, signing the agreement today has personal and general significance."

*The author is Director of the Archival Acquisitions Department, Archives Division.*

## USA

American Society for Yad Vashem Co-Chair **Adina Burian** and American Society Board Member **Lawrence Burian** came with thirty friends and family, including Lawrence's mother **Ruth**, for an unveiling and dedication ceremony of the Educators' Balcony at the International School of Holocaust Studies. The group attended a specially prepared presentation and film of the testimonies given by **Andrew** and **Tibor Burian** (Lawrence's father and uncle). They were accompanied by Yad Vashem Chairman **Dani Dayan**, International Relations Director **Dr. Haim Gertner** and



The American Society's "Mission of Dedication and Commemoration" took place from 24-28 April. Chaired by **Andrea** and **Loren Weiss**, the twelve Mission delegates were offered a rare opportunity to view a wide range of Yad Vashem's unique behind-the-scenes work and explore the relevance of Holocaust education and commemoration today. Highlights included the dedication of Yad Vashem's new Center for Holocaust Education at the Ariel Sharon IDF Training Campus in the Negev (see pp. 18-23), and attending the official Holocaust Remembrance Day state ceremonies.



During the official Holocaust Remembrance Day Wreath-Laying Ceremony, American Society Co-Chairs **Adina Burian** and **Mark Moskowitz** laid a wreath on behalf



of the American Society for Yad Vashem; American Society Board Member **Loren Weiss** and his wife **Andrea** represented the American Society "Mission of Dedication



and Commemoration"; and Young Leadership Association (YLA) Board Member **Rachel Shnay** laid the American Society YLA wreath.

New Yad Vashem Pillars **Nancy** and **Sam Shamie** were honored with lighting the Eternal Flame on Holocaust Remembrance Day.



Yad Vashem Pillar and American Society Board Member **Steven Baral** and **Tova Weinberg** met with Chairman of the Yad Vashem Council **Rabbi Israel Meir Lau** and **Dr. Haim Gertner** at the Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Day Opening State Ceremony.

## USA



The Belz family visited for a meaningful Twinning Ceremony in the Yad Vashem Synagogue. Bat Mitzvah Lily Brody is the great-granddaughter of Benefactors and dear friends of Yad Vashem and American Society Board Member Jack Belz and his late wife Marilyn z"l.



Michelle and Randy Fine and family visited Yad Vashem in April for Jacob's Bar Mitzvah Twinning

Ceremony in the Yad Vashem Synagogue.



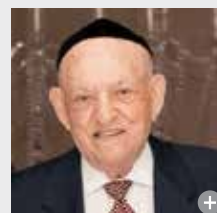
On 27 March 2022, the American Society's Education Department held its twenty-fourth Barbara G. Arfa Conference on Holocaust Education. The theme for this year's program, organized by Director of Education Marlene W. Yahalom PhD, was "Without A Trace: The

Obligation of Memory." The keynote speaker, Prof. Yehuda Bauer, spoke on "Reflections on Transports to Extinction," and Yad Vashem educator Lori Gerson presented *The Auschwitz Album*. The Conference is generously supported by the family of Barbara G. Arfa z"l.



On 17 April, Steven and Amy Roth marked their son Zach's Bar Mitzvah together with his brother Josh in a meaningful Twinning ceremony, and commemorated Steven's father Julius Roth z"l with a plaque in the Yad Vashem Memorial Cave.

## USA



Yad Vashem mourns the loss of Holocaust survivor **Mark Palmer**, 96, beloved husband of Myrna z"l; devoted father of Stephen (Sharon) and Brandon (Loren) Palmer; cherished grandfather of Jason (Yoori), Michael, Jaclyn, Shira and Carly Palmer; and proud great-grandfather of Jordan and Jake. Mark lost his entire family during the Shoah. He later became a business owner and one of the founders of the American Society for Yad Vashem. May his memory be for a blessing.



Yad Vashem mourns the loss of Holocaust survivor **Halina Kleiner**, born in Cześćochowa, Poland. Halina survived labor camps, a concentration camp and a death march. Throughout her life, she was committed to sharing her story and promoting educational opportunities for younger generations. She is survived by her loving husband of 73 years, Leon; daughters Susan and Nina (and predeceased in 1975 by son David, z"l); five grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren. May her memory be for a blessing.



In March, Yad Vashem was delighted to host award-winning actor, producer and director **Henry Winkler** (center). Winkler's parents immigrated from Berlin to the US in 1939, but many of his family were murdered during the Holocaust. Winkler and his wife **Stacey** toured the Holocaust History Museum and Mount of Remembrance grounds together with close friend **Caroline Aaron** (third from left) and her husband **James Foreman**.

## AUSTRALIA



On 23 March, Yad Vashem Chairman **Dani Dayan** (right) presented **Eitan Neishlos** (center) with archival research on the Neishlos family from Riga, Latvia. Eitan presented the written testimony of his grandmother, **Tamara Ziserman** (née Kantorovitch) z"l.



## SOUTH AFRICA



On 18 April, a ceremony was held in the Yad Vashem Synagogue to honor Yad Vashem's new Benefactors **Brian** and **Lee Joffe** (center). Following a behind-the-scenes tour of the Archival Collection, Brian and Lee, surrounded by their family and friends, unveiled the plaque for their dedication of the [Yad Vashem International Book Prize for Holocaust Research](#) in memory of

Brian's parents, **Benny and Tilly Joffe z"l** and their plaque on the Benefactor's Wall, in the presence of Head of the International Institute for Holocaust Research and Incumbent of the John Najmann Chair of Holocaust Studies **Prof. Dan Michman** (left), Yad Vashem Chairman **Dani Dayan** (second from right) and International Relations Division Director **Dr. Haim Gertner** (right).

## UK



On 9 May, Yad Vashem Benefactors **Michael** and **Jacqueline Gee** (second and third from right), and Jacqueline's sister and brother-in-law **Rosalyn** and **Nicholas Springer** (third and fourth from left), visited the Museum of Holocaust Art and were given a behind-the-scenes

tour of the Archival Collection by International Relations Division Director **Dr. Haim Gertner** (left). In addition, they met with Yad Vashem Chairman **Dani Dayan** (center). They were accompanied by Director of the English-Language Desk **Searle Brajzman** (second from left).

## CANADA



On 3 May, **Paul Bronfman** and his partner **Maybelle Pacak** toured the Holocaust History Museum and the Children's Memorial.



Yad Vashem Chairman **Dani Dayan** (second from left) and International Relations Division Director **Dr. Haim Gertner** (left) recently visited Toronto. They met with **Fran Sonshine**, Chair of the **Canadian Society for Yad Vashem** (left) and Canadian Society National Executive Director **Jonathan Allen** (right) at the Holocaust Memorial at Earl Bales Park.

## GERMANY

A special Deutsche Bahn delegation led by CEO **Dr. Richard Lutz** along with **Dr. Kristina Eichhorst**, Head of International Relations at Mercedes-Benz Group AG, visited Yad Vashem for Holocaust Remembrance Day. They attended the Opening State Ceremony, were given a special Behind-the-Scenes presentation of the Archives by Director of the Reference and Information Services Department **Bettina Malka Igelbusch** and attended the Main Memorial Ceremony in the Hall of Remembrance.



International Relations Division Director **Dr. Haim Gertner** speaking to the delegation. Front row, left to right: Deutsche Bahn Head of Corporate Communications **Dagmar Kaiser**,

Deutsche Bahn Head of Economics, Politics and Regulation **Frank Miram**, **Deborah Feldman**, **Dr. Richard Lutz**, **Claudia Lutz**, **Dr. Kristina Eichhorst** and **Dr. Jochen Bittner**. Second row, left to right:



German Society Program Manager **Lukas Geck**, **Ruth Ur** and **Britta Bäuml** of Deutsche Bahn.



**Dr. Beatrice Gorawantschy** (left), Director of the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung Israel Office and **Philipp Paul Burkhardt** (right), Research Fellow in the Israel Office, visited Yad Vashem on Holocaust Remembrance Day and laid a wreath on behalf of the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung.



**Kai Diekmann** (left), Chairman of the **German Friends of Yad Vashem**, visited Yad Vashem for Holocaust Remembrance Day and laid a wreath on behalf of the German Friends together with Deutsche Bahn CEO **Dr. Richard Lutz** (right).



Left to right: **Dr. Richard Lutz**, **Dani Dayan**, Director of the German-Speaking Countries Desk **Ruth Ur** and **Dr. Haim Gertner**.

## MEXICO



Yad Vashem Builder **Jaime Braverman**, along with family members **Samuel** and **Yael Braverman**, **Gladys Braverman**, **Rachel Braverman**, **Jacobo** and **Ilana Cheja** and **Rafael** and **David Cheja Braverman**, visited Yad Vashem for the unveiling of the plaque honoring his grandchildren in the International School for Holocaust Studies.



**Yaacov** and **Shifra Wengrowsky** attended the official Holocaust Remembrance Day State Opening Ceremony. They were joined by **Perla Hazan**.

## LATIN AMERICA, SPAIN, PORTUGAL AND MIAMI SPANISH-SPEAKING DESK

Yad Vashem welcomes **Marcelo Goldin** as the new Director of the Latin America, Spain, Portugal and Miami Spanish-Speaking Desk.

Marcelo immigrated to Israel from Argentina in 1986 and performed his military service in the IDF Engineering Corps. He earned his BA and MA at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. After a career in journalism, he joined Keren Hayesod – United Israel Appeal, working closely with the Spanish-speaking world. He is married to Eti and has three children. "I am very proud to join this wonderful organization, which keeps

alive the memory of our brothers and sisters in many ways," he stated. "This goal is extremely important for the future of the Jewish people and the world."

Yad Vashem would like to sincerely thank outgoing Desk Director **Perla Hazan**, and wishes Perla and her husband **Moshe** the best of luck in this new stage of their lives.



## COSTA RICA



**Philip** and **Vivian Unger** were joined by **Perla Hazan** for the unveiling of the plaque in honor of Philip's grandparents and uncles on the Builders' Wall.



Chairman of the Society of Friends of Yad Vashem in Costa Rica **Philip Unger** was honored to say the mourner's prayer Kaddish at the "Unto Every Person There is a Name" public names-reading ceremony in the Hall of Remembrance.



**Dr. Norman Hines**, **Karen Hines**, **Joaquin Caliva**, **Philip Unger**, **Isaías** and **Grettel Medelewitz**, **Vivian Unger** and guests were greeted by **Perla Hazan** after a tour in the Holocaust History Museum on Holocaust Remembrance Day.

## CHRISTIAN FRIENDS WITH ICEJ



**Sari Granitza**, Director of the Christian Friends of Yad Vashem was invited to the Christians United for Israel (CUFI) Summit in Horseshoe Bay, Texas, where she spoke about the importance and relevance of the work of Yad Vashem today.



**Sari Granitza** (right) gave a radio interview to **Chris Katulka** (left) for the Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry, headed by **Dr. Jim Showers**.



**Sari Granitza** spoke at Connect Church in Charlottesville, VA - an advocate and good friend of the Christian Friends of Yad Vashem.



Following a two-year hiatus, a Christian Leadership Seminar was held once again at Yad Vashem. The thirty participants, who came from the US, Denmark, Germany and Switzerland, took part in the Holocaust Remembrance Day State Opening Ceremony and attended lectures at the International School for Holocaust Studies.

# YOUR SUPPORT HELPS MAKE A DIFFERENCE

The activities, projects and events which you have just read about are made possible in large part thanks to the generous support of our donors. In these difficult times, when there is a worrying rise in antisemitism and Holocaust denial around the world, Yad Vashem is doubling its efforts to commemorate the Holocaust, disseminate its universal implications and strengthen Jewish continuity. Yad Vashem is deeply grateful for your generosity in supporting its vital work and welcomes both new friends and established supporters as partners in our shared mission.

## To make tax-deductible donations:

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