Cover Story:
24 Hours on the Mount of Remembrance: Yom Ha'Shoah
Dear Readers and Friends, Shalom.

"Return to Life" was the theme of this year’s Holocaust Martyrs’ and Heroes’ Remembrance Day - Yom Ha'Shoah.

"Return to Life" is the essence of the survival instinct which has characterized our Jewishness throughout the ages. This strength has come from the spiritual, cultural, familial and communal Jewish experience, and lies at the foundation of our existence as a people. The current issue presents the biographies of the six torch lighters at the official memorial ceremony held at Yad Vashem. These personal memories are the story of a period, of a generation, of hundreds of thousands of Holocaust survivors who chose the option of life.

Our cover story draws you into a 24-hour, emotionally difficult voyage for the 22,000 visitors from the world over, who experienced this symbolic and meaningful day at Yad Vashem. Holocaust Survivors chose "life" and bequeathed to their children and grandchildren this "determination" to continue. The third generation, Sabras, young Israelis of high school age, are partners in this choice.

In this issue, we focus on an interesting trend among youths who choose to deepen their knowledge of this period through studying and writing about the Holocaust, perhaps uncovering aspects of their own identity.

The regular column "Yad Vashem's Master Plan 2001" reports on the computerization and erection of the new archive building. This issue also introduces a new and permanent column, "Podium", which will highlight a particular aspect of research, academic discussion or original historical outlook.

We hope this magazine provides insight into the atmosphere and work at Yad Vashem, addressing the challenge of commemoration and continuity toward the 21st century.

By Michal Morris Kamil

April 15

20:00 The somber melody, "The Town in Flames," by Mordechai Gerbirtig, from Cracow, sets the tone for the next 24 hours. On a giant screen, a video of Yad Vashem's sculptures and documentary pictures paints horrific images of reality; of daily life only 51 years ago. The audience which includes grandparents who hug their children with a love beyond the youngsters' understanding, high-ranking IDF personnel who check their watches in anticipation, elderly couples who have shared unspeakable pasts - all wait tensely for the ceremony to begin.

President Weizman and his wife Reuma at the official ceremony

20:02 The crowd rises as the President of Israel, Ezer Weizman, and the former Prime Minister, Shimon Peres, enter and take their seats. The ceremonial guard of the paratroopers stand to attention, raise their bayonets as the flag of the State of Israel is lowered to half-mast. The nationwide official 24-hour commemoration of the Holocaust begins.

"The Jewish people was left defenseless and at the mercy of murderers, enabling this greatest of tragedies to occur - a tragedy which left in its wake six million testaments with the declaration: "Never again!" Never again will the Jewish people be left helpless in the face of its enemies..." President Weizman's words ring out in Yad Vashem's Warsaw Ghetto Square.

"Softly, softly, as we stumble,
Hearts are frozen numb,
Till the prison walls will crumble
We must all be dumb.
Come my darling, now's no time
For smiling, but for grief -
Let the spring for those who hate us
Be as an autumn leaf."

20:13 From the podium, Premier Shimon Peres recalls the tragic and fatal timing of the establishment of the State of Israel and stresses the necessity of the establishment of a Jewish homeland as a place of permanent refuge for victims of anti-Semitism. "Zionism restored dignity and national status to the Jewish people. The nation took responsibility for its own destiny, and returned flourishing to stage of history..."
Songs, poetry readings and cinematographic material characterize the remainder of the ceremony. The theme of this year's Holocaust Remembrance Day is "The Return to Life." Each in their unique way, the six torchbearers represents an aspect of physical and spiritual rehabilitation following the cultural and social devastation of the Jewish people. Whether by establishing escape routes to the DP camps in Central Europe, or by helping illegal emigration to Eretz Israel, each of the torchbearers embodies a personal victory in the face of those who sought to destroy an entire people.

Wanda Rotenberg liaised with the ghetto inhabitants from the Aryan side of Warsaw during the German occupation of the city. Posing as a Christian, she organized hiding places for those who succeeded in escaping the ghetto undercover. Following the destruction of Warsaw, she hid until the war's end and made her way to Israel in 1949. A grandmother of three, she speaks on behalf of the Holocaust survivors at the ceremony. She offers her insight into the meaning of survival and the strength of the Jewish spirit during this period. "...With failing strength and infinitesimal chances of success, our wonderful young people, members of the Jewish fighting organizations and other movements, managed to redress the balance with a supreme show of courage."

Dr. Felix Zandman was born in Grodno, Poland, in 1928. Surviving the Holocaust in excruciatingly difficult and also miraculous circumstances, Zandman later became a leading industrialist. His company, Vichay, has 56 facilities worldwide, including three in Israel. Zandman recited "Kaddish" with great sensitivity. The words of the prayer, echoing grief too deep for words, resound in the audience. Here and there, a muffled sob escapes from the audience.
April 16

The following day, Yad Vashem opens its gates to the world. This is the State of Israel's 42nd Holocaust Martyrs' & Heroes' Remembrance Day; beyond the historical significance of the day itself, it provides those who enter with the opportunity to open their own portals of self-exploration and self-exposure.

10:00

The official wreath-laying ceremony in Yad Vashem's Warsaw Ghetto Square. Representatives of the State of Israel - politicians, diplomats, army personnel and Zionist leaders of diaspora communities take their turn at placing wreaths at the base of Nathan Rappaport's sculpture of Mordechai Anielewicz depicting both the helplessness and the valor of the Jewish people in the Holocaust. Images, which might go unobserved in the street, or if noticed, might not arouse any particular interest, become monumental as these personalities stand for a moment of silence before the flame of memory. Experience-worn partisan fighters, decorated veterans of the former Soviet army weighed down by their medals, survivors' children, young Israel Defense Force officers - all merge together into a impressive human mosaic at Yad Vashem on this day.

10:30

The Nulman family, all speaking simultaneously, point to Sara, blonde, middle-aged, quietly sitting to one side. An intriguing story emerges. Sara Nulman (nee Chicher) was born in Kovno, 1942. A year later, she was smuggled out of the ghetto by her aunt, Chana, and handed over to the grandmother of a non-Jewish friend from the neighboring town of Jurbarkis. Sara was raised as a Christian until liberation in 1945, while her mother, Esther, and elder sister Pesya, perished in Auschwitz. Sara was collected by her father, Claim, who survived the Dachau death march, and her aunt Chana, who had been in Auschwitz. Until that day, Sara had had no idea of their existence. She was brought to Israel with her father in 1956, and is now the mother of three grown-up children and four grandchildren. Ilanit Nulman, a 20-year-old daughter, says: "Mother doesn't talk about their past except when my aunt Chana visits. It seems so distant on the everyday level. I could never speak with my grandfather when he was alive as he only spoke Yiddish. In his home there were pictures of my mother's older sister, Pesya, and of the ghetto."

11:00

In "Ohel Yizkor" the Hall of Remembrance, the ceremony, "Every Person Has a Name" takes place. Written on the six million mosaics are the names of the main centers of mass extermination. The surrounding walls are built from huge boulders - reminiscent of the quarries where Jews slaved and perished - with narrow strips of stained glass windows by artist and survivor Roman Halter, filtering in an otherworldly blue light. The funneled shaped ceiling of grey concrete contains a small opening at the top where light and air penetrates - an echo of the gas chambers at Auschwitz-Birkenau or crematoriums at Majdanek, where openings signified death. Adults and children step forward and read out the names of beloved family members who perished in the Holocaust. The young are moved to tears as though they themselves knew their relatives. Penina Schwartzman commends Michal, her granddaughter, on reading out the names of Penina's family from the town of Novosedritza in Bessarabia. Of the 23 members of her family, Penina and her father were the sole survivors. They underwent the horrific trek to Transnistria in 1941 and came down with typhus at the Luzinez camp, originally a pig farm. Penina recalled that in 1945, upon hearing that the war was over, her initial reaction had been, "I don't care as I have no one to wait for." In 1950 she and her father immigrated to Israel. Their absorption, in Binyamina, was difficult. She seldom shared her war experiences with her daughter, Miriam, and admits that only during the past few years did she begin to open up to her grandchildren. "We feel the loss at family gatherings when there are so few participants," says Michal, the 15-year-old granddaughter. "I learn about the Holocaust from my grandmother and I read lots about it at school and at home. I'd like to go on a youth delegation to Poland and to go back..."
with my grandmother to her hometown, which she herself visited three years ago. Her house is still there.

**Family gatherings... survivors' visits to their hometowns... youth delegations... To have no one to wait for...**

11:30 Nuns stand out in Israel, and at Yad Vashem today it is no exception. **Sister Theresa**, from France, has lived in Israel for ten years and belongs to the order of Mt. Beatitude in Jerusalem. She has been interested in the Holocaust since she was a child. "I can't explain it, but I remember library books mentioning the Jews, whom I had never met personally. What I read deeply upset me. This was reinforced when, at the age of 15, I saw Holocaust films on television. Much later on, I learned that my grandfather had saved a number of Jewish lives in his village. I feel that it is my responsibility as a Catholic to fight anti-Semitism and to work for closer ties between the Catholic church and the Jewish people. The Holocaust represents exile and suffering, and therefore should not be taught as past history but rather as an important reminder of prejudice which still exists in the present."

Sister Theresa is invited to lecture in France and Germany on the Holocaust and the history of the Jewish people.

**A grandfather who rescued Jews... Metaphysical hatred... closer ties between Catholics and Jews... the Holocaust as a lesson in prejudice**

13:00 A harsh Israeli sun beats down from an uncompromising blue sky. Three teenagers from a Jerusalem boarding school are studying the Lodz ghetto exhibit, two of north-African origin and a recent Ethiopian immigrant. **Tai** is 16: We have no relatives originating from Europe, and no one in our family has been through the Holocaust period, so we have to rely on school programmes for information, but the lessons learnt at school aren't enough. No one told us to come to Yad Vashem today, but it seems the most suitable time to feel the atmosphere and learn more about what happened to our people. Knowledge is important, especially in the light of neo-Nazis who deny that it ever happened. **Micky** adds: "Had Yad Vashem not existed, I would have known nothing about all this." **Chaim**, who was born in Ethiopia, knew nothing of the Holocaust before coming to Israel. "This happened to our people; it's not just an educational matter."

**The thirst for knowledge... facts in the face of those who deny the Holocaust...**

14:00 **Mary**, 21, is from Bloomington, Indiana. On the one-year Hebrew University program, she agrees with the three Israeli teenagers. "I didn't go to a Jewish school and until my visit to Israel, I had no contact with the Jewish community. But on this day, I feel moved to be in Israel. I've been in the Holocaust Museum in Washington D.C., but being here in Yad Vashem today, remembering the Holocaust in Jerusalem, in the midst of the Jewish people, feels entirely different. People know so little about it in the States; there are some who don't even understand the meaning of the word 'Holocaust'. Education should start very young because the lessons of the Holocaust are universal."

**To commemorate together in Jerusalem, Israel... to feel the Jewish connection... There are some people who don't even understand the meaning of the word 'Holocaust'...**
the Koreans and those carried out by the infamous Dr. Mengele on Jews.

"Human behavior in extreme situations adapts itself to the prevalent conditions; how else can you explain why so many people stood by and watched Hiroshima and Nagasaki being bombed? But then, today just as much as then, we all have to be in touch with our consciences, don't we?"

Comparison... to stand by and watch... a clean conscience...

The universal lessons to be learnt from the Holocaust keep recurring in people's expla-

\[\text{by Yuka, Japan}\]

\[\text{by Naomi & Chaim Ozeri, Israel}\]

nations as to why the subject should be taught all over the world. Yet the Holocaust is a specifically Jewish phenomenon. Never in the history of mankind has there been such an efficient attempt by one people to obliterate another. Not only physically, but to destroy them culturally and spiritually too.

An amazing but typical sight in the Israeli collage of characters: an elderly Yemenite Jew, hunchbacked, with springy grey curls, slowly ascends the museum hill with his wife. Both are almost blind. Chaim Ozeri, from Yemen, reached Egypt on foot with his first wife and then immigrated to Israel in 1935, settling in Jerusalem. His only source of information about the Holocaust was from newspapers. Three months ago he married his second wife, 83-year-old Naomi. Together they have over twenty grandchildren and countless great-grandchildren. Chaim felt it his responsibility to teach his new bride about the Holocaust. "I have lived in the Holy Land for over 60 years and have never stopped teaching my children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren about what 'they' did to our brothers back in Europe."

Personal responsibility...continuity

A sea of youngsters in different shades of blue and white -- their ages ranging from infancy to army age -- fill the Warsaw Ghetto Square. Laughter, excited chatter and youth brighten the air, creating an atmosphere of hope and vision. Although unspoken, the message is clear -- the Holocaust is no longer the sole domain of the elderly or their children. It can be approached openly, unhesitatingly, by the youth of tomorrow. In these times of the peace process, there is no longer the question of personal and national survival. Some youngsters from a scouts' movement in north Tel Aviv, Doron, Alon, Tal and Lee, outline what they consider are the main issues when studying the Holocaust: "Did Jews really go like lambs to the slaughter? Can one truly judge anyone? Would we have mustered similar courage and endurance in similar circumstances? How will we remember and what is our personal responsibility?"

Professor Amnon Rubinstein, the former Minister of Education, aptly concludes, "The distance in time enables us to re-examine the terrible tragedy that befell the Jewish nation and see it within a combined historical and Jewish perspective."

\[\text{by Wanda Rovenberg}\]

\[\text{by Yad Vashem}\]

Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Day is drawing to a close. 1996 was different from that of 1986 and will certainly be different from 2006. For some, it becomes harder as the years progress and they find it harder to maintain a defensive shell; their scar becoming more exposed. For others, it has become a fact of the past. Yet the third and fourth generations visiting Yad Vashem on this particular day are involved and alert to the dilemmas facing future generations.

Holocaust survivor Wanda Rovenberg: "Our children - the wonderful generation growing up here in Israel - are the symbol of renewed life in our homeland. You are partners and witnesses to the miracle occurring in our lifetime after so many years of exile. You are our guarantee that we will succeed, and you are our hope... We charge you to carry on with our work with pride and courage, with understanding and sensitivity; to continue to tell our story and to learn from what we have been through."
great library contains the diary of the human race, it was once said at the opening of a large public library in Britain.

Indeed, it is estimated that if the 45 million pages of documents contained in the archives at Yad Vashem were set side by side, one would have to walk 25 kilometers to reach the end.

Yad Vashem's "Master Plan 2001" has been taken one step further with the laying of the cornerstone of the new archives building. The guest of honor was Rabbi Dr. Israel Miller, Chairman of the Claims Conference, which provided the funds for this essential project.

The 70 people working in the archives collate, store and index material which is gathered from numerous sources. One of Yad Vashem's most important collections, for example, is from the Red Cross International Tracing Center, based in Arolsen, Germany. Established in 1944, the Tracing Center was to provide aid and resettle 10 million refugees from a Europe ravaged by war. Though the Center was supposed to have been dismantled some time ago, it continues to exist and, surprisingly, receives some 200,000 enquiries a year about missing relatives and monetary compensation. Until 1956, a representative of Israel's Foreign Ministry sat at the Center and collected material - documentation from the various camps, deportation lists, the various census counts organized by the Judenrats, and so forth - amounting to 20 million entries.

With the opening up of Eastern Europe to the West, it is anticipated that Yad Vashem, in cooperation with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, will obtain an additional twenty million pages of documents. Since 1989, Yad Vashem has been systematically involved in the search for archival material throughout Europe (with the exception of Albania and the Vatican) at a tremendous annual cost, which covers staff with expertise and the actual purchasing of documents. According to Yaacov Lozowick, Director of the Archives at Yad Vashem, the majority of archive authorities have been cooperative, especially the Czech and the Slovaks. Lozowick maintains that it will take up to 10 years to complete the collation of worldwide archival material. The new archive building, which will contain the most advanced forms of climatic regulation, is also planned to be equipped with the most up-to-date retrieval and cataloging computer technology to enable access to the archive material by the general public. The 15,000-square-feet of temperature-controlled storage space will house documents, historic photo albums, original cinematographic material and the master copy of the Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation - filmed testimonies of Holocaust survivors, a project initiated and funded by film mogul Steven Spielberg.

The new archive building will extend over 27,000 square feet, and include a reading hall outfitted with computer stations, the library, private cubicles for silent reading and areas designated for group work. The reception hall for the general public will include part of the Hall of Names, and will provide services to the museum visitors. The remaining areas are designated for a modern, equipped laboratory and a general office area.

\* The architectural plans for the 27,000-square-foot complex were drawn up by Jerusalem architect Daniel Lanski, in conjunction with David Resnik and Dan Zue, architects of Masterplan "Yad Vashem 2001."
Menachem Sharon, 1925, Lachva, Poland

Menachem Sharon's mother and two brothers were murdered in Chelmno; his father in Auschwitz. Upon the liquidation of the Lodz ghetto, Menachem was sent to Auschwitz. In January 1945, Auschwitz was evacuated and the prisoners sent on the-infamous death marches. Menachem escaped and hid in the woods until the area was liberated by the Russians.

On returning to his native Poland in search of family and friends, Menachem failed to find any survivors. He joined the B'richa movement, aimed at relocating the tens of thousands of refugees and Holocaust survivors from the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, all trying to leave Europe for Israel. Only a few succeeded - illegally - the majority remaining in Displaced Persons Camps.

Menachem and other B'richa activists established crossing points, falsifying documents and visas. For three years Menachem liaised with youth leaders, Israeli emissaries and Jewish Brigade officers in caring for the tens of thousands of Jewish refugees making their way to Israel to try to rebuild their lives. Menachem was in charge of one of the main crossing points between there and Poland.

In Israel, Menachem worked in the Jewish Agency and in the ministries of Defense and of Foreign Affairs.

Raphael Blumenfeld, 1921, Kielce, Poland

The Kielce Ghetto was liquidated by the Germans in August 1942, when most of the inmates were sent to Treblinka. Out of the 27,000 Jewish inhabitants, 2,000 youngsters remained in the ghetto, among them Raphael Blumenfeld. They were made to dig mass graves and put to forced labor. Raphael was interred in a concentration camp for political prisoners in Germany until the liberation, when he returned to search for his family.

He began his Zionist activities as a guide in the Bnei Akiva youth movement. In Lodz, he joined the Ichud movement's pioneer training kibbutz. In 1946, he returned to his native Kielce to head the teaching staff of the kibbutz preparing for immigration to Israel.

Polish anti-Semitism peaked in the Kielce pogrom of July 4, 1946. Rioting Poles, surrounded the youth movement building and murdered 42 young Jews. Raphael, seriously wounded, only escaped by posing as dead.

Having lost all his family and witnessed this latest massacre, Raphael decided to emigrate to Israel without delay. He settled in Kibbutz Tel Yitzhak, and for 30 years directed the Nitzanim youth village. Later, he worked in the Central Zionist Archives, Jerusalem. He devotes much of his time to research on the Kielce pogrom.

Martin Hauser, 1913, Berlin, Germany

With the rise of the Nazis to power in 1933, Martin Hauser left Germany for Palestine. In 1940 he joined the British Air Force, serving first in its Cairo headquarters, and later in Italy, where he worked for British intelligence. In the vanguard of the fighting units, he was among the first to comprehend the extent of the Jewish catastrophe.

In Italy, Martin initiated the collection of information from synagogues, prisons and other sources so he could contact and help Jewish refugees. The information was relayed to the Jewish Agency and to the Joint Distribution Committee. Soon Martin was responsible for providing food and shelter to the masses of refugees reaching Italy. With the arrival of the Jewish Brigade in 1944, Martin established Hamerkaz Lagola ("The Diaspora Center"), responsible for educational and cultural activities and for placing multitudes of refugees on boats for Palestine.

Martin was later sent by the Diaspora Center to camps in Germany and Austria, referring thousands of refugees to the Jewish Agency emissaries, and helping organize their emigration to Eretz Israel.

On his return to pre-State Israel, Martin joined the Jewish Agency's department of absorption, continuing to help immigrants settle in their new homeland.
1946 was the year bridging the periods of destruction and redemption. It heralded the rehabilitation and struggle of Holocaust survivors to establish a new life. Hundreds of thousands had lost their families. The challenge before them was not only to recuperate physically and spiritually, but also the struggle to immigrate and reach safe shores. Those who reached Israel were also immediately plunged into the War of Independence and the building of the State. Living witnesses to terror and murder, the survivors took it upon themselves to perpetuate the memory of the Shoah. We dedicate the six torches to them.

Miriam Hirschler, 1932, Bukovina, Romania
Nine-year-old Miriam Hirschler and her four-year-old sister Fritzi were orphaned during the German invasion of Russia in June, 1941. The sisters, who had been separated, reached Transnistria along with thousands of other Jews who survived the massacres. On route, Miriam contracted typhus. She found shelter with an elderly couple who saved her life and helped her locate her aunt. In the Mogilev ghetto, Miriam was reunited with her sister and they were placed in an orphanage. In 1944, they were among the orphans waiting to be transported to Bucharest.

Miriam and her sister stood on the railway platform waiting for their names to be called. Fritzi, whose name was on the list, boarded the train in tears, anticipating their final separation. But then fate intervened: Miriam, noticing that the name 'Josephina Stuttinantal' had gone unanswered, took her place on the train, and the sisters were reunited.

After the war Miriam went to Transylvania, where she joined a kibbutz movement. The boat she boarded for Israel in 1946 was intercepted by the British off the coast of Israel and rerouted to the detention camps in Cyprus, where 92,000 survivors of the Nazi regime again found themselves behind barbed wire. In 1947, Miriam finally immigrated to Israel, and raised a family.

David Pur, 1924, Siauliai, Lithuania
David Pur was active in the Zionist underground. He survived internment in the Siauliai ghetto between 1941 and 1945 he was deported to Stutthoff and from there to Dachau. In April, 1945, he was sent on the death march from Dachau and was liberated by the Americans in May.

Critically ill with typhus, he was hospitalized and came into contact with Jewish Brigade soldiers from Eretz Israel - a meeting which was to prove a turning point in his life.

On his recovery, David established a youth movement, Nachum, teaching Zionism ideology and preparing for 'Aliya' in the Feldafing DP camp. He was then sent to Poland, where he established additional branches.

In February 1947, sailing for Israel on the Theodor Herzl, David was responsible for the education and welfare of 80 child survivors, keeping up their morale when the ship was intercepted by the British and rerouted to Cyprus where they were once again behind barbed wire in the island's detention camps.

A member of Kibbutz Netzer Sireni, David served for many years as the secretary of Hanoar Haoved Vehalomed, established the district school at Kibbutz Givat Bremer and chaired the Pedagogical Unit at the Ministry of Education. Today he heads the division for Jewish Zionist Education.

Zipora Hasfari, 1924, Volhynia, Poland
Following the invasion of Poland, Zipora and her family were interned in the local ghetto. Anticipating the worst, she fled with her parents and seven brothers. Terrified of collaborators, the family hid in the forests. The youngest brother died and the father was murdered upon leaving the hideout to seek food for the family.

In the course of their wanderings, Zipora and her brothers took refuge with 19 non-Jewish families, who were later recognized as Righteous Among the Nations. At the war's end, Zipora's husband, Mordechai Hasfari, enlisted in the Russian army. He sent Jewish soldiers equipped with documents and transit visas to Germany to provide aid for Jewish refugees. The Hasfars gathered information as to the whereabouts of Jewish orphans who had escaped the Nazis, which was passed on to representatives of the Joint Distribution Committee and UNWRA.

The Hasfars were sent by the Jewish Agency to a youth village at Lindenfels, where children were taught Hebrew and imbued with a love for Zionism, helping them to prepare for departure to Eretz Israel. Despite Zipora's involvement with children, she initially had no desire to have any of her own. However, the need for Jewish continuity and survival eventually swayed her.
AN INSIGHT

into an annihilated world: the community chronicles

By Galit Abargiell

The Pinkasei Hakehilot project includes 15 volumes published to date and offers information concerning vanished Jewish communities.

Until the eve of the Second World War, dozens of children from Molotai, Lithuania, studied in Jewish day schools belonging to the Tarbut ("Culture") network. This framework instilled Zionism and the love of Israel, and helped the children acquire the Hebrew language.

The German invasion of Lithuania on June 26, 1941, brought an abrupt halt to these children's hopes and aspirations. On August 29, the Nazis and their accomplices rounded up the remnants of the Jewish community - mainly women and children - and slaughtered and buried them in a mass grave in a forest clearing a kilometer outside Molotai. Thus, the Molotai Jewish community, in existence since the 18th century, was obliterated. A number of Jews attempted to escape the massacre and find shelter among the Lithuanians, but they were turned in by local collaborators. However, thanks to a few unusual, brave inhabitants of Molotai, a handful of Jews from the town did survive.

The Pinkasei Hakehilot ("Encyclopedia of Jewish Communities") project, supported by the Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture and its director, Dr. Jerry Hochbaum, is one of Yad Vashem's most important projects commemorating the Holocaust. In 1973, it was awarded the prestigious Israel Prize, honoring its research on Jewish communities in Rumania and Germany. This extensive project was initiated during the 1950s and was devoted to documenting Jewish life in the European Diaspora prior to and during the devastation of the Holocaust.

The collection provides a wide range of invaluable material concerning the fate and condition of both European and North African Jewry. Expert researchers give the reader access to the socio-economic and cultural conditions of the communities, including lists of Jewish organizations. In addition, the attitudes of non-Jewish organizations and local authorities towards the Jews are analyzed. These community encyclopedias include photographs, rare documents and maps which offer insight into a world which was obliterated.

Pupils and teachers of Tarbut, a Jewish day school, Molotai

One of the most ambitious and salient projects of the team will be the publication of an English lexicon, which will include a summary of the histories of Jewish communities. Dr. Shmuel Spector heads the staff who collate, edit and cross-reference the material. In special instances, for example, the chronicles of Germany, volunteers from the "Sign of Forgiveness and Peace Organization" (with a special affinity for Yad Vashem) were recruited to gather and translate material. Guided by leading scholars, the staff base their research on a wide range of source material, including census counts taken in Russia and Eastern Europe. Another major source of documentation originates from "The Historical Committee," an organization of Holocaust survivors active in the DP camps in Munich, who also collected testimonies. An additional source of knowledge dealing with the fate of Jewish communities was found in the 45,000 pages of interrogations carried out on Nazi war criminals and recorded by the Soviet authorities during the Nuremberg trials, in 1946. In fact, the idea for the project of Pinkasei Hakehilot evolved upon gaining access to the archives in the former USSR, in Berlin, and in various Jewish organizations.

NEWLY PUBLISHED: THE CHRONICLES OF LITHUANIAN COMMUNITIES

The 14 volumes of this project which have been published to date describe the Jewish communities of Poland, Germany, Rumania, Hungary, Holland, Yugoslavia and Latvia-Estonia. These chronicles enable the reader to obtain information concerning communities which have been entirely obliterated, leaving no other surviving testimony of their rich and vivid Jewish life and culture.

On the eve of this year's Holocaust Memorial and Remembrance Day, Yad Vashem published the Pinkas Hakehilot ("Community Records") of Lithuania. This volume, produced by Professor Dov Levin, a senior scholar at Yad Vashem, the product of teamwork by researchers and writers, is the 15th volume in the series on the European Jewish communities.

Pinkas Hakehilot: Lithuania, contains approximately 300 listings on the Lithuanian Jewish communities, taking as its frame of geo-political reference Lithuania's period of independence between the World Wars, with Kaunas as the capital and the political borders in effect on September 1, 1939.

For centuries, Lithuania had been renowned as a thriving center for Jewish life and Torah studies. Lithuanian Jewry was famous for its cultural life, for its scholarliness and its rationalism. It was the latter which gave rise to "Litvak" morality movements, biblical studies and Zionist movements. The Lithuanian community held the welfare and well-being of the individual in high regard. 'Pinkas Hakehilot: Lithuania' follows the history of this community over three periods, beginning with initial Jewish settlement in the area, up to the end of the First World War. This essay includes the mechanisms of establishing a community structure and its economic, social, spiritual and political life.

The second period covers the Jewish community between the wars, within the context of an independent Lithuania: 1918-1940. The final period deals with the period of the Second World War and its aftermath. This period is subdivided into the Russian occupation of 1940-41, and the Nazi conquest and the genocide of the Jewish population between 1941 and 1944.
THE IIIrd GENERATION
The personal quest of young students in Israel for knowledge

By Michal Morris Kamil

Mid-summer is not a pleasant time for the Israeli teenager. While they fantasize about lying on a beach or splashing in a pool, they have to burn the midnight oil as their matriculation exams beckon. However, for the past 20 years, there has existed an option in some state schools of substituting an exam with a personal piece of research. All such papers are carefully monitored by the Ministry of Education. The pupils are required to submit a written proposal, stating aims, methodology and bibliography; pupils select their own academic tutors and then commence their research, which often turns into a personal voyage of discovery.

One of the more popular areas chosen by pupils over recent years has been the Holocaust. In the academic year 1995-1996, pupils have chosen subjects such as "The Diaries of Adolescents During the Holocaust", "The Fate of the Jews in Ludmir between the Two World Wars and During the Holocaust", "Israeli Attitudes to Survivors Before and After the Eichmann Trial", "The Holocaust in the Eyes of Religious Jews", and many other related subjects, including the personal accounts of surviving grandparents and relatives. Asher Shlomai, Yad Vashem's statewide coordinator for personal works in the field of Holocaust studies, points to a marked increase in the number of high school students opting for this particular field.

"Many young people who have no direct connection with the Holocaust encounter it through reading, the media or hearing the testimony of a survivor. They discover an aspect which involves them intensely, and want to do further research. Others learn about the Holocaust through their grandparents who are often eager to talk after so many years of silence, or perhaps the inability to share their pasts with their children."

Shlomai notes that this is especially noticeable among Russian immigrants who came to the country in the large wave of immigration of 1991 and 1992. On arriving in Israel, the young immigrants encountered an alternative way of perceiving the Holocaust, detached from the ideological wars between Communism and Fascism. Rather, they learn to approach this whole field from a Jewish perspective, discovering the uniqueness of the subject for the Jewish people. Shlomai and death marches, tends to bring about an intense catharsis. There is not only the recognition of the reality of the Holocaust's occurrence - itself traumatic enough for some - but the journey also brings to the fore issues of personal identity and group belonging, which, for many, brings about a greatly strengthened Zionist identification.

According to Shlomai, there are additional benefits to be gained by working on a personal project: "One needs to learn how to write a paper of academic standard, and the Holocaust provides ample opportunities to refine the necessary skills: the ability to summarize, to be succinct; the ability to integrate historiographic materials - documents, photographs, testimonies and interviews; and finally, the ability to present the material logically and coherently, while at the same time adding personal insights and conclusions - all these can be gained in this learning process."

Young people are not the only ones who benefit from this program. Over the years, invaluable research material has been accrued through these high school graduation papers. Safira Rappaport, director of Yad Vashem's pedagogical resource center, adds: "Some of the works submitted by the students are of M.A standard, and they have contributed greatly to the mosaic of Holocaust knowledge, of which so many pieces are still missing. In light of the fact that time is taking its toll among Holocaust survivors, the interest of youth in this field is of utmost importance both in terms of commemoration and in terms of educating future generations. The works of these students hold a place of honor on our shelves."

The Uveeder Prize: Promoting High School students interested in Holocaust studies. (See page 15.)
The Debate over "Hitler's Willing Executioners"

By Yaakov Lozowick

The Germans killed millions of Jews because they believed this to be the right thing to do. This, in a nutshell, is the central thesis of Daniel Jonah Goldhagen's new book, Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust (Alfred A. Knopf, 1996). Richard Bernstein, writing in The New York Times (March 27, 1996), is impressed by the book, yet states that Goldhagen "is, after all, essentially saying that the crime of the Holocaust was the reflection of a special iniquity lying within the German culture and the German people. That seems almost too extreme a conclusion to be true". The facts, as Bernstein concedes, may be facts, but they can't be saying what they seem to be saying.

Goldhagen, it appears, has managed not only to make us look again at an important historical event, he is forcing us to question our own understanding of the world. The unusual controversy engendered by his book reflects the potency of its implications far more than of its historical analysis: The responses tell us even more about the responders than about the event itself.

Goldhagen himself supplies much of his detractor's ammunition. His tone is arrogant. "Explaining why the Holocaust occurred requires a radical revision of what has until now been written. This book is that revision." Historians who would revamp an accepted interpretation ought to base their revision on a solid foundation of primary sources. Goldhagen's first section, dealing with the importance of antisemitism in German society in the 19th century, is based almost exclusively on his extensive reading of German and English-speaking historians, many of whom would not agree with his interpretation of their research. Contemporary historiography is wary of sweeping historical interpretations spanning generations and eras, preferring concentrated analysis of limited and more manageable subjects. Goldhagen devotes only 30 pages to demonstrating that antisemitism in 19th century Germany was central, obsessive, and ubiquitous, and that its thrust was to eliminate the Jews.

Historians are expected not only to bring documentary evidence of their thesis, but also to specify what evidence might weaken their position; only after sincerely trying to disprove their own position, can they cite their failure as a possible proof of the correctness of
their claim. At times Goldhagen does this, but in a perfunctory, unconvinced manner. Scholars treat colleagues with professional courtesy, even when sharply differing with them. Goldhagen's treatment of Christopher Browning and his book Ordinary Men skirts the edge of politeness, at best. Monocausal explanations are - by definition - never correct, because human beings are too complex. Goldhagen says clearly that his explanation is not monocausal, yet the subtext of the whole book is just that.

Any attempt to underline the singularity of a phenomenon must explain what it is that distinguishes it from other cases. Goldhagen only barely discusses the antisemitism of non-Germans. Even worse, he hardly relates to the unprovoked brutality unleashed by the Germans against most of Europe.

And yet, given all these drawbacks: What if he is right? Rudolf Augstein, rebutting Goldhagen in Der Spiegel, (April 15, 1996), takes pride in his own contribution to the public understanding that not only committed Nazis perpetrated the murder ("so the book has told us nothing new on this point"), but fears that Goldhagen may cast doubt on the ability of men in general, anywhere, to commit such atrocities. This, Augstein argues, would be "patently absurd". Yet is it? Must we all bear the mark of potential genocidal murderers in the name of some ideological universalism?

Goldhagen poses many thought-provoking questions. If it can be proven that in the 19th century antisemitism was a motivating force in Germany, where is the proof that it ceased to be so later? Under the Nazi regime, many Germans disagreed with some policies of their government, and did not hesitate to say so. Where is the evidence of widespread disapproval of the persecution of the Jews? Why do we assume the murderous conviction of other groups who have committed mass murder, yet insist that Germans killed for abstract sociological reasons? (Has anyone claimed that Hutus murdered merely for structural reasons, or that Serbs shelled Bosnian civilians because they were banal, and failed to understand the meaning of their actions?)

Goldhagen's meticulous reading of the documentation about the middle-aged, seemingly non-ideological policemen who murdered tens of thousands of Jews in Poland convincingly shows them to have been voluntarily brutal, beyond the call of duty. The same goes for his masterful description of a Death March at the end of the war. He repeatedly relates to photographs taken at the scene, often as mementos, and shows how proud the murderers were of their actions. A recent research project in the Yad Vashem photo archives reached similar conclusions, independently of Goldhagen. None of this can be regarded as conclusive evidence, but it demands that we rethink some of our current positions.

His many detractors brush aside his contention that German antisemitism was of a particularly virulent type. This should be demonstrated, not merely stated. The Jews were persecuted more relentlessly than anyone else. Could this have been a coincidence? There is, unfortunately, no lack of evidence that the murderers genuinely hated their Jewish victims.

His criticism of the terminology used by other historians is startling: A crowd watching a burning synagogue, taking no action to extinguish the fire, will be described as "indifferent," as are those who turn their backs as their Jewish neighbors are deported forever. Why not call them "callous," or "malicious"? Reading his book, one suspects that a systematic analysis of the language used by scholars will show an ideological bias that exonerates the community of Germans, even while it condemns individuals. Might this be the result of the historians' upbringing and conditioning, which shapes their understanding of the past?

There is no doubt that Hitler had tens of thousands of executioners at his service, perhaps far more. Many of them apparently were collected more or less at random from German (and Austrian) society, and almost none of them shirked their task. They frequently contributed, at their own initiative, much uncalled-for violence and cruelty. It seems reasonable to assume that the number of their compatriots who would have done the same, had they been called upon to do so, was large. All of this was known before Goldhagen's publication, and indeed it is puzzling that so many people are surprised by his findings.

As for his thesis that the hatred of the Jews can explain the facts, the proof he musters is not sufficient to be conclusive, but it certainly should suffice for a critical re-evaluation of accepted explanations.

As many critics of the book have noted, a major historical trend 30 years ago posited that the Germans were different (the Sonderweg explanation), and they castigate Goldhagen for taking us back a generation. Yet for all our efforts, we have yet to find a satisfying explanation for the perpetration of the Shoah. Perhaps this book should be seen as a challenge to us all, as a call for further research, not as a definitive last word. Attacking its author for his ideology or his style won't make his questions go away.

Hitler's Willing Executioners is an angry book. It is difficult to avoid the impression that the author was driven by tremendous rage as he wrote. Some of his formulations are sharper than necessary. However, before his detractors use his style and tone to discredit him, they should ask themselves how it is that they can read his material and remain calm. Although his scholarly stance may be somewhat impaired, his stature as a compassionate human being is enhanced by his emotion. Fortunately, for some people the brutal murder of millions of innocents is not yet a subject that can be discussed dispassionately, in learned tomes.

Yaacov Lozowick is the Director of Yad Vashem Archives
YAD VASHEM'S LIBRARY ACQUIRES RARE NAZI MAPS

On June 22, 1941, 55 years ago this month, the German armed forces invaded the Soviet Union, beginning the systematic mass murder of Jews in the cities, town and villages they conquered. In preparation for this attack, code-named "Operation Barbarossa," the German General Staff's department of cartography prepared detailed maps showing roads, railway lines and topographic features, as well as illustrated geographic handbooks for the territories they planned to conquer.

Yad Vashem's library - the world's only facility on such a scale, containing over 70,000 titles on the Holocaust - recently acquired a collection of these maps, comprising a significant contribution to its already rich collection of geographic resources. The new collection details the region of Belarus, including city plans for Białystok, Bobruisk, Borysław, Grodno and Minsk, where hundreds of thousands of Jews lived before the Holocaust.

Dr. Robert Rozett, director of the library at Yad Vashem, explains: "These maps were produced to ease the German military conquest and to facilitate the destruction of the Jews in the regions they detailed, so this compendium is of immense importance to scholars of the Holocaust today."

This collection is also of great practical and sentimental value to the descendants of Holocaust victims who inhabited the areas designated by the maps. Along with the handbooks, the maps enable them to locate the obscure places where their relatives lived out their last days. It was from these small towns and villages - which have either fallen into obscurity today, or long been totally obliterated from the map - that the Jews in these areas were taken away and murdered by the Nazis and their collaborators. Currently, the Yad Vashem library contains a collection of approximately 50 rare maps from the period.

1ST CONFERENCE ON HOLOCAUST EDUCATION

"The time has come to review what we have done and what we know about the field, to evaluate our activities and to focus on those areas in which serious attention is required in the immediate future. We need to take stock of how far we have come and to try to set the agenda toward the year 2000."

Avner Shalev, Chairman of the Yad Vashem Directorate, has set the theme for this year's "International Conference on Holocaust Education", to be held October 14-17 at Yad Vashem, Jerusalem, Israel.

The conference aims to reinforce relations between commemorative centers worldwide, developing channels of communication through which those teaching the Holocaust and its significance can exchange information and ideas. Participants will have an opportunity to examine the current state of the field, assessing it as the basis of their future efforts, present their programs and discuss each other's work. The themes will be examined in light of various disciplines: history, sociology, the creative arts and literature. Another avenue of enquiry will be the contribution of the electronic media: cinema, television, computers and multimedia.

The conference program, sponsored by the Central School of Holocaust Studies, will include in-depth probing of Holocaust teaching in Israel, the United States and Europe. A thorough survey of goals, assumptions, curricula, scholastic environments, teaching staffs and student populations will be made. The central feature of the conference will be the presentation of innovative study units produced by various centers worldwide. The conference, to be held in English and Hebrew, will include lectures, discussion groups, workshops and an education fair where various programs can be exhibited.

For further information, please contact Ms. Lea Roslovsky, Conference Coordinator, Yad Vashem, P.O.Box 3477, Jerusalem 91034, Israel. Fax: 972-2-751637/612/613/693
The American Society, chaired by Mr. Eli Zborowski, is currently renewing its activities in Los Angeles and the West Coast area. A festive dinner took place at the beginning of June in honor of Mr. Abraham (Abie) Spiegel, Chairman of the West Coast area, and Deputy Chairman of the Society, who was responsible for the establishment of Yad Vashem's Children Memorial and has been extremely active on behalf of Yad Vashem over the years. This event will herald the incoming of representatives of the Second Generation and of Mrs. Rita Spiegel.

A special fund-raising dinner will take place at the residence of Mr. Meshulam Riklis. The aim of the dinner is to support the completion of the new archive building, purchase of equipment and the upgrading of the computerization and retrieval systems which form part of Yad Vashem's "Masterplan 2001".

At the recent meeting of the Directorate of the American Society, it was decided to propose additional projects and increase its range of activities, including setting up additional branches of the American Society. Mr. Don Adelman has been appointed Director of the Head Office. He recently completed a comprehensive educational tour of Yad Vashem.

The generosity of Dr. Felix Zandman, Chairman and founder of the electronics multinational concern, Vichay, together with his wife Ruta, has enabled the establishment of the "Family Square" at Yad Vashem, which will be situated at the entrance of the International School of Holocaust Studies and the new Archives building.

The Panamanian Society is in the process of revitalizing its activities in support of Yad Vashem and the promotion of Holocaust education in Panama.

The reading and reference halls in the new Archives building will be erected with a generous endowment from the Schwartz Family.

The Israeli Society, within the framework of the Yad Vashem Fund chaired by Mr. Shlomo ("Chich") Lahat, has commenced its campaign to raise funds for the purchase of original works of art from the Holocaust period - works which had been hidden away in the ghettos, camps and other places. The Society has set its sights on purchasing an invaluable and unique collection of sketches, the work of Hungarian artist Ilke Gedo. This Budapest collection includes over 100 powerful sketches of ghetto studios from 1944, showing Jewish ghetto inhabitants awaiting their fate. The drawings, which display great sensitivity and artistic talent, will form an invaluable contribution to the world's largest Holocaust art collection, based at Yad Vashem.

Mr. Harst Nystad, one of the leading personalities of the Auction firm Christies -Europe, and who is himself a Holocaust survivor and a close friend of Yad Vashem, has, with the help of the Dutch Society led by Mr. Ab Caransa, been negotiating for the purchase of the 63 outstanding sketches of the Jewish artist, Adolph Aussenberg, on behalf of Yad Vashem's Museum of Art.

(Continued from page 11)

THE YAD VASHEM UVEELER PRIZE: PROMOTING HIGH SCHOOL PROJECTS

Yad Vashem provides prizes and scholarships from the Mark Uveeler and Leuba Uveeler Scholarships Fund for high school students interested in Holocaust studies. The competition aims to promote a high level of succinct and structured writing, theoretically sound and substantiated from wide-ranging sources. The prize-giving ceremony was held at Yad Vashem on May 30, 1996, in the presence of Mrs. Leuba Uveeler, Mr. Johanan Bein, Vice Chairman of the Directorate, Mr. Motti Shalem, Director of the Central School of Holocaust Studies and Mrs. Tikza Lev, Director of Uveeler Center for guidance of research projects.
PUBLICATIONS AND EVENTS

NEW PUBLICATIONS

Major Changes within the Jewish People in the Wake of the Holocaust: Proceedings of the Ninth Yad Vashem Historical Conference, Jerusalem edited by Yisrael Gutman. Yad Vashem, 1996, 700 pp., (Hebrew and English)

These 40 scholarly papers reflect a broad discussion of the effect of the Holocaust on the Jewish people. Beginning with trends in Jewish thought and public life in the late 19th century, they explore the link between antisemitism and the Holocaust, touching on the Jewish response during the Nazi period, Eretz Israel and the destruction of European Jewry, and the impact of the Holocaust on the Jewish people and universal society.

Among the most thought-provoking presentations are those of Steven Katz on the problems of comparative genocide, and of Yechiam Weitz, on the shaping memory of the Holocaust in Israel during the 1950's.

Holocaust Poetry, compiled by Hilda Schiff, Saint Martin's Press, New York, 1995, 234 pp., (English)

For students of the Holocaust, a knowledge of the historical events is clearly primary. Nonetheless, historical analysis alone cannot convey the essence of this vast subject. Fine art, too, must be must be brought into the attempt to approach an understanding of this overwhelming event.

Schiff's anthology of poetry is an important single volume resource, with contributions from celebrated poets - W.H. Auden, Nelly Sachs, Paul Celan - and from famous writers not widely known for their poetry, such as playwright Bertold Brecht or Shoa novelist Elie Wiesel. Much of the work in this volume is in translation, allowing readers the opportunity to familiarize themselves with the verse of important but lesser-known poets.

War, Holocaust and Stalinism: A Documented History of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee in the USSR, by Shimon Redlich, Harwood Academic Publishers, Luxembourg, 1995, 504 pp. (English)

Since the fall of the Communist regimes in Europe, much new documentary material about the Holocaust has become available. Using this, Redlich supplements his earlier study about the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee, written in 1982. He casts light on the origins of the Committee, its evolution into the representative body of Soviet Jewry during the war and its role as a repository for Holocaust documentation. Redlich includes an extremely interesting appendix.

The Last Ghetto: Life in the Lodz Ghetto, 1940-1944 by Michal Unger, Yad Vashem Publications, Jerusalem, 1995, 184 pp. (catalog in Hebrew and English)

The catalog of a temporary exhibit in the Yad Vashem Museum, this volume tells the story of the Lodz Ghetto through photographs, documents, artifacts, texts and testimonies. This unique ghetto was the longest-standing ghetto in Europe - the suffering of its inhabitants as agonizing as it was prolonged. The exhibit depicts the richness of life in Lodz despite intolerable ghetto conditions, and shows how Lodz Jewry clung to the hope that if they did their utmost to make the ghetto workforce indispensable to the Germans, some would survive to see the liberation.

MAY 8 AT YAD VASHEM

Ceremony to mark the Allied victory over Nazi Germany is declared a state event

On May 8, Yad Vashem commemorated V-E Day, paying homage to the bravery of the one and a half million Jewish fighters who fought in the Allied and Red Armies and the Resistance.

The ceremony, which was attended by former Prime Minister Mr. Shimon Peres, took place at the Fighters' Monument in the presence of over 2,000 war veterans. Also honored were Jewish partisans and fighters from Eretz Israel who volunteered for the British Forces and the Jewish Brigade. The event, organized by the Association of Jewish partisans and fighters from Eretz Israel, Disabled Veterans of the War Against Nazism and Yad Vashem, featured speeches by the Chairman of the Yad Vashem

Directorate, Brig. General (Reserves) Mr. Avner Shalev, Mr. Avraham Cohen, representing the Disabled War Veterans, and Dr. Netanel Lorch, representing the Jewish Brigade. Wreaths were laid by former fighters and partisans, representatives of the Righteous Among the Nations, the Second Generation, Yad Vashem, the IDF and the Israeli Government. The ceremony was concluded with the singing of "Hatikva", played by the IDF Orchestra.

The Ministerial Committee for Ceremonies and Symbols, headed by former Minister of Tourism Mr. Uzi Baram, has decided to establish the May 8 commemoration ceremony as an annual State event.