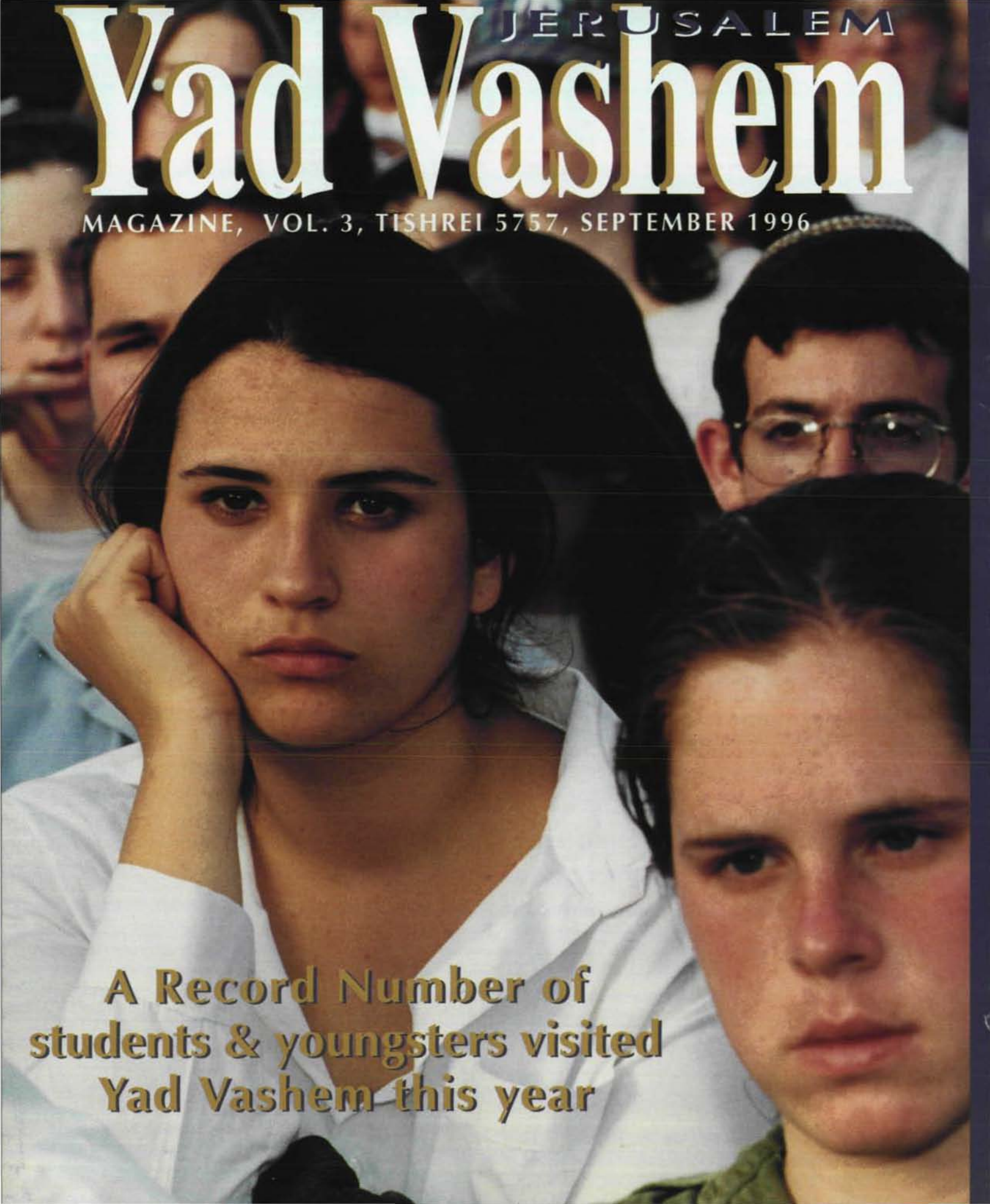


JERUSALEM

# Yad Vashem

MAGAZINE, VOL. 3, TISHREI 5757, SEPTEMBER 1996



**A Record Number of  
students & youngsters visited  
Yad Vashem this year**

# Editorial

**D**ear Readers and Friends, Shalom! As we approach the new year, and near the High Holidays, we find ourselves initiating a new age with novel plans and invigorated hopes.

The dawn of a new year brings with it a period of soul searching, introspection, ponderance and memory. Yad Vashem, The Remembrance Authority, diligently perpetuates the imperative of remembrance of the Holocaust and the Heroism and ensures its transmission to the next generation. Approximately 80,000 Israeli youths, 35,000 soldiers of the IDF and thousands of teachers, educators and scholars from Israel and abroad, Jews and non Jews, took part in Yad Vashem's educational activities and seminars.

With the opening of the new school year, 5757, we present you, our readers, with the Minister of Education and Culture's central tenets regarding Holocaust education. In addition, you shall read the fascinating story of Israeli choreographer Yehudit Arnon, who is a Holocaust survivor; and we shall review the activities of Yad Vashem's Testimony Department which is currently cooperating with Director Steven Spielberg. In the "2001" column we shall report on Holocaust research and the activities of the International Institute of Holocaust Studies. Finally, we are pleased to include an exclusive interview with the famous international Jewish educationalist Rabbi Israel Miller.

On the opening of the new school year, we call for the million and a half Israeli school children to remember those million and a half Jewish children who did not complete their studies, who were persecuted and whose life was cruelly stolen at such a young age. Remember. Remember and hope: that this year and its misfortunes close, bringing on a new year full of blessing.

*Avital E. Baer*

*Ms. Avital Baer, Editor*

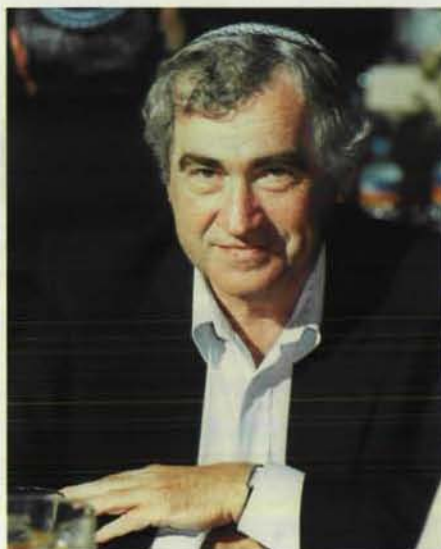
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Cover: *Youngsters at Yad Vashem,  
Yom Ha'Shoah, 1996.*

# Learn to

## A New Year Message



By Michal Morris Kamil

“Education” is at the root of any form of imparting the history of the Holocaust. It is thus a core element of Yad Vashem's "Masterplan 2001". The International School of Holocaust Studies, officially recognized by The Ministry of Education, has been outstandingly successful in its extensive educational activities. In the Minister's opinion, what role can the school play within the context of the compulsory hours allocated for Holocaust studies in the school curriculum?

The aim of the school is three-fold:

- The Israeli educational community's establishment of the school is indicative of its belief that it is the State of Israel's Jewish national imperative for this generation to teach the entire spectrum of Holocaust studies to future generations.
- Despite the fact that the Holocaust occurred in the first part of this century, research is still in its infancy. New documents are uncovered daily, new testimonials are provided and the factual evidence constantly increases. It is our responsibility to impart all the updated factual material. It is only by investigating the events that we may fully comprehend the historical, philosophical and religious implications of the greatest tragedy to befall our people and

the most atrocious failure of mankind.

- Teaching about the Holocaust also means teaching about Israel, its establishment, and its Jewish purpose. One cannot fully grasp the meaning of total destruction within Jewish terms without incorporating the notion of universal abandonment at a time when there was no Jewish state.

The Israeli "life experience" exposes the child at a tender age to the siren blasted during the commemorative minute on Holocaust Remembrance Day. Children are frequently exposed to the horrific scenes from the Holocaust in the media. Yad Vashem's International School of Holocaust Studies is aware of the dozens of requests made by primary-school teachers and kindergarten staff who are lacking the pedagogical tools needed to deal with the pressing issues of the Holocaust raised by their pupils. In cooperation with the Ministry of Education, the school is in the process of preparing programs suitable to this age level. Can you expand on the value of such programs? Do you consider it necessary to develop such programs within the compulsory Holocaust curriculum so as to include the younger ages?

In the course of broadening the compulsory educational program, the possibilities of applying and extending them to all ages will be checked. I have no doubts that we are committed to face this challenge of inculcating a primary understanding of the phenomenon which was to change the face of mankind. But painful dilemmas are faced by those educators whose contact with the Holocaust was so recent. Their task of providing suitable answers to cope with the encounter between the blossoming and growing child and the most destructive and murderous face of man is problematic. We need more time, not only because of the perspective that time provides, but more importantly, in order to gain the pedagogical courage constituted by a deeper understanding. It is essential that the cooperation

# Remember

*from The Minister of Education and Culture Zevulun Hammer*

between the experts of the Ministry of Education and the educators of Yad Vashem will continue and be enhanced.

30,000 youths visited Poland during the past ten years. As you well know, the Ministry of Education incorporates within the itinerary of this difficult visit to the sites of murder, a visit to a place where there once existed, before the Holocaust, an active Jewish community. What is the educational rationale behind this?

It is essential to confront the Israeli youth not only with the places and the methods of genocide but with Jewish life of the Diaspora, as this provides even deeper meaning as to the destruction of the Jewish communities' rich and colorful existence. All this depends on the integration of these tours with the material taught back in Israel.

The central theme within the educational establishment of the new year is "The Centenary of The First Zionist Congress". How does this integrate itself with Holocaust studies?

I will emphasize one central issue in this complex question. Political Zionism was aware for years preceding the Holocaust that the Diaspora cannot provide a permanent basis of existence for the Jewish people. The enormous impact of the Holocaust does not change the fact that it is still part of an historic continuum. Had we had a state of Israel, in other words, had the Jews uprooted themselves and immigrated to Israel, not only would they have been saved from the Holocaust, but the Holocaust couldn't have happened. When we celebrate a centenary of The First Zionist Congress, we must remember that in light of our tragedy, Zionism was a hundred years too late.

Yad Vashem is up-to-date on the educational programs in existence in countries such as Uruguay, Britain, Germany and many states in the U.S.A. which in some places

are compulsory within the curriculum. How does the Minister explain this increase in interest internationally?

We must not regard this as an attempt to atone for the crime, or for the silence of those who bore witness. It is a fact that the Holocaust

happened to us and us alone, because throughout our existence we have stood alone. We weren't exterminated for being different, but for being Jewish. The Holocaust sensitizes us to the hatred of strangers, of the weak, and the persecuted. These are the universal messages of the Holocaust.



## 30,000 Israeli Youths Visit Poland

Over the past 10 years, 30,000 Israeli youths visited remnants of Poland's Jewish communities and the death camps. The study tours, a week in length, take place following special preparation and guidance in Israel by expert educators, many from Yad Vashem.

The Israeli youth delegations are organized by The Social and Youth Educational Administration of The Ministry of Education, and independently, by local authorities, youth movements, The United Kibbutz Movements, and schools. The Ministry of Education has trained dozens of youth leaders to guide the tours in Poland. The schools are provided with special assistance so as to include on the tours youths from disadvantaged populations.

Other activities include "The March of the Living" on Holocaust Remembrance Day, which involves over 5000 youths from Israel and the Diaspora, 40 countries altogether. The march, from Auschwitz to Birkenau, is organized by a non-profit organisation. Due to the great demand of Jewish communities worldwide to send their youth on the March, it has recently been decided to hold it annually and not every two years, and to include a visit by the youth to another European country, so that they may study the history of another Jewish community as part of the overall Jewish mosaic of our times. The Ministry of Education has arranged for Holocaust survivors from Israel to accompany the pupils. The survivors will present living testimony of



the horrors of the Nazi genocide and will serve as a link between the Israeli pupils and the Jewish victims of the Holocaust. This dialogue between the survivor and the Israeli pupil is a key element of the trip.

# Remembrance

*The Hall of Names Receives 3000 new  
"Pages of Testimony" per Month*



By Michal Morris Kamil

*Hall of Names at Yad Vashem where the names of millions of Victims are gathered individually*

**F**ebuary 19, 1996, Rochester, New York: Miriam Levine sends a request via the Internet to Yad Vashem, to check whether her great aunt, Sonya Levine, who perished in Treblinka, is registered in the "Pages of Testimony".

Fifty years. Fifty years of collective and individual memories. Fifty years which have finally enabled some survivors to come to terms with the loss of their loved ones at the hands of the Nazis and to perform a final act of remembrance and respect. Fifty years which have produced a third generation of youth who out of respect for their elders, or in search of roots have filled in "Pages of Testimony", and thus erected a memorial on paper for those millions whose burial sites are unknown. The special acid-free "Pages" requires a picture, if available, the full name of the relative, his or her place of residence before and during the war, occupation, and when and where they perished during the Holocaust.

The Hall of Names at Yad Vashem contains millions of names of victims, most of them testimonials filled in by the families and friends of those murdered during the Holocaust. Over the years there have been campaigns to collect names, the first in the mid-fifties following the mass Aliya. Hundreds of thousands of "Pages of Testimony" were filled in

by many relatives and friends after they had sought out the whereabouts of kin in the DP camps, via the Red Cross, the broadcasts on Israeli radio, and the archives of various camps. And yet, there were those who refused to partake in the project, hoping that their search for missing relatives would bear fruit. For others, the finality of declaring a death was too traumatic. Over the years, people continued to fill in forms, and they still do to this very day.

Following the large waves of immigration from the former Soviet Union in the early 90's a growing flow of "Pages of Testimony" has been received. In an effort to reach Holocaust survivors and witnesses who are still among us, it was decided to renew the campaign of collecting names. In 1995, the program was piloted in Kiryat Gat and Carmiel under the direction of Yad Vashem's Rachel Barkai, Director of the Public Relations Department and Alexander Avraham, Director of the Hall of Names, and in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, local councils and the Automation Society. The two projects extended over 5 days, and involved 900 pupils from six schools in the two towns. The pupils visited private houses, old age homes and community centers. The result: 7,000 new "Pages of Testimony" were completed and filed.

The benefits were even greater, as the youth

encountered survivors and their families who provided them with direct insight and perspective on the extent of the tragedy. There were some who shared personal belongings related to the Holocaust with these kids: photos, Siddurim and items from the concentration camps; and yet there were others who refused to talk with them, stipulating that what they know will accompany them to their graves.

The collection of names has been taking place throughout the world. Approximately 3,000 names are recorded per month by visiting Jewish tourists, and through foreign-based Jewish organisations such as the "Comité Francais" of Paris, Jewish museums from Sydney to Toronto, Jewish communities in New York, Pretoria, Copenhagen and other places throughout the world. In addition, there have been many others who have made concerted efforts to put people in touch with Yad Vashem. However, it is believed that tens of thousands of people still don't know of the existence of this project, for example, in many Kibbutzim and Moshavim in Israel.

The Hall of Names is mellowly lit. The rays penetrate the stained glass windows and fall onto the rows of shelving containing folders with millions of "Pages of Testimony" alphabetically ordered. They are catalogued in Hebrew for two reasons. Hebrew is Israel's official language and by doing so, it allows



# HOLOCAUST

## Yad Vashem's International Institute at the

“ We venture to hope that these studies will constitute a source of encouragement to scholars to collaborate in this field. Study of the destruction of European Jewry is more than a duty devolving upon our generation: it is the personal responsibility of each and every one of us.”

Ben-Zion Dinur, former Minister of Education and Chairman of the Yad Vashem Directorate.  
Editor's note to the first issue of the *Yad Vashem Studies*, 1957

Since 1944 Yad Vashem has been engaged in gathering documents and other material from Jewish and non-Jewish archives and private collections throughout the world. The aim of this enterprise is to obtain all available documentation of the Holocaust period and to store it in the Yad Vashem archives. The spectrum of source materials includes data on the political situation between the world wars, Nazi ideology and anti-Jewish policy, chronicles of former Jewish communities, details of the extermination of the Jews and Jewish resistance in all its forms. The Yad Vashem archives serve as a historiographical base for research and study. In addition, testimonies of survivors provide invaluable

insight into life before, during and after the dark era of the Holocaust, and are used by large numbers of researchers in Yad Vashem and worldwide.

Over the past twenty years Yad Vashem has held scientific conferences on various important subjects related to the Holocaust, with the participation of world-class Holocaust scholars. Past conference themes include Jewish leadership during the Holocaust, rescue measures, historiography of the Holocaust, Holocaust survivors, the concentration camps, and Jewish resistance.

In 1957 the first edition of the *Yad Vashem Studies* was published, the world's only comprehensive scientific publication on the Holocaust.

Among the subjects currently under research at Yad Vashem are antisemitism;

ographies on the Holocaust. A notable characteristic of these publications is the use of Jewish source material and the application of a Jewish perspective to the various issues under discussion.

Yad Vashem's "Scientific Advisory Committee" was established some 25 years ago in order to coordinate the activities and curricula of academic institutions in Israel. It was chaired by Professor Yisrael Gutman, a senior member of the Yad Vashem academic staff who was responsible for both academic coordination and the supervision of Yad Vashem's scientific publications. 1990 saw the publication of the *Encyclopaedia of the Holocaust*, a work of major importance in which Professor Gutman served as both editor and scientific advisor. The *Encyclopaedia* has appeared in Hebrew, English and German editions.

In 1993 Yad Vashem founded the International Institute for Holocaust Studies, an autonomous, scientifically-independent academic body headed by Professor Gutman, which coordinates between academic institutions worldwide. Professor Gutman was responsible for establishing the professional criteria for the Institute's publications and for the formation of a highly professional and respected team of scholars. Among next year's guest scholars, for example, are Professor Saul Friedlander and Dr. Suzanna Heim. The Institute's activities include:

1. Provision of annual scholarships for six senior postgraduates to develop scientific projects and discuss specific issues with Institute staff, in addition to producing joint papers (see box).
2. Initiation of research projects such as the scientific publication of the Emmanuel Ringelblum diaries, the multi-volume *Lexicon of the Righteous Among the Nations*, and a collection of last letters of Holocaust victims to reach the outside-world.
3. Organization of conferences and academic debates, many of them open to the general public, such as the recent discussion of Daniel Jonah Goldhagen's new book, *Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust*.
4. Publication of scholarly works, including the *Yad Vashem Studies*.



Hitler's rise to power; the conditions which enabled the Holocaust to take place, and the attitude of the Nazi-occupied countries and the free world to the Holocaust. In its capacity as a commemorative institute, Yad Vashem is also issuing a series of *Pinkasei Kehillot* to memorialize Jewish communities destroyed by the Germans. Fifteen volumes have been published to date. Other Yad Vashem publications include scholarly works, memoirs, chronicles, diaries, and catalogues of bibli-



# RESEARCH

## Forefront of Shoah Studies

The Institute's most recent publication is *Major Changes within the Jewish People in the Wake of the Holocaust: Proceedings of the Ninth Yad Vashem International Conference*.

5. Cooperation with academic bodies in Israel and abroad on Holocaust research.
6. Combatting Holocaust denial and revisionism, while preserving an open approach to new interpretations and views in the field.

According to Professor Gutman there is a new trend towards revisionism and relativism within Holocaust studies: "There is a growing tendency to ignore the role of antisemitism

within modern radical ideologies, and especially within the Nazi movement and its final solution".

At the end of August 1996, Professor Yehuda Bauer will replace Professor Gutman as Director of the Institute, after the latter completes a most productive 3-year term of office. The position of director is shared in rotation between the two professors, both of whom are Holocaust scholars of international renown.

From September, Professor Gutman will occupy the post of Yad Vashem's chief scholar-in-residence.

### Visiting German Scholar from London at Yad Vashem



Peter Longerich, born in Germany and residing in England, is a reader at the Royal Holloway College in the University of London. He has published numerous books dealing with the Weimar Republic and the rise of the Nazi Party and its political-military machine.

In 1996 Longerich was invited by the International Institute for Holocaust Studies at Yad Vashem to prepare a collection of documents on the deportation of Jews from Central Europe to Riga, Kaunas and Minsk during the years 1941 and 1942. Longerich worked in close

cooperation with Yad Vashem's senior scholars on this project.

The project's central aim is to fully reconstruct the fate of the 60,000 deportees, who originated from Austria, Germany and Czechoslovakia and were sent during the second wave of deportations, following Lodz, to the occupied territories of the Soviet Union in November, 1941. The documentation uncovered by Longerich reports the mass murder of those in the transports. They also describe the terrible suffering under horrific conditions of tens of thousands of Jews in the Riga and Minsk ghettos.

Longerich's work also includes a synopsis of the decision-making process relating to these particular deportations, which took place at the same time as those relating to the "Final Solution", and he provides an hypothesis as to the relation between the two.

The historiographic sources include Gestapo deportation orders, train timetables of the trains used for deportation, memoirs and diaries of Jewish survivors, eastern-based German administrative documents, testimonies by Jewish and non-Jewish witnesses, Soviet Commission reports prepared immediately after the war evaluating Nazi crimes, and material from the post-war trials. The collection will include documents from Yad Vashem, archives in the United States, Lithuania, Latvia, Russia and Germany.

For Longerich, the main theme behind this project is the use of material from totally different sources and in an array of languages, which through correlation and cross-referencing help us to gain a deeper understanding of this particular historical event. In addition, Longerich maintains that in order to obtain a broad and thorough understanding of the Holocaust there must be close cooperation on an international level between experts in the field. In reference to German Studies, Longerich feels that it is impossible to understand German history unless one places the Holocaust within the German historic continuum, and not to treat it as an isolated and unrelated period in German history.

By GA

## 50 Years Since the Kielce pogrom: Poles express regret



On July 4th, 1946, a mere year following the liberation of the concentration and death camps, 42 Jews were murdered and 50 wounded by a police-backed savage mob that attacked the Jewish Committee's building on Planty Avenue, Kielce, where 200 Jews lived. Among them were members of "HaNoar Hatzioni" who were destined for Israel and awaiting exit visas.

This tragic episode accelerated and enlarged the "Berihah" (escape) movement. Many survivors realized that rehabilitation and resettlement were impossible in their former homeland. Many reached Eretz Yisrael.

This summer, 50 years later, the Polish leadership have expressed their regret and shame. In a ceremony which took place by the building where the Pogrom began, The Prime Minister of Poland, Cimoszewicz, described the horrors of the pogrom which was inflicted upon those survivors. "We must learn our lessons from history" said the Polish Premier to an audience of local residents and representatives from Jewish organizations from throughout the world. "We feel deep remorse for what we Poles have done to the Jews and we beg their forgiveness. We want to reconcile and form a partnership between the two nations".

Breaking the ice within the academic world, a number of Polish historians have contended that there was deliberate provocation by the pro-Soviet administration and others. Yad Vashem's chief historian, Professor Gutman, indicates that until now there has been no proof to substantiate this claim. "There is no doubt that this murderous Pogrom was cruelly committed by the local population and in light of the large number of visitors, the official position of the Polish government, professing regret, is imperative".

By Michal Morris Kamil

**A**vocados, apples, bananas and kiwis all grow on the road to Kibbutz Gaaton. Situated near the Lebanese border, this remote and lush settlement, surrounded by forests and frontier hillocks, is the home of one of Israel's leading choreographers, Yehudit Arnon, who is the Artistic Director of The Kibbutz Contemporary Dance Company, and the Dance Center, both situated on the Kibbutz.

On approaching the Kibbutz my doubts grow as to the relevance of the theme of the imminent interview, "Memory"; surrounded by such an abundance of natural beauty and serenity, why would memory need to encroach upon a perfect setting for pure creativity.

Yehudit Arnon, winner of numerous prizes for her contribution to the Arts, greets us in her office, her home. The walls are filled with pictures of movement and dancers, her shelves filled with books on the art, and no hint of a sombre, tragic past. Laughter, talk, steps and the voice of the dancing instructor fill the air. All is vital and alive.

"I assume you have read everything I have said about Auschwitz and the period that preceded it in my hometown, Komarno on the Czech-Hungarian border. My family was orthodox, you know. I never danced at home, it must have been latent. At school I transformed the gym class into a movement studio. That was my first choreographical experience. When I was 12, as a result of the Nazi invasion, I had to stop school. I found solace for the next few years spinning wool. Those years provided me with the opportunity to dream and create, if only in the mind. In addition, the Zionist youth movement "Hashomer Hatzair", to which I went secretly, provided me with artistic enrichment and opened an entirely new cultural world from which I had been cut off at home".

In 1944 Yehudit and her mother stood in the rows facing selection. Despite Yehudit's

**" It is sweet to dance to violins  
 When Love and Life are fair:**

**To dance to flutes, to dance to lutes  
 Is delicate and rare:**

**But it is not sweet with nimble feet  
 To dance upon the air!"**

Oscar Wilde:  
*The ballad of Reading Goal II*

# The **m** **o**



insistence on remaining together the infamous Dr. Mengele tried to convince her that as she was able-bodied, she should go to work, promising her that he would "care" for her mother. "You know, for a month I really believed that she was being cared for", Yehudit comments, her eyes moist. Yehudit was sent to slave labor, her task was to carry rocks, pointlessly, from place to place. Her captors beat her and broke two discs in her spine. In search of hope, Yehudit would mark a stone in the quarry in the anticipation that she would find it the following day. "On discovering the stone, I was the happiest person on this earth. Look how I started from nothing and what simple things made me happy..."

In her dance, "Elegy" created for a Holocaust ceremony at Kibbutz Lohamei Hagetaot in 1969, music by Mordechai Seter, the essence of her traumatic memories are expressed in scenes of directionless walking and pointless movement, emphasizing the futility of life.

In his introduction to the book, "Art of the Holocaust" author Irving Howe makes the following comment:

**"Is "the debris of our misery" (as one survivor has called it) a proper manageable subject for stories and novels? Are there not perhaps extreme situations beyond the reach of art? Should not art have a sufficient sense of its own limitations to keep a certain distance from the unspeakable? I raise these questions to suggest the extreme difficulty in any effort at an imaginative representation of the Holocaust. But about one thing there can be no doubt: that every piece of honest testimony, every unadorned recollection by the victims, both those who survived and those who did not, is precious. It is precious whether it comes from professional writers and artists or from ordinary people grappling to leave a trace of their presence before the smoke rises from the gas chambers".**

The theme of memory implants itself within many of Yehudit's compositions, and as all artistic works, they evolve a life and character of their own. The ballet, "Aide Memoire" choreographed by The Kibbutz Dance Company's Resident Artist, Rami Be'er



*Pictures: "Aide Memoire" - The theme of memory in the ballet*



# tion of life



ading Israeli Choreographer Yehudit Arnon Brings the Past to the Present Through Dance



in 1994, himself the son of a Holocaust survivor, is a perfect example of this process. Be'er intended the ballet to be an artistic protest against racism, and yet, as a result of their working together, it was inevitable that Yehudit's personal experience of the Holocaust was everpresent in the process of the ballet's creation. "It became obvious that racism and the Holocaust found the most natural of meeting grounds."

One scene of the ballet involves the leading female dancer striding from one pillar to another, as though floating on air. This image is deeply rooted in Yehudit's experience in Auschwitz as she, weighing 28 kilos, danced before an audience of a thousand headshaven, starving women prisoners, on the wooden planks which served as beds for the inmates. When ordered by the German commanding staff to perform for them in their Christmas party, Yehudit refused. "I was convinced that they'd shoot me, and as life was so unbearable, I didn't really care. We were so helpless, we weren't even permitted to die. But they didn't shoot. Instead, they stood me outside in the

snow, endlessly. My feet frozen, and unable to move, I swore to myself that should I survive, I would commit my whole being to dance".

Hate, revenge, good, evil and determination are all components of the human character, who is involved, according to Yehudit, in a constant struggle to balance between them. In her dance, "The Three" (A Trio) 3 males representing earth, wind and water appear initially to be in harmony with one another. Yet, the differences between them burst forth, causing violence and aggression. "The appearance of difference is part of nature's course and is inevitable, as is revenge. Violence is one aspect of this and dance too, in its essence, contains a certain type of violence as the dancer, an artistic masochist, suffers great pain in attempting to reach the perfectly authentic movement. When one reaches the limit of movement, the dancer knows that he or she has reached both the movement's truth and his own. This is the soul of dancing".

But she herself does not hate, and considers it a personality fault on her part." I accept

each person and his mistakes. There is no good without evil and vice versa. After the liberation of the concentration camp a group of prisoners savagely attacked a few remaining German soldiers. I simply walked away, not hating but crying. Why didn't I feel the need to revenge? Something's wrong with me". In 1988 the Kibbutz Contemporary Dance Company visited Germany and spoke to many of the local population, including German choreographer Suzanna Linke with whom Arnon made a joint film.

"Many people asked me how I can dance and work with Germans. I had no problems with this because I see people as individuals. It's not people that cause hate in me, but rather their actions and behaviour. As far as I'm concerned my involvement in dances such as "Soweto", which was my last solo performance, and "A Diary of Reserve Duty", choreographed by Rami Be'er, are expressions of protest against racism and oppression. These ballets are the artistic expressions of human freedom".

# W I S U A L

By Galit Aberjiell

## *Yad Vashem uses advanced technology to bring to life tragic*

**T**he Israeli parliament, the Knesset, on passing the law in 1953 establishing The Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Authority, intended to erect a framework to commemorate, congregate, research, publicize and educate towards the memory of the Holocaust throughout the world.

One of the central enterprises of remembrance and perpetuation at Yad Vashem is the Testimonial project, which commemorates the testimonies of Holocaust survivors using the most advanced technological means, and by doing so, erects a tombstone for all those who did not survive.

The Department for the ingathering of Testimonies headed by Ms. Iris Berlatzki invites survivors from all over Israel to tell their and their dearests' personal stories. Nowadays, more than in past years, survivors are willing to share the tales of their lives during the Holocaust with the younger generation.

Thousands of survivors' depositions are captured on video and bring to life the painful testimonies of the tragedy and destruction that the Jewish people underwent. The interviews uncover dramatic and intriguing stories, some recalled for the first time. The survivors bring to the surface the darkest, most hidden parts of their hearts, retracing the most horrific scenes experienced in their childhood, linking up with their parents and siblings, many of whom were murdered or fell victim to the terrible struggle for survival during the Holocaust. A large number of witnesses feel that by providing testimonies they are serving as emissaries for those who perished and thus cannot relay their pasts; "to tell what happened back there"...

Yad Vashem trains its interviewers psychologically and emotionally by means of workshops and expert lecturers, to enable them to listen to the testimonies, most of which are extremely difficult and painful.

The director of the department, Iris Berlatzky, explains that the interviewers enable the survivors to place themselves at the center of the testimony and to recall their personal stories at their own pace and in accordance to their ability to cope with the agonizing

memories. Simultaneously, the interviewers attempt to adhere to the historical chronology so that in the future these testimonies will provide raw historical material for scholars, artists and all who deal with the Holocaust.

The interviewer must cope with forms of repression and their causes, and to be sensitized to the fact that, at times, silence contains a painful and traumatic experience which must be exposed sensitively and carefully.

For the interviewer, the testimonial procedure is difficult; he has to be attentive and prepared for all the nuances appearing in the Holocaust testimonies and to foresee the conclusions drawn by the witness, understanding that at times they are laden with guilt or are recalled from a different perspective in time.

The testimony contains scenes from a life which is no longer in existence: a Jewish world predating the Holocaust, described as a lost paradise. In nearly every story the personal fate of the survivor is intertwined with that of the Jewish people. Life in its fullest is described by the witness. The survivors survey a lifetime, reaching out for their past roots in their native homeland while linking it to its future: their personal rehabilitation, establishment of families and raising of children and grandchildren, events which symbolize for many a personal revenge against Hitler.

The importance of these testimonies lies in its contribution to the field of research dealing with aspects of survival as it pertains to the human race in

general. In addition, they contribute to the understanding of historical detail of the Second World War and the history of the Jewish people. The witnesses' narrative introduces an understanding of the Holocaust beyond literary texts.

Yoram Friedman's story is an intriguing and heart-rending example of a testimonial collected in this project. It is the testimony of the colossal struggle for survival of a young boy during the Holocaust. Born in Blonie, Poland, Yoram, aged 7, escaped the Warsaw ghetto alone, leaving his family behind. He faced death innumerable times as he evaded the detection of German soldiers and Polish informers, learning to cope with the permanent dread of being discovered. For days on end he would roam the forests, barefoot and hungry, and survived on the leftover food stolen from local peasants. His only friends were the surrounding animals.

Then, one day, having been discovered and running for his life, he hid in a potato field where he encountered a bearded man crawling towards him. It was his father. Excited, they embraced but his father instructed him to continue on alone, with the parting words: "From today, you are Yurik Stanyk... You must not divulge your Jewishness as Germans kill Jews with Polish help...you must invent stories about your family...Never



# REALITY

*memories of the survivors, to the younger generations.*

admit to being Jewish!... If you spot a German escape to the forests, because the Germans fear Partisans...If their dogs chase you jump into the water or into a swamp, where the dogs lose their sense of smell ... You should find someone to teach you how to pray in Polish... We must not remain together. Go, it's the only means to life".

Once again Yoram was forced to part from his father. After a short while he heard gun shots. This small boy later served as witness to his father's murder by the Germans, who left him lying in the field to die.

Later, on a day when Yoram hid in a haystack loaded in a cart he was exposed for a reward by the driver. The German officer offered the driver a cigarette, and at that moment Yoram made a run for the nearby swamp and forest but was caught. The German officer took pity on the boy and found a job for him, working with German women during the harvesting period. At work his hand got caught in a shredder and was severely lacerated. Following a short period in hospital, his hand amputated, and having been deliberately starved for being Jewish, he escaped.

Towards the end of the war, one night, while hiding in a pit in a potato field, Yoram heard Russian. On awaking, he was surrounded by Russian soldiers who invited him to accompany them on their mission of revenge against the Germans.

Yoram Friedman, who for years lived as a hunted animal, lost all contact with his former identity and his Jewishness. Repeatedly, local Jewish communities attempted to adopt him to no avail, and he continued to present himself as a Polish Christian, an identity which in the past served as his ticket to life.

During his wanderings he arrived in his native city, Blonie, where he met an acquaintance who informed him that his entire family was murdered with the exception of his sister. Yoram reunited with his sister 23 years later in Israel.

For 50 years Yoram withheld his story. Then, within the framework of Yad Vashem's Testimonial project, following an emotional meeting with childhood friends at Yad Vashem, Yoram opened up, and today he speaks to pupils and students at the Holocaust Study Center at Wohlin House, Tel Aviv. 50 years after the Holocaust, Yoram Friedman continues to relate his story to the younger generations.

## A NEW AGE OF COOPERATION



**Steven Spielberg**, one of the most famous producers of the international film industry and who is best known for his film "Schindler's Lists", recently met with the Chairman of the Yad Vashem Directorate, Avner Shalev, to discuss joint cooperation between Yad Vashem and Spielberg's "Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation", established in the summer of 1994. For the past decade, Yad Vashem has been making thousands of video clips of the testimonies of Holocaust survivors who are living in Israel. Spielberg's Foundation, in close cooperation with Yad Vashem, will film 50,000 Holocaust survivors throughout the world, interviewing in several languages and using the most sophisticated equipment in existence today. The videos will be made available on-line to 5 major repository stations situated in the five central institutions dealing with Holocaust studies: Yad Vashem, Jerusalem, The Simon Wiesenthal Center, Los Angeles, The Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington D.C., The Museum of Jewish Heritage, New York, and The Fortunoff Video Archives at Yale University. At any of these repository stations it will be possible for the potential viewer to gain access to the largest collection of video testimonies in the world. The master copy will remain in the Yad Vashem archives along with the 40,000 existing testimonies recorded in various forms since the end of the Second World War.

To this date over 16,000 survivors have been interviewed and videofilmed throughout the world, in countries such as Poland, Argentina, the U.S. and Israel by a staff specially trained by Spielberg's Foundation. In Israel, the Foundation has had the close cooperation of Yad Vashem, and has trained over 300 interviewers.

Spielberg and Shalev also discussed the possibilities of developing joint multimedia educational programs in light of Yad Vashem's central educational role in Holocaust Studies and its expertise in making use of the survivors' testimonies for educational purposes, while benefitting from Spielberg's expertise in producing audio-visual materials. The International School for Holocaust Studies situated at Yad Vashem will be directly involved in these projects. These films will prove an invaluable source for the creation of the most updated educational media suited for Junior High school students.

**Caption: Steven Spielberg (right) and Avner Shalev (left) at the premier screening of the film "Schindler's Lists", which took place in Israel under the auspices of Yad Vashem and The Hebrew University. Yad Vashem held a number of special showings especially for those survivors saved by Schindler, and their families.**

# GRODNO

## *The Fall of a Thriving Jewish Community;*

### *Dr. Tikva Fatal - Canaani's Recent Thesis Sheds Light on Jewish Life in Grodno*

By Michal Morris Kamil

In a small, narrow office, looking out onto a lush green lawn, Dr. Tikva Fatal - Knaani bids me "Shalom" and to take a seat. Tikva, a member of Yad Vashem's archives staff, has recently completed her doctorate on the Jewish community of Grodno during the Second World War and the Holocaust, 1939-1944. As she enthusiastically describes the course of her research and her attempts at learning Russian, Yiddish and currently German, one can't help wondering what brought Tikva, of Iraqi origin, to specialize in Holocaust studies.

"The Holocaust is unique to the Jewish people as a whole. My interest comes from sharing common roots and identifying myself with a collective entity; it's deeply embedded in me. Perhaps in past times there was a professional and academic exclusivity amongst Holocaust survivors and their Second Generation, but today the field is open and tolerant and the academic atmosphere does not necessitate solely studying your parents annihilated communities."

A small community that was rich in Jewish culture, education, religious and political pluralism and Zionist identification, Grodno provided a wealth of historiographic material. Personal letters sent to and from relatives in Palestine, diaries, notebooks, official letters and petitions from the community's leadership, documentation of the various educational establishments, newspapers, political party pamphlets, etc., are just a few of Tikva's sources.

In November, 1993, Tikva visited Grodno for the first time. The harsh winter, the endless wait in queues, the encounter with a community of but a 1000 Jews, mostly from Bellorussia, and only four survivors originating from Grodno and the near vicinity, brought Tikva closer to her subject of study. During those few weeks Tikva surveyed the documentation in Grodno's official regional archives. There she discovered material dating through 1939. Aided by Grodno's Zvi Chassid, a Holocaust survivor who escaped a train headed for the Treblinka death camp and who joined and fought with Belski's Partisans for the remainder of the war, Tikva deciphered documents written in Polish, Yiddish and German which proved invaluable to her work.

Back in Israel, Tikva established contact with a family in Kibbutz Kfar Menachem. The father, Avraham Broide, who recently passed

away, immigrated from Grodno back in 1932. He provided Tikva with an invaluable collection of letters from his kin back in Grodno from before and during the war years. The letters, sent by his younger sister, mother and brother, paint a picture of an illustrious and thriving community which disintegrates and withers away as a result of Russia's occupation following the Ribbentrop-Molotov agreement of 1939 and Hitler's invasion in the summer of 1941. Out of a community of 25,000, who represented 42% of Grodno's general community, approximately 250 Jews survived until the end of the war. The majority perished in Auschwitz.

"That moment when the elderly Avraham handed over to me his most personal and most treasured possessions was the most touching and inspiring in my life," Tikva said, her eyes moist. "I felt as though I had been ordained on a special mission to commemorate, not only his family who had perished in the gas chambers of Poland, but the memory of an entire community."

Another vital source of information discovered by Tikva lay in the archives of Yad Vashem. A notebook, written by the young teacher Zhukovsky, a Communist in his political orientation, provided invaluable insight into the coexistence of political and religious fringes amongst Grodno's Jewish community. Hiding in a potato mound stacked in a peasant's cellar, he was given a notebook by the farmer's wife, Katya, whereupon he decides to write a last will and testament thanking her for her brave deeds and calling for the permanent struggle against Fascism. His writings also contain fierce condemnation of Grodno's Judenrat, the local Jewish council, condemning them for cooperating with the German authorities.

In the aktions of November, 1942, January and February, 1943, the two ghettos of Grodno were liquidated, the Jews sent to Auschwitz and Treblinka. The remaining 1,148 Jews were sent to the Bialystok ghetto on the 12th of March, 1943. A few managed to escape and find shelter for the remainder of the war. Others joined the partisans in the forests. But the majority had nowhere to go and remained, hoping that this terrible period would pass.

"The role of the Judenrat is extremely problematic. As in many ghettos, the Judenrat, at gunpoint, had to execute the German military command's orders and thus may be regarded as inexcusably passive,





# ZCHOR U'SHMOR

*The new Archives as Active Jewish Education*

By Michal Morris Kamil

“ I see Jewish education as imperative; particularly for the next generation who did not live through the Holocaust and who did not witness the establishment of the State of Israel. It is easier for youngsters to grasp contemporary Jewish history than to bring them back to what transpired to the Jews in the Middle Ages. It's not as difficult to bring kids back one or two generations; young people want to trace roots. It's part of our history and tradition to remember history. History has to be remembered”.

Rabbi Israel Miller, one of the world's leading Jewish figures, is the supreme example of a community leader. As a pillar in modern Jewish education, he is Senior Vice President Emeritus of Yeshiva University. Dr. Miller's broadmindedness and ability have gained him tremendous admiration among Jewish and non-Jewish organizations throughout America. He is the past Chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations. He was President of the Rabbinical Council of America and has led the fight for Soviet Jewry. Renowned for his wisdom and experience in Jewish issues, he has advised 5 U.S. Presidents. Rabbi Miller is the President of the Conference of Jewish Material Claims Against Germany. This organization, composed of representatives from 23 leading Jewish organisations worldwide, is the official body representing the interests of all Jewish victims of Nazi persecution throughout the world to the Federal Republic of Germany. It was established in 1951.

Under the leadership of its first President, Nahum Goldman, the Claims Conference concluded in September 1952 in Luxembourg 2 major agreements with the German Federal Government. The agreements provided the basis of extensive German indemnification legislation which extended compensation to hundreds of thousands of Jewish victims of Nazi persecution. The agreements also provided funds to the Claims Conference for the rebuilding of destroyed Jewish communities in Europe, for relief and resettlement of Holocaust survivors as well as for cultural and educational reconstruction.

Comments Saul Kagan, Executive Vice

President of the Claims Conference, "None of these payments are compensations for the loss of 6,000,000- this, no one can repair. These payments are only a measure of compensation to Jews for their personal suffering and losses due to Nazi persecution." Yad Vashem was a principle beneficiary of the Claims Conference which contributed half the building costs (the other half provided by The State of Israel and the Jewish Agency). From the beginning a special emphasis was



placed on building up the archives and on research, which included the research on Jewish communities.

The Claims Conference continued supporting Yad Vashem and other projects, including the establishment of the Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture. The bulk of the funds ran out in 1965, but the Claims Conference continued to press for the speedy implementation of the individual compensation program for Holocaust survivors who left the Soviet Union too late to file claims under the

original law.

"The second phase was decided by history," Miller explains. Throughout the years, East Germany had taken no responsibility for the heinous crime of the Shoah and had not compensated Holocaust victims. On the reunification of Germany, the Claims Conference entered difficult negotiations with the new united government over a 16-month period. "Fifty years after the Shoah, there's a "Dor Chadash" (new generation) who did not know Joseph. They did not feel the same moral obligation of their parents' generation". With the active support of the United States State Department, the sum finally agreed upon was nearly one billion Deutsche Marks (about \$660,000,000) through 1999, which was recently increased by a commitment of an additional DM 500 million. These funds are for compensation payments to Holocaust survivors who were severely persecuted and received no or minimal compensation and live in difficult financial circumstances. The Claims Conference became the official heir of unclaimed individual and communal Jewish property throughout East Germany.

The strong relationship between Yad Vashem and the Claims Conference has guaranteed the establishment of a new archive building to house the 40,000,000 documents and their computerization. Miller comments, "You know, this allocation is really important to me. If you really want to educate, it must not be through emotions alone but on the basis of factual material. Yad Vashem is the central institute for Holocaust remembrance, research, and education. We need the best educators and minds to deal with that part of history. So many young Jewish people are disengaging from their Jewish heritage both in Israel and in the Diaspora".

Miller's credo is "Zachor U'Shmor", both words having equal importance. But according to Miller it's not enough. The Jewish educational responsibility is to be active, and by developing and modernizing the archives, The Claims Conference is doing just that.

"The Shoah should teach lessons; we have to learn the lesson of what is evil and what is good and live our lives as Jews sought to live them".



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

■ At the Annual meeting held in August of the **American Society**, the election of officers took place. The meeting included a number of new Board members from all over the United States. **Elie Wiesel** was elected Honorary Chairman and **Norman Belfer, David Berg** and **Isidore Karten** as Honorary Vice Chairmen. **Eli Zborowski**, the founder and living force of the American Society, was reelected as Chairman, and **Joseph Bukiet, Ira Drukier, Eugen Gluck, Mark Palmer, Sam Skura, Axel Stawski** and **Joseph Wilf** as the Vice Chairmen. Holding the position of National Vice Chairs are **Elinor Belfer, Fanya Gottesfeld Heller, Sam Halpern, Abraham Spiegel, Sigmund Strochlitz** and **Fred Weiss**. For this term, **Ulo Barad** and **Marvin Zborowski** have been elected Treasurers, while **Rita Spiegel** was voted in as National Secretary and **Ellis Krakowski** as Recording Secretary.

□ **Eli Zborowski** welcomed the new Board, elected by thousands of the Society's members, which in total number 18,000, and commented that he was delighted to see so many new members representing the second and third generation after the Holocaust.  
□ The meeting included reports given on the development of projects of 2001 at Yad Vashem with special emphasis on the Museum by **Joseph Wilf**, Chairman of the Museum Campaign. **Sam Skura** reported on the Valley and its completion.

■ Other news from the **American Society** includes the festive dinner held in the **Meshulam Riklis Estate** in honor of **Abraham and Edith Spiegel** in Los Angeles recently. **Spiegel** is one of the leading lights of the Los Angeles Jewish community and is one of Yad Vashem's most outstanding benefactors. During the Shoah they were deported to Auschwitz, where their eldest son **Uziel** was murdered. After the war they immigrated to the U.S., where they raised a new family and devoted themselves to strengthening Jewish life. The **Spiegels** erected the "Yad Layeled" Children Memorial at Yad Vashem, one of the most moving sites on Har HaZikaron.

□ **Eli Zborowski, Joe Wilf, Mark Palmer** and **Cheryl Lifshitz** attended the dinner, which was organized by a host of activists including **Rita Spiegel** who is the moving spirit behind the resumption of activities in Los Angeles and in cooperation with **Shalom Elcott**. The outstanding evening was devoted to the initiation of the campaign for the completion of the Yad Vashem's Computerised Archives Center.

□ **Sheldon and Miri Edelson's** electrifying announcement of their major contribution towards the project encouraged **Abe Spiegel** to announce during the course of the evening that he is optimistic that the Societies' targets would be realized in the near future. **Rita Spiegel** stated that there was a most positive response on the part of friends and donors to the reopening of a Yad Vashem office on the West Coast.

■ The newly renovated and expanded Garden of the Righteous Among the Nations, built with the assistance of the **Family Sultan of Caracas, Venezuela** in honor of the parents **Abraham Sultan Sultan** and **Dora Abadi de Sultan** was dedicated at a moving ceremony in August. The Garden honors over 13,000 non Jews; men and women who saved Jews during the Holocaust at the risk of their own lives. Addressing the well-attended gathering was **Dr. Yosef Burg**, Chairman of the International Council for Yad Vashem, **Judge Yaakov Maltz**, Chairman of the Committee for the Designation of the Righteous; **Avner Shalev**, Chairman of the Yad Vashem Directorate, **Shlomo Lahat**, Chairman of the Yad Vashem Foundation; **Ivan Vranetic**, representative of the Righteous Among the Nations; and **Perla Chazan**, Vice President of the **Venezuelan Society**.

■ **The Brazilian Society**, under its President, **Ernesto Strauss**, has been active for a number of years in the field of community education. Next year, its ties with Yad Vashem will be reinforced by the adoption of "Masterplan 2001".

■ **Ben Helfgott** heads the very active **Yad Vashem National Charitable Trust in England**, whose extensive activities have raised extensive funds for projects related to masterplan 2001, including an "encapsulator" for the archives, which seals documents of various sizes for maximum protection in the years to come.

■ **The Israeli Society**, which is within the framework of the Yad Vashem Fund, and is chaired by **Shlomo Lahat**, is composed of senior professionals, business people and personalities. During the past six months, significant funds have been raised to save the art of the Holocaust.

■ **Digital Equipment, Inc. Israel** enabled the production of an educational kit for schoolchildren throughout Israel. The kit is on the "Teheran Children" who were Polish orphans brought to Israel via Teheran.

■ Advocate **Moshe Porat** provided a generous gift for the collation and computerisation of the six million names of Shoah victims which is taking place at the Hall of Names.

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Yad Vashem יד ושם

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# new Yad Vashem

## PUBLICATIONS AND EVENTS

### NEW PUBLICATIONS



**Vanishing Diaspora, The Jews in Europe Since 1945**

Bernard Wasserstein  
June 11, 1996

London: Hamish Hamilton,  
1996, 332 pp.

"The Jews are vanishing from Europe - and not only because of Hitler," so the scholar Bernard Wasserstein begins his historical monograph about European Jewry in the aftermath of the Holocaust (p. vii). Wasserstein shows how demographic change and ongoing historical processes have combined to shape the post-Holocaust European Jewish community. He concludes that the Jews of Europe, like the former Jewish community of Kai-feng in China, are vanishing not only because of the reverberations of the Holocaust, but because of choices they have made. Using Nahum Goldman's words he asserts: "People disappear in history by suicide, not by murder" (p. 289).



**The Buchenwald Report**,  
David A. Hackett (translator  
and ed.)

Boulder: Westview Press,  
1995, 397 pp.

Shocked by what they saw when they liberated Buchenwald, the US military made a conscious

effort to present the camp as a symbol of Nazi barbarism. One of their first acts was to have a committee of prisoners, headed by Eugene Kogon, compile a report about the camp. In 1946, Kogon published his seminal work, "The Theory and Practice of Hell," based on the report. This translation of the original document adds substantial depth to Kogon's consequential work. In particular, the 150 statements by prisoners furnishes the important dimension of eye-witness accounts about the dehumanizing brutality of the camp regime.

**שנה טובה !**

**Blessings for the new year**  
from the Directorate & staff  
of Yad Vashem

### EVENTS - "THE VOICE OF A PEOPLE"



The Jerusalem 3000 celebration of Cantorial music took place in July. Three major events took place at Yad Vashem. Three hundred cantors took part in a moving ceremony in memory of the victims of the Holocaust. In the evening, over 400 guests listened to the beautiful voices of Holocaust survivors Tenor Louis Danto and Baritone Isaac Goodfriend singing songs from the ghettos and of the Yiddish culture in a program called Songs of Remembrance. At the piano was Raymond Goldstein, who is also an expert on Jewish music. The Guest of Honor was the former Mayor of Tel-Aviv and Chairman of the Yad Vashem Foundation, Mr. Shlomo (Chich) Lahat.

The Valley of the Communities witnessed a second musical event with the appearance of Cantor Alberto Mizrahi, whose father, originally from Saloniki, survived Auschwitz. "The Voice of a People" included songs and cantorial pieces in Yiddish and in Ladino originating from communities ravaged by the Holocaust. Accompanying Mizrahi was Rakefet Hak. Prominent amongst the guests was the Chief Rabbi of Israel, Rabbi Yisrael Meir Lau, also a Holocaust survivor.

### INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

**The International Conference on Holocaust Education** will take place at Yad Vashem between **October 14th-17th, 1996**. Currently, over 90 participants will be taking part in addition to dozens of Israeli educators from the different institutes dealing with Holocaust studies, teachers, and graduates of the various courses held by Yad Vashem. Representatives from Cyprus from the Institute for Armenian Studies, Japan-The Hiroshima Center, United Kingdom-Beith Shalom Memorial Center for the Holocaust, from Australia, Italy, U.S.A., Canada and Germany will contribute their expertise and professionalism to the growing field of Holocaust education.

The session "The evolving socio-educational reality and its influence on Holocaust education" will involve educators from Germany, Poland, France, the U.S.A and the United Kingdom. "The Holocaust as an interdisciplinary-educational topic" will include discussions on literature, the arts, theology and informal education, by academics of the top order. Yad Vashem will present its pedagogic program and innovations in the field and the sessions will include workshops on various educational programs. The final day will include an evaluation of central concepts to be emphasized within Holocaust education. In addition there will be discussion panels and workshops.

#### An educational materials exhibit

will be a central feature of the conference. Displays of educational materials from several international and local institutes will include study kits, CD-ROM programs, video cassettes, audio-visual programs, portable exhibitions and academic journals.

Yad Vashem will be displaying material from its different educational divisions. A central feature will be Yad Vashem's pedagogic and education magazine "Bishvil Hazikaron" circulated amongst educators and educational establishments throughout Israel and whose first English-language issue will appear concurrently with the exhibition.

