

Yad Vashem

JERUSALEM

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A Special Issue for Remembrance Day

A newborn baby, upon entering this world, is surrounded by a well-developed support system of parental and familial love and guidance, health, food and shelter. It is a birth of not only a physical being, but of an entity with a biography and an associative network of affiliations and a sense of belonging – to a culture, to a state and to a people. Still, the baby’s own personal life is new, untouched.

It is said that those survivors liberated from the camps returned from the dead. In a sense, they too, needed to start their lives anew. Theirs was a triple tragedy. They had personally suffered, had witnessed the destruction of their past being, and unlike the newborn baby, had to establish a new life born out of torment, pain and familiarity with loss, not only of their personal biographies, but of the associative network of affiliations and belonging. It was the most painful of births.

The survivors strove to start anew, en masse, in a new land, and to take an active part and responsibility in the creation of the Jewish state. This entailed the creation of a new personal identity linked with the birth of a new cultural, political and national entity, which for many appeared the only choice both logically and emotionally.

This magazine, marking Israel’s jubilee year, looks at this year’s theme for Remembrance Day, “The Contribution of Holocaust Survivors to the Creation of the State of Israel and their Integration into Society” from a number of different angles – opening and closing circles, short and long term responses – and studies aspects of this second birth for the survivors.

Yad Vashem
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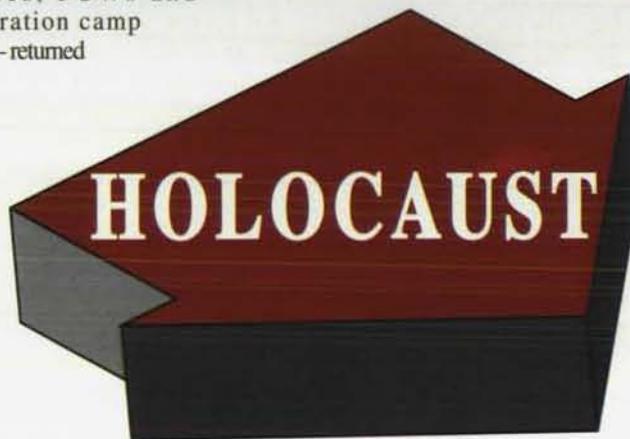
*Cover: A joint destiny - Holocaust survivors and the new State of Israel.
 Courtesy of the Yad Vashem Archives, the Central Zionist Archives and Beit Hatfutzot.*

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As the bells of liberation sounded throughout occupied Europe in 1944-45, a mighty stream of some 10 million people of various nationalities – former labor camp internees, POWs and concentration camp survivors – returned to their homes,

the Jews for their own miserable plight – the chains of Soviet oppression having replaced the cruelty of the Nazi occupation.

Age-old antisemitism and the postwar feeling that life was cheap led to the slaughter of some 1,000 Jewish survivors in Poland, culminating in the Kielce blood libel and pogrom of July 1946.



families and countries of origin. At the same time, a handful of Jews emerged from hiding, from partisan camps in the forests and from labor and concentration camps. Few expected them or rejoiced in their return. Only rarely did a passerby stop and stare, exclaiming, “A Jew! A living Jew!” for all Jews were believed to have been killed.

A considerable number of the tens of thousands of Jews who were liberated from camps on German soil did not join the wave of returnees. They loathed Germany, its people, and its language, and sought shelter in the barracks of the abandoned camps rather than return home. They knew that only agonizing memories, desolation and estrangement awaited them in the towns and villages where they and their families had lived for generations. The British and American liberating armies regarded them as a moral incubus and a hindrance to the order they sought to establish, and tried in vain to persuade them to go home.

The survivors who returned to Poland were joined by approximately 200,000 others who had survived as refugees in the heart of the Soviet Union and had been repatriated after the war. However, hopes of reestablishing a Jewish community in Poland proved illusory. Many Poles and citizens of neighboring states feared that the Jews would demand the return of their stolen property, whilst others blamed

A combination of all these factors led the survivors to a decisive change of direction.

During the liberation of Eastern Europe, small groups of survivors, including former members of Zionist youth movements, ghetto fighters and partisans, had begun to organize underground routes to Eretz Israel. Their endeavors subsequently triggered a mass movement, known as the *Bricha*, which, by the end of 1946, numbered some 140,000 people from Poland. The loyal core group which established the DP camps in Germany and Austria was transformed into a social and political movement with hundreds of thousands of members fighting determinedly for their right to immigrate, and struggling to rebuild their lives.

Over the years, conflicting accounts have

been given of the history of the *She'erit Hapleita* (lit., "remnant which escaped"). Some postulated that these were active Zionists, who realized their dreams and beliefs through aliya. Others claimed that the mass immigration of the *She'erit Hapleita* was a calculated political move orchestrated by emissaries from Eretz Yisrael.

In fact, the meeting of the survivors with the emissaries and members of the Jewish Brigade was a moving and joyful experience which helped bring closer two sections of the Jewish nation that shared the same origins and a common goal.

The Zionist ideology of the *She'erit Hapleita* crystallized at the height of the horrors in the ghettos and camps, in a world that spurned

Jews and had
abandoned
them

immigrate to Eretz Yisrael; to sail in overcrowded, dilapidated boats to a forbidden haven; to be imprisoned in camps in Cyprus, and to make their way clandestinely to a country in the throes of war. From 1946-1949, approximately a quarter of a million Holocaust survivors made aliya to Israel.

Three years separate the conclusion of World War II and the establishment of the State of Israel. The disclosure of the dimensions of the Holocaust and the murderous methods employed by the Nazis sent shock waves throughout the world which could not be ignored by world leaders. At the same time, the tragedy unified the various factions of the Jewish people as they faced the trials of the declaration of the state and the war which would inevitably follow. Thus, the horrors of the Holocaust, which had destroyed the Jewish communities of the Europe, brought forth an hour of reprieve in which the independence movement gained new impetus.

The immigration of the *She'erit Hapleita*, who constituted approximately half of Israel's Jewish population, marked the beginning of the ingathering of exiles to the state, and was followed by a massive aliya

from the East. The survivors arrived at the height of the struggle for independence, and were given no time to relax and adjust to their new surroundings. Instead, they were immediately recruited to the ranks of the *Palmach* and the army at the front. Organized groups of survivors established kibbutzim and moshavim on the borders and in the interior of the country, and were active in numerous branches of industry and culture.

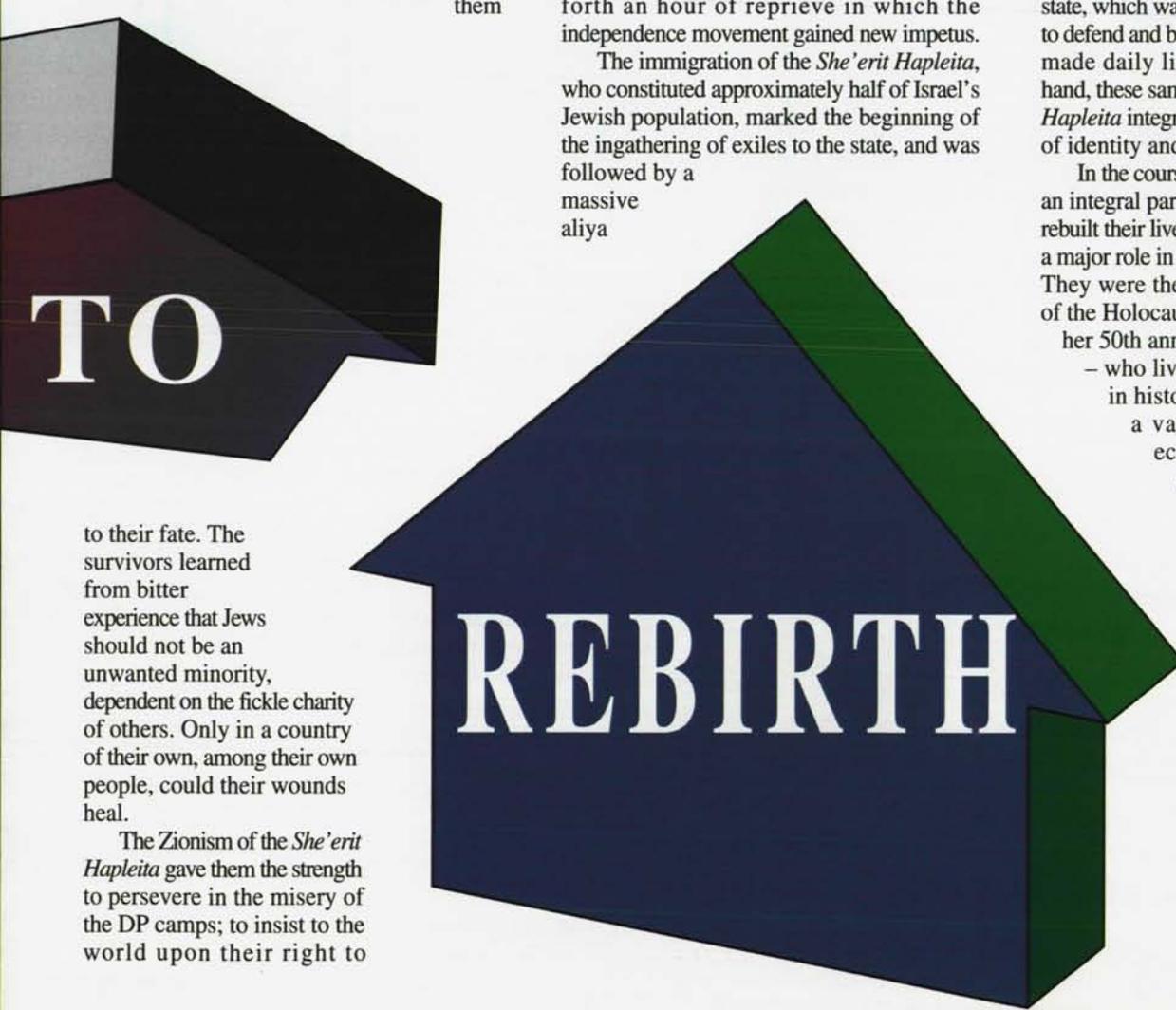
Yishuv veterans were uninterested in the survivors' stories and their emotional burdens, and most of the new arrivals enclosed themselves within a wall of silence. There were fears that the physically and emotionally scarred *She'erit Hapleita* would be a burden on the young state, but there was never any question that it was Israel's duty to take all Jews under her wing.

The conditions prevailing in the emergent state, which was forced to recruit all its citizens to defend and build up the country, undoubtedly made daily life difficult, but on the other hand, these same hardships helped the *She'erit Hapleita* integrate quickly and acquire a sense of identity and belonging.

In the course of time, the survivors became an integral part of the local population. They rebuilt their lives, founded families, and played a major role in the formation of Israeli society. They were the first to awaken the memory of the Holocaust. Today, as Israel celebrates her 50th anniversary, Holocaust survivors

– who lived through the worst tragedy in history – are actively involved in a variety of fields, including economics, defense, industry, education, academe, science and technology, art, and sociopolitical affairs.

The State of Israel, which was established in the wake of the Holocaust, became a home and homeland to Holocaust survivors and persecuted Jews the world over.



TO

to their fate. The survivors learned from bitter experience that Jews should not be an unwanted minority, dependent on the fickle charity of others. Only in a country of their own, among their own people, could their wounds heal.

The Zionism of the *She'erit Hapleita* gave them the strength to persevere in the misery of the DP camps; to insist to the world upon their right to

REBIRTH

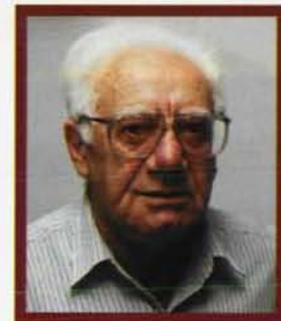
THE TORCHLIGHTERS 1998



Hanna Bar Yesha (Rosner) - was born in 1932, in Uzhorod, Czechoslovakia. In 1944, Hanna Bar Yesha's entire family, consisting of 70 members, was deported in one train compartment from Hungary to Auschwitz. Hanna was taken to Birkenau, to the so-called C-Camp, the camp of Hungarian women, and in November that year she was transferred to the Hainichen camp in Germany. In the spring of 1945, she was sent on the death march to Theresienstadt. After the war, she decided not to join her aunt who emigrated to the United States, but preferred to go to Eretz Yisrael. She arrived in 1946, traveling via Trieste, Milano, Santa Maria and Bari.

On boarding the ship, all passengers were requested to throw their luggage overboard. Hanna was compelled to part from her only possession – an embroidered towel, a memento from her mother. In Eretz Yisrael she studied at Mikve Israel College, was mobilized to become a member of *Gadna* (the Youth Corps). Based in Kibbutz Be'erot Yitzchak, she participated in the War of Independence. After the war, she was instrumental in co-founding Kibbutz Massuot Yitzchak. In 1957, she and her husband moved to Even Shmuel, in the Lachish region, and from there to the Shapira Center. Between 1977 and 1990, Hanna Bar-Yesha worked as the principal of the local secondary school. Since 1991, she has continued to be involved in educational activities and helps in the absorption of youngsters from Ethiopia. She also accompanies youngsters to Poland.

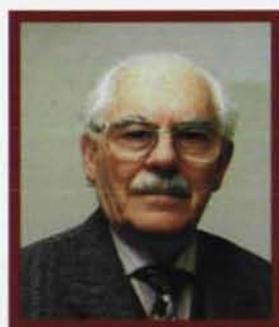
Prof. Yisrael Gutman - was born in Warsaw, in 1923. Gutman, a member of the Jewish underground in the Warsaw ghetto, was wounded in the uprising. From Warsaw he was taken to Majdanek, and from there to Auschwitz. In May 1945 he was sent on the death march to Mauthausen. Gutman spent two years in the camps. After the war, he was hospitalized in Austria. He escaped and joined the Jewish Brigade in Italy. He helped in the rehabilitation of survivors, was active in the *Bricha* movement and immigrated to Eretz Yisrael in 1947. He joined Kibbutz Lehavot Habashan where he raised a family and was a member of the kibbutz for 25 years. Gutman, the only survivor among his family and classmates, felt a responsibility to understand how life could proceed normally after the great catastrophe. He studied at university, published many scholarly books and papers about the Holocaust, and became internationally renowned in this field. He has trained generations of scholars and has set the tone for future academic research. Today he is the Chief Historian of Yad Vashem.



Shoshana Evron - was born in Florence, Italy in 1936. Under Nazi occupation, her father, who was the Chief Rabbi of Florence, went from house-to-house, urging Jews to take shelter. Shoshana and her sister hid in various locations and for half-a-year, until liberation, remained in a convent. Shoshana recalls that she had to "pray loudly, but that quietly, I recited the Shema Yisrael prayer repeatedly, and also the Jewish thanksgiving prayer for food." Her parents and many other Jews from Florence were deported to Auschwitz. In 1945, Shoshana reached Eretz Yisrael with the help of the Jewish Brigade, in time to attend the seder in Jerusalem in the house of her grandfather, Moshe David Cassuto, the famous Biblical scholar.

Shoshana's father was murdered in Auschwitz, her mother, a survivor, immigrated to Israel and joined her children. In April 1948, Shoshana's mother was killed in the convoy of Hadassah employees who were trying to reach Hadassah Hospital on Mount Scopus but were attacked by Arab gangs when passing through the Sheikh Jarrah quarter. Shoshana joined the IDF and was involved in the establishment of the Kerem Avshalom outpost. In 1955, she settled in Kibbutz Sa'ad. Shoshana has 11 grandchildren.

Lt. Col. (Res.) Yoseph Offer - was born in Oradea Mare, Romania in 1929. In 1943, his father was drafted into the Hungarian Army and disappeared. In May 1944, Yoseph's family reached Auschwitz. They were sent to the showers. He rejected his mother's embrace, convinced that they would all see each other again within half an hour. But they never did. Yoseph was sent to Buchenwald and from there to a work camp in Magdeburg where he worked as a factory hand and finally to a small plant which manufactured airplane wings for the Fuka Wolf 190 combat aircraft. There he decided that upon liberation, he would become a pilot. In April 1945 he was liberated from Buchenwald, and via Youth Aliyah, reached Eretz Yisrael, settled on Kibbutz Afikim, joined the *Hagana* and served in *Golani*. In the kibbutz he met his future wife, Hava. On April 12, 1951, Yoseph was awarded his pilot wings by the Israel Air Force, exactly 6 years after his liberation. Yoseph served in the Israel Air Force, later in El-Al, and also as Israel's Air Attache at the Israeli Embassy in London. He has published four books, and lectures to youngsters about the Holocaust.



Professor Elazar Shafrir - was born in 1924 in Cracow, Poland. His father, a leader of the Zionist movement, died in 1940 as a political prisoner in Auschwitz. Shafrir was imprisoned in Plaszow, where together with his friend Yehiel Steiner, he repaired guard towers. A year later, the two managed to escape with the help of Anna Katchrowska, later recognized as a Righteous Among the Nations. They reached Cracow under assumed identities. The Polish underground helped Shafrir reach Hungary, where aided by the Jewish Agency, he reached Eretz Yisrael. Aharon Hantke, who headed Keren Hayesod, helped Shafrir conclude his studies at the Tel Aviv Gymnasium. Shafrir began

chemistry studies at the Hebrew University. In December 1947, he was drafted to the *Haganah*. At the outbreak of the War of Independence, he left his white scientist's jacket on a chair in the laboratory and pushed his notebooks into a drawer. During the war, he spent three months in Gush Etzion, and returned to Jerusalem in the Nebi Daniel convoy. He participated in the battles for San Simon, Ramat Rahel, the Jerusalem corridor and the Kastel. Following the Six Day War and the return to Mount Scopus, Shafrir entered the Chemistry Building at the University and was stunned to find his jacket on the same chair, and his notebooks in the drawer, 19 years later. He continued his studies of chemistry, became a professor and served as Head of the Department of Biochemistry at the Hadassah Medical School.

Dr. Viola Torek - was born in 1916 in Slovakia. In 1934, she studied medicine and married a physician. In 1944, the Germans invaded Slovakia and Torek's family was sent to Auschwitz. She was transferred to the Lichtwerden forced labor camp in Silesia four months later. Torek worked in the clinic and in May 1945 was liberated. She returned to her birthplace, and upon learning of the fate of all her loved ones, her husband included, lost the will to live. Encouraged by relatives, she returned to Bratislava and continued her medical studies. Upon completion, she worked at a Clinic for Holocaust Survivors in the Tatra mountains. "There was a common bond of partnership and of belonging to one another. We had all been left alone.



For me, it was a commitment." She remarried another doctor, and they decided to immigrate to Eretz Yisrael. They misled the Soviet authorities and escaped from Slovakia. In Eretz Yisrael, they worked as physicians at various places, and Torek worked at a clinic in Beer Ya'akov which treated Holocaust survivors. In 1959, the couple moved to Beer Sheva and were among the founders of the Beer Sheva Medical School. Her husband established the Orthopedic Department of the new hospital. Viola worked for 22 years as District Physician. She was crucial in developing the medical services in the Negev region. At 72, Viola retired. She is intensely involved in volunteer activities.

H o l o c a u s t

Remembrance Day

this year marks the

contribution of

Holocaust survivors to

the creation of the

State of Israel and

their integration into

society. Here are the

stories, presented

briefly, of the 6 torch

lighters who epitomize

this theme.

The speed with which Jewish survivors in Germany organized themselves served as an important factor in turning the survivors of the Nazi slave labor camps into agents of primary importance in the Zionist struggle to open the gates of Palestine and establish a Jewish state. The first steps following liberation were taken by the survivors themselves. The survivors' determination and fervor infected a wider periphery with a sort of "instinctive Zionism," which was expressed in refusal to return to their Eastern European countries of origin, unwillingness to remain in Germany, and the majority's desire to rebuild their lives in the Jewish society in Palestine.

Notable was the Jewish organization in Bavaria, which housed the largest number of camp survivors in the American Zone, and was initiated by Zionist survivors from the Kovno and Shauliai ghettos, whose residents were deported in the summer of 1944 to forced labor in Dachau's satellite camps. Alongside various Zionist groups, new underground bodies formed, such as the *Irgun B'rith Zion* (I.B.Z.), which was established in 1940, during the Soviet occupation of Lithuania. Its founders were Jewish high school and college students, but the organization expanded in the ghetto and continued to hold limited activities in the Dachau-Kaufering camps. I.B.Z. included members of various Zionist youth movements, secular and religious. The commander of I.B.Z. throughout much of the organization's existence was Yitzhak Shapira, who was killed during the deportations of July 1944. The organization focused on maximum unity within the Zionist camp, and the cultivation of Hebrew language and culture. It sought to maintain the moral constitution of the youth in these times of distress, and to prepare them for future Zionist tasks. Among the central tenets of its political platform were negation of the Diaspora and the demand for a Jewish state. Along side the I.B.Z., whose constituents tended to be younger, a parallel adult organization was established in the Kovno ghetto in 1943 – *B'rith Zion* (B.Z.). In line with I.B.Z.'s spiritual legacy, its members – some of whom held leading positions in the survivor community and Zionist institutions

following liberation – continued to strive for unity, at least during the early period.

Zionist activity was significantly reduced in the Dachau-Kaufering camps. Nevertheless, meetings were held. The Hebrew underground paper *Nitzoz* ("Spark") continued to appear, handwritten. It was established during the Soviet occupation of Lithuania in 1940, appeared more-or-less regularly throughout the ghetto years, and became the organ, in print, of the United Zionist Organization and



A commemoration of the Warsaw ghetto uprising, DP camp Feldafing, 1945

by Dr. Shlomo Shafir

on Their OWN

The Survivors in Germany on the Eve of Liberation and Immediately Thereafter

Noham ("United Pioneer Youth") in Germany following liberation.

In addition to the call for unity among Zionist forces, in the winter of 1944-45, demands were made for the post-liberation era. These demands included punishment of those who had participated in the murder of Jews, an international tribunal for the Nazi leadership, reparations for survivors (the term *She'erit Hapleita* was already used in Zionist underground discussions), evacuation of European Jewry, maintenance of the spiritual integrity of the society of refugees, and coordination between groups of survivors.

The survivors began to organize themselves in the first weeks following liberation. Zionist veterans of the underground, as well as others, played central roles. The initial steps were taken in the various places in which the survivors were located – in the liberated camps, in temporary sites and in villages where they were rescued during the evacuation marches. One month later, with the assistance of Rabbi Abraham Klausner, an American Reform rabbi and army chaplain, thought was already being given to a wider-based regional organization, led by Dr. Zalman Grinberg.

A committee for Jewish mutual aid was formed immediately after liberation in the Buchenwald concentration camp, which was at first captured by the Americans, but later passed into Soviet hands. In May 1945, this committee published the first newspaper by survivors in Germany, titled *Tehiyat ha-Metim* ("The Resurrection"). A singular contribution of the Zionists there was the establishment of Kibbutz Buchenwald, which – in the wake of the experience of the Holocaust – believed in unity without partisan or religious exceptions, and which opened its doors to all who wished to join. Auschwitz survivor, Joseph Rosensaft, stood at the head of the thousands of Jewish survivors of Bergen-Belsen, in the British Zone. Due to Britain's anti-Zionist policy, he met with considerably greater difficulties than his colleagues in the American Zone.

The soldiers of the Jewish Brigade arrived in the American Zone of Germany during the second half of June 1945, when the representatives of the various camps in Bavaria were already in the midst of the first stages of organizing the joint community institutions in the area. The encounter with the Jewish soldiers from Palestine greatly reinforced the survivors' pro-Zionist feelings. Cooperation between them and the Zionist and community organizations contributed to the strengthening of the survivors and their leadership. By their very existence in Germany against their will, they were to play a significant role in the fulfillment of Zionist tasks in the post-war world.

The author was editor of the underground publication of *Nitzoz* in Dachau-Kaufering and continued to edit after liberation. Today he is the editor of *Gesher* Journal of Jewish Affairs.

Volunteers For The Cause

by Alisa Lehrer

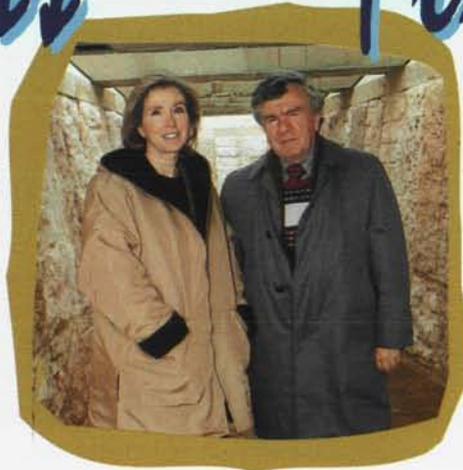
There is another team of people, besides the employees, working behind the scenes at Yad Vashem. Approximately 100 loyal and committed volunteers supplement the Authority's vital and essential work. Whether it is guiding the VIPs who regularly visit Yad Vashem or the guided tours for the public four days a week, translating documents for the Archives, stacking library books, inserting the Pages of Testimony names into the computer, helping with the enormous mail load, sorting through the Righteous

Among the Nations files, or teaching and lecturing to school pupils or other groups, the Yad Vashem volunteers contribute with great enthusiasm and dedication.

Each volunteer has a unique story and an important role and deserves individual thanks. Ishai Amrami, Director General of Yad Vashem, notes that "each volunteer's contribution is significant and welcomes these special people who give of their time to help Yad Vashem in its sacred mission."

Sabina Elzon is Yad Vashem's longest serving volunteer. Polish born, she moved to France in her youth. During the war, she and her husband were active in the French Resistance in Lyon. She helped organize the rescue and hiding of Jewish children, as well as fighting in the combat units of the Resistance against the Germans. She promised herself that after the war, she would do something in memory of those who were murdered by the Nazis. In 1975, a few years after her aliyah, she signed up at Yad Vashem. For over 22 years, she has been involved in sorting through the millions of Pages of Testimony in the Hall of Names and considers Yad Vashem's commemorative work essential. She feels that through her volunteering, she can pay homage to the Holocaust victims. She comes twice a week and is often given a lift by her daughter, Berthe, who works in the Information Department at Yad Vashem.

One of the youngest volunteers is Shira



William Leibner and Dr. Edna Wilchfort

Jewish farmers. After the war, he moved with his parents to France, where he began his schooling, then to the United States, and, in 1973, he settled in Israel. William, a former teacher, feels that his firsthand experience can contribute to a visitor's understanding of the Holocaust.

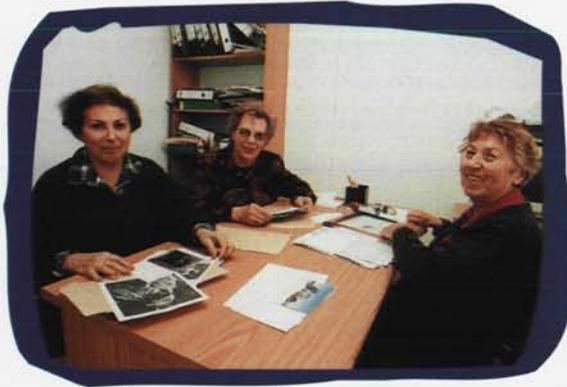
Having listened to Professor Yehuda Bauer's university lectures on the radio in the 1970s, Michal Wager became interested in the subject. Volunteering twice a week in the Yad Vashem Archives, she translates documents and testimonies from German into Hebrew. She is currently sorting through the important and relevant documents that Yad Vashem has received from recently opened archives in Germany. She values Yad Vashem's role in educating the future generations and is surprised and encouraged by the large numbers of people visiting Yad Vashem daily.

Another one of the guides is social worker Dr. Edna Wilchfort, an Israeli born to Holocaust survivors. When Edna began volunteering in 1993, her parents were very proud of her involvement with Yad Vashem and her determination to educate others about the Holocaust. Edna, who gives much of her free time to guiding, finds it rewarding and challenging, especially when she has made an impact on other people's lives.

For others, volunteering at Yad Vashem symbolizes the closing of a circle. David Efrati, a Warsaw Holocaust survivor, was saved by a Polish farmer who has been

recognized by Yad Vashem as a Righteous Among the Nations. Nowadays, Efrati volunteers in the Righteous Among the Nations Department, as well as serving on the Commission for the Designation of the Righteous

Among the Nations. He talks about his experiences to groups in Yad Vashem, both in Jerusalem and in Givatayim. He feels that, "what we do here for the Righteous is nothing compared to what they did for us. ... Yad Vashem - this is my place. I belong here."



Erna Sharon, Yona Shalgi and Ruth Mittelmann

Mayerson, 20, who is completing her second year of National Service. After last year's Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Day, she intensified her reading about the Holocaust

and applied to Yad Vashem's Pedagogic Center for her second year. She finds that while her knowledge of the Holocaust has greatly increased, the Holocaust itself becomes harder and harder to grasp. She tries to teach the lessons of tolerance and believes that "we must be aware of the suffering of others."

Some of the Yad Vashem volunteers are constantly in the limelight, guiding many of the 1.5 million people who visit Yad Vashem annually.

William Leibner has been volunteering at Yad Vashem since 1993. In addition to guided tours, he regularly helps in the Public Relations and Commemoration Department. As a little boy in Poland during the war, he was smuggled out of the ghetto and was hidden by non-

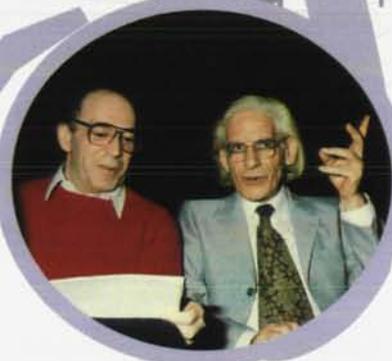


Sabina Elzon (right) and her daughter Berthe Badici

"THE ESSENCE OF MY PAST"

Special Tribute Concert by the Israel Philharmonic at Yad Vashem

by Michal Morris Kamil



Noam Sheriff (left) and Bernhard Bronkhorst

“ This is the first time that this musical piece will be performed in its most natural, most fitting place, Yad Vashem, Jerusalem. It is as though, it has roamed from place-to-place like the wandering Jew and is now coming home.”

No'am Sheriff

On May 4, 1998, a concert will take place at Yad Vashem in the presence of Guest of Honor, Mayor of Jerusalem, MK Ehud Olmert, survivors from Israel and abroad, and a delegation of Righteous Among the Nations. The concert which is in association with the Department of Culture of the Jerusalem Municipality will be filmed and the film will include sites from Yad Vashem.

The Israel Philharmonic, conducted by maestro Zubin Mehta, tenor Josef Malovany, and bass baritone, Vladimir Braun, along with the Ankor children's choir and the chamber choir of Ramat Gan, will perform sabra (Israeli-born) composer No'am Sheriff's four movement symphonic requiem, *Mechaye Hametim* (Revival of the Dead), and Johannes

Brahms' *Concerto in D for violin and orchestra, Op. 77*, with guest violinist Maxim Vengerov. This historic concert will take place in the Warsaw Ghetto Square at Yad Vashem, and will mark Israel's jubilee year and this year's Holocaust Remembrance Day theme, "The Contribution of Holocaust Survivors to the Creation of the State of Israel and their Integration into Society." The concert will be dedicated to the community of Holocaust survivors in Israel.

The birth of this work perhaps symbolizes the difficult encounter and establishment of a complex and sensitive dialogue between the Israeli-born Jew and the European Holocaust survivor. In 1983, while working in Cologne, Germany, Sheriff was paid a visit by Dutchman Bernhard Bronkhorst, himself a survivor. The visitor explained that he had decided to dedicate himself to the commemoration of the tragedy of European Jewry. Like the monarchy of enlightened Europe, his specifications to the composer were precise and rigid and he dictated the musical materials to be used, a mixture of Jewish music from all periods and traditions.

For Sheriff, this pas-de-deux was the beginning of a personal catharsis as to his identity. "The immense conflict that I felt between seeing myself as belonging to the community of contemporary composers on the one hand, and on the other, my self-image as a Jew... 'Who am I?' I kept asking myself... Pieces of music that I abhorred and were embarrassed by in my childhood, the Jewish tradition that, in my youth, we had tried to forget in order to build something entirely fresh and new in our new country – all these old traditions were now coming back to me with a new and pure beauty."

For Sheriff, *Mechaye Hametim* reflects the very essence of the meshing of identity and artistic expression. By enlisting, paraphrasing and developing a broad variety of Jewish musical sources and near-archetypal Jewish traditional imagery throughout this monumental piece, Sheriff has created what he describes as "a process that has forced me to look at my own heritage and to create a new significance for belonging to that past... However, music, unlike nostalgia, never belongs to the past. Music exists and expresses

itself within the domain of the present."

Sheriff directly relates this tenet of creativity to the relevance of the Holocaust to the youngsters of today and of tomorrow. "The historical memory of the Jewish nation, epitomized by the biblical saying, 'Remember what Amalek has done to thee,' acquires different forms of meaningful and relevant expressions, many through existing artistic and creative prisms."

Mechaye Hametim is composed of four movements based on the chronology of the Jewish experience: Jewish life in the Diaspora until the Holocaust, the Holocaust, *Kaddish* and *Yizkor* and Revival and Renaissance. The opening enlists the Jewish motif of the *shofar* (the ram's horn in Jewish ritual) and the central theme of the Passover song from the Hagaddah – *Echad Mi Yodeah* (Who knows one?). The second movement depicts the Holocaust on a number of levels, which Sheriff describes as, 'a dialogue between documentary and meta-documentary' while the third movement, *Kaddish* and *Yizkor*, is based on the Jewish prayer for the dead, and is sung in the characteristic accents of Ashkenazi Hebrew. The first three movements originate in the Diaspora. The fourth and final movement, "Revival and Renaissance" draws on Israel's modern dialect, Sephardi Hebrew and Samaritan chants which Sheriff regards as truly authentic to Israel. Combining this with the past, forms a new, sonic quality and tonality.

Sheriff explains, "The fourth movement explains this entire work. It is not 'the revival of the dead' or 'resurrection'. The connotations, as I see it, are different. We look at ourselves as a people who are replanted in our land for only then can we blossom and grow again. It is like the Hebrew language. It didn't die. It just lay dormant for 2000 years, and has only recently reawakened."

Sheriff regards the performance of his work in Yad Vashem as a true highlight. Not only because it closes a personal circle of identity but also because of the work's message for the future. "This piece carries a message of tremendous hope. It linked me, the sabra, with the essence of my past. It is our only hope for the future – by reviving the language we will have a once-in-a-life opportunity to renew ourselves and that is rare in human history."

“WE CAME FROM AFAR”

by Galia Limor

As early as 1932, the idea of sending youth to Palestine was raised by Recha Freir of Berlin. Henrietta Szold, who established the Youth Aliya office, worked for the immigration of children and youth to Palestine, as well as for their education, up until her death in the 1940s. Within a short time, this Zionist enterprise received the support of educational institutions and public circles in Palestine and abroad. Over the years, Youth Aliya brought tens of thousands of young Jews from Europe and from the Near East, settled them on kibbutzim and moshavim, and in educational institutions, and took care of their education and professional training.

Dodo Joseph Shenhav's story is representative of this phenomenon. Shenhav's father, Yehuda Weiss, who had been a forced slave laborer in the Hungarian Army, was taken prisoner by the Red Army. His mother was sent to a camp which served as a transit point for Jews being taken to concentration camps. The three children were transferred to a "yellow-star" house (transit houses where Jews were placed before their deportation to the camps). Dodo, the middle child, planned an escape route for himself, his brother and sister. He posed as a non-Jewish refugee and claimed that he had lost his original documents. His plea convinced the clerks and they gave him new documents with new Hungarian names.



Dodo (left) and his brother Moshe at Kibbutz Heftziba

Youth Aliya brought thousands of youth to Israel and provided them with a new home.

These documents were a rare commodity. With the documents, the three children rented a room, but, after a short time, they were forced to leave. Dodo found a safe place for his older sister and younger brother, and he himself joined the Jewish Fighters' Underground. Shenhav became a courier for the underground and for the Red Cross, transporting travel documents that saved people from the camps. He was able to obtain such a document for his mother, but for her, it was too late.

After the war, the youth movement *Dror Habonim* established camps to gather and prepare young Jews, including Dodo, who had been in hiding during the war, or who had survived the camps, for immigration to Palestine through Youth Aliya. The ship Shenhav was on, *La-Negev*, was captured by the British, and its passengers spent half a year in Cyprus before being able to immigrate to Palestine.

Shenhav was one of approximately 11,000 children and youth who were settled by Youth Aliya on kibbutzim during the first post-war years. During the first four years after the war, Youth Aliya absorbed over 15,000 survivor children and youth, created a framework for them in the new land, and trained them to be citizens in a country whose language most of them did not know.

Shenhav's personal story is, thus, a microcosm of tens of thousands of similar stories. When he arrived at Kibbutz Heftziba in the Jezreel Valley, he spoke a broken



Dodo at his work table at Yad Vashem

Hebrew. "A reception was held for us, and one of the kibbutz members welcomed us. Somebody had to respond in the name of the group. I, with more courage than knowledge of the language, answered, 'We came

from afar.' Only in later years did I learn that this was not an actual mistake, but rather a literary form."

Not all of Shenhav's memories of his time on kibbutz are rosy. "In the morning we would work on fortifications or in the quarry. In the afternoon we would study a bit," he recalls. "The kibbutz children, in contrast, were taken to study in the high school at Ein-Harod. We were not exactly equal. Work in the quarry was extremely difficult. The cooking was bad, and we were not used to the local food – especially the cooked eggplant..."

During Israel's War of Independence, Shenhav fought in Jerusalem. Upon his military discharge, he went to the Youth Aliya offices which were located in the Beit Yahalom building. Shenhav, who was a lone immigrant, was given five Israeli Liras, a significant sum, by then Director of Youth Aliya, Moshe Kol, and by Aryeh Lifshitz, who was in charge of the lone immigrants. Youth Aliya funded Shenhav's studies at the Bezalel Academy of Arts.

In order to support himself, Shenhav, who was studying jewelry and sculpture, worked in a quarry. Later, he was accepted for work in the government's Antiquities Division. His job was to mend broken shards of ancient pottery. Over the years, he became a well-established expert on scrolls and the preservation of antiquities. Today, in addition to his work as an artist, he serves as a restorer for the Yad Vashem Museum.

Shenhav maintained his close connections with Youth Aliya for ten years. He received not only financial but emotional support. For many years, Youth Aliya kept contact with Shenhav. Shenhav's parents arrived in Israel in the late 1950s. Although he no longer needed the "parents" provided by Youth Aliya, he never forgot the warm treatment he received.

VOICES OF BIL

by Michal Morris Kamil



Klara Minzberg (Maayan), 21, on the right and her late sister Mala, 18, on Kibbutz Tel Yitzchak, 1946

Kibbutz Tel Yitzchak

Klara Maayan - b. Poland. Trained with Janusz Korczak. Active in the underground. Immigrated to Kibbutz Tel Yitzchak in October 1945.

"I had dreamt and hoped for this moment. As a member of a Zionist youth movement in Poland, my entire life evolved around achieving this dream. On

Kibbutz Tel Yitzchak I was a teacher and was involved in the absorption process of those children evacuated from Kibbutz Nitzanim during the War of Independence. My strongest memory is the feeling of immense pride upon seeing a Jewish, independent soldier - considering everything we had experienced, he wasn't just a simple soldier, but rather, appeared immortal. We recalled the words of Berl Katznelson as we stood witness to the signing of the Scroll of Independence of the sovereign Jewish State. For

us, it was a God-given miracle after all we had gone through. No person who experienced the Shoah could have believed that this moment would arrive."

DP Camp in Former Concentration Camp Bergen-Belsen

Hela Berlinski - a survivor who, upon liberation, decided to stay behind and care for those ill with typhus. She immigrated to Israel in 1951.

"I remember that we heard the transmission of the Declaration in the evening at 17:00. We listened to every detail. We were used to hearing broadcasts from Eretz Yisrael, which they used to transmit through loudspeakers placed in the central area of the camp. Our link to Israel was very strong. From the moment of liberation in 1945, we didn't return to our birthplace, but rather wanted to go to Israel.... We gathered in the camp center. I remember people laughing, crying and being happy. We danced all night. It was something. An indescribable joy."



Soldier Asher Aranyi

Kibbutz Maagan

Asher Aranyi - b. Hungary. Fought in the underground. Incarcerated in Cyprus and transferred to Atlit where he was freed in 1947. Settled in Kibbutz Maagan and joined the Hagana.

"I was in the 103rd battalion of *Golani*, stationed at Kibbutz Degania, which was under attack by the Syrians. This was two weeks after a Jordanian attack from Naharayim on Kibbutz Gesher. What I recall is myself as a soldier without uniform (it hadn't arrived yet) witnessing the fall of my comrade-in-arms, who was a survivor like myself. We were both in the trench by the cowshed. This was extremely difficult for me."



Trudi Birger looks out onto Haifa port

Haifa

Trudi Birger - b. Germany. Incarcerated in the Kovno ghetto and imprisoned in Stutthof. Immigrated to Eretz Yisrael in 1947 and settled in Haifa.

"I remember that that same day we were glued to the radio, listening intently. The joy was overwhelming. We ran to the streets of Herzl and Nordau, to the square where we danced a hora. We embraced one another and there was a feeling of a unified peoplehood. I remember feeling, as a Holocaust survivor, that our hope, which was to attain a state, a home, had been realized. It was so important for us Holocaust survivors that we had finally come home. The joy was so great and laughter mixed with tears. It is hard to describe. As survivors we always dreamed and questioned, 'Will we arrive safe and sound?'"



The Megilla created by Aryeh Ben-Menachem when he was a POW in Egypt, 1948-1949

Nitzanim

Aryeh Ben-Menachem - b. Poland. Imprisoned in Auschwitz. Liberated from Dachau. Immigrated illegally to Eretz Yisrael in 1945. Settled in Kibbutz Nitzanim.

"When we heard the Declaration, we started dancing spontaneously, but the celebrations were cut short. Almost immediately, we established defensive positions in the fields surrounding the kibbutz in fear of the hostile local Arab villagers. In Tel Aviv they continued to dance and celebrate, but we hadn't the time. Soon after, we evacuated mothers and children, including my wife, also a survivor from Lodz, and my daughter, who was born on the kibbutz. Their first stop was Beer Tuvia and from there they continued to Kibbutz Tel-Yitzchak. I myself remained and was taken prisoner by the Egyptian forces for nine months. In June 1949 I was released and returned to Israel."

REMEMBER

9 Holocaust Survivors
Share their Memories
of the Day the State
of Israel was Declared



Jerusalem

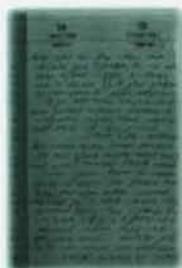
Professor Dov Levine - b. Lithuania. Active in the underground. Illegally immigrated in October 1945. In 1946 settled in Jerusalem.

Dov Levine at the Hebrew University, Mount Scopus, Jerusalem

"I, as a soldier of the *Hagana*, was permitted to study at the University on Mount Scopus and to serve there as part of the defense force. On Friday, 14.5.1948, I entered in my diary the following:

'Again, an historic day, or rather, the historic day, and yet, this entire period of ours is unique. At 4:00, the state was declared. Gush Etzion surrendered! Jaffa surrendered with nearly no preconditions.

Cut off from transport and telephones, we feel the jitters of the birth of the state. And I am privileged to witness and view this event, even if from afar.



Entry from Levine's diary on the day state was declared, 14.5.1948

The daily hassles of guard duty, laundry, ironing – we learned this too.... Afternoon snooze, and then negotiating guard duty. We don't feel the greatness of this moment – an immigrants' ship has arrived in Israel from Cyprus without being stopped – that's what we fought for all the time. This was the gist of our demands: free immigration. We are planning the capture of Sheik Jarrach. Gunshots, which are disturbing my rest, reach us from the Legion. I run back to my post until this barrage of shots ends."

Kfar Haroeh

Chava Meir - b. Bessarabia. Survived the hell of Transnistria. An orphan, she immigrated to Eretz Yisrael and spent the next few years in a youth village in Kfar Haroeh.

"I recall the day of the Declaration of Independence. I cried terribly. I felt intensely lonely and alone. All those around me had brothers and sisters and they were all celebrating the joyous moment together. I had no one."

The Youth Village of Hadassim

Dr. Avigdor Shahan - b. Bessarabia. Survived Transnistria. Immigrated in 1947, was caught and sent to Cyprus. In March 1948 arrived in Eretz Yisrael and lived in the youth village of Hadassim.

"It was sunset as I left the dining room of Hadassim, where we had listened to the Declaration of David Ben Gurion. I watched the sun as it descended and regarded it as symbolic: all the difficult trails and beatings by the Ukrainians in the fields of Transnistria, the roamings throughout Bessarabia as we were chased by the Romanians, the incarceration in the DP camps of Cyprus by the British, it had all set with the sun, forever. I dug my heels into the golden sand and decided - this was my final stop. I would never leave."



Avigdor Shahan, 14, and his sister Miriam, 12, at the youth village of Hadassim

Kibbutz Lehavot Habashan

Chasia Bornstein-Bielicka - b. Poland. Active in the underground in Grodno and Bialystok. She was caught and interned in Cyprus and in September 1947 was transferred to Atlit. Settled in Kibbutz Lehavot Habashan.

"I remember that day well. I had returned with my husband, Heini, from planting pines in a new forest. There was one central radio in the kibbutz. We heard Ben Gurion's voice announcing the establishment of the state. A month earlier, in April, we had suffered a heavy attack by the Syrians. Hostile Arab



Chasia Bornstein-Bielicka celebrating the independence of the state with friends on Kibbutz Lehavot Habashan

villages also surrounded us. We became very excited upon hearing the broadcast and started to cry. I remember saying to Heini, "I'm sad. I'm afraid that this will come to no good." On the one hand, I felt proud of this moment, yet on the other, we were in dire straits. We knew that the Declaration would cause a blood bath and that the Arabs would not accept it. These were mixed feelings of joy and fear. It was so intense. I also remember saying to Heini, "Look, millions didn't make it to be here with us now."

By Daniel J. Chalfen

The Holocaust and the creation of the State of Israel constitute the most significant events in contemporary Jewish history. Yet, while these symbols of destruction and then revival appear to inherently indicate a dialectic which links the two, debate about the actual connection between them is rife. The question of whether the establishment of the Jewish state in 1948 was post hoc or propter hoc, that is to say, after the Holocaust or because of it, has led to the academic dismantlement of one of the greatest myths upon which the State of Israel was founded - that the guilt and sympathy felt by the nations of the world helped the Jews create a homeland.

Professor Yehuda Bauer, Head of the International Center of Holocaust Studies at Yad

Vashem, believes that, contrary to conventional wisdom on the subject, the Holocaust almost prevented the establishment of the state. He postulates that before the outbreak of World War II, the outcome of the process leading to the establishment of the Jewish state was hanging by a thread. By wiping out European Jewry, the Holocaust almost stopped the creation of the state by obliterating

many of the people who would have made the state a reality. The hundreds of thousands who did survive were the remnants of an incomplete Nazi task.

"All Israeli leaderships have tried to create the myth that the Holocaust led to the creation of the State of Israel," claims Bauer. "This myth is based on the reality that what happened in Europe was a tragedy that could teach Jews that an alternative to Diaspora existence is political independence in this country." However, this general argument, he believes, is counter-factual.

Bauer's theory separates the impact of the Holocaust from the events in Europe between 1939 and 1945. The Holocaust, he says, was the murder of Jews, and the murder of Jews could have stopped the creation of the state. "The result of the Holocaust was murder," he states, "The result of escaping this process was the creation of the state."

Bauer denies any sentiment of guilt in the world powers' actions in the years immediately following the war. He views the policies followed by the USA, Britain, the USSR and the UN as purely pragmatic. A large

element of luck was evident while the process of the creation of

a Jewish state was under discussion, but no guilt was apparent, according to Bauer. While Weizman, Ben Gurion and the

**Is there
a Connection
between the
Holocaust and
the Establishment
of the State
of Israel ?**

other Zionist leaders played the international diplomacy game to the best of their abilities, including the emotive card of Holocaust suffering, they ultimately had no control over world power decisions. Therefore, concludes Bauer, the Holocaust itself did not cause the creation of the state, rather the impact of the Holocaust did.

Is there a Connection between the Holocaust and the Establishment of the State of Israel ?

In a 1996 symposium tackling this same question, Professor Anita Shapira talked about the truth of history being in the facts as well as in the symbols. One cannot separate the Holocaust from Zionism. "While it hurts to say so," she commented, "if we believe in a world of justice, the world could not have faced its irresponsibility during the war without returning something to the Jews as retribution." Her facts included the "facts on the ground," established by the Jews settling in Palestine from 1881, Zionist sentiment among Diaspora Jewry, as well as the 1937 Peel Commission and the 1942 Biltmore Plan. Shapira leaves the Holocaust, as both fact and symbol, in the equation - even if only to the extent that, as the news of the Holocaust was unfolding, Jews in Europe and America became increasingly militant in their drive for an independent state. If anything, World War II may have slowed down, rather than helped, the Zionist process already in place. "But," she states, "it was the War of Independence that ultimately led to the safe foundation of the state. The Holocaust's effects on this were the numbers of people who came to Palestine after the war which bolstered demographic and military force, and their experience shaped motivation." She believes that the Holocaust became the symbol of Jewish suffering and the proof of the need for an independent state.

Conversely, Professor Saul Friedlander, at the same conference, claimed it is hard to find actual connections between these two events. He suggests that the outcome was relative to the different players - the countries, the survivors, the Yishuv and world Jewry, and their own motives. While believing that the ethical imperative was not translated into meaningful action after World War II, he acknowledges that to extract the Holocaust from the equation would be a dehistoricization

of the Holocaust. In his summary, Friedlander compared the connection between the Holocaust and the creation of the State of Israel to the relationship between Yad Vashem and the city of Jerusalem. Yad Vashem is located on the outskirts of Jerusalem; it is on the side of the hill, and not at its peak, where the military cemetery lies. Yet, every visiting head of state visits Yad Vashem, and not the cemetery. While Yad Vashem is peripheral yet integral to Jerusalem, the Holocaust, although not the basis of the development of the Jewish state, gives a certain legitimization.

Professor Yisrael Gutman, Yad Vashem's Chief Historian, believes there is a more direct connection between the Holocaust and the creation of the State of Israel. Principally, a chronological one. "It is simply impossible to deny the importance of the fact that the war ended in 1945 and only three years later the state was declared," he comments. Secondly, he claims, that at Biltmore, in 1942, in view of the atrocities in Europe, Ben Gurion thought of promising a homeland to millions of Jews - his idea being that, after the war, the Allied powers could focus on the creation of a Jewish state. "Ben Gurion fully understood the workings of international diplomacy," believes Gutman, "and recognized the opportunity for speeding up the creation of a Jewish state." Gutman believes that there was clearly a cause and effect process at work - the Holocaust acted as a lesson, the ultimate lesson in antisemitism, as well as a catalyst in the momentum of history.

If Herzlian Zionism aimed at providing a solution to the existential problems faced by European Jews, and the target was a haven of refuge, then the experience of the Holocaust convinced most of the survivors that such a safe-house was needed, and that they had to establish it in Palestine. The end of World War II and the complex, Jewish, and international realities encouraged the renewal of the uphill struggle for the establishment of a Jewish state. The prospect was daunting, but a successful utilization of political developments on the international scene, and a great deal of luck, pure and simple, presented the Zionist movement with new circumstances under which it could secure its aims. The subject of Holocaust survivors, mainly those in Central European DP camps, was emotive enough to encourage American Jews, and indeed the American public at large, to support the struggle for Jewish independence. Simultaneously, the Soviet support for Jewish statehood as part of its Cold War policy, provided crucial help. Such moves were not ideological, but largely motivated by pragmatic politics - with some exceptions, such as the policy of the Czechoslovak Foreign Minister, Jan Masaryk, for whom moral issues were also very important.

The Zionist option became dominant in the eyes of the survivors, neither because it was the most correct nor the best option, but because no others were available. They were driven by their Holocaust experiences. As a result of the one unique historical moment at the end of World War II, the Zionists had the chance to make Jewish statehood a reality. Of course, without the background of the Yishuv, the Zionist movement in Palestine, and the pioneering fervor, Israel would not even have been an option.

Bauer and Gutman agree: after the Holocaust, the Jews about whom Ben Gurion spoke when he initiated the Biltmore program to establish Palestine as a Jewish state were no longer alive. British Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin was determined not to permit the establishment of a Jewish state, but his policy of preventing Holocaust survivors from entering Palestine ultimately caused the Americans to intervene which in turn helped the struggle to found Israel. The process, however, was tenuous, and the murder of the millions, who could have pressed for Jewish independence, almost prevented it from happening. To this extent, the Holocaust did almost stop the Zionist process.

FORBIDDEN MESSAGES

A Series of Coded Correspondences was Recently Presented to Yad Vashem by a Survivor

By Daniel J. Chalfen

In a pristine, imaginatively decorated house in the Tel Aviv suburb of Bitsaron, a popular place among those who arrived in Palestine from Europe after the Holocaust, lives Rita Muenzer, formerly Bejkovsky, a Theresienstadt survivor. She recently donated books, diaries and a

the Yad Vashem Archives. "The recent addition of Rita's letters gives us a more exact picture of the content of these letters."

The letters, which were distributed secretly via an inmate whose job was to fix doors and shutters and therefore had a pass to move between the

developments of Kadimah, a Zionist group which was founded in Pilsen by the end of 1939 and continued inside Theresienstadt as its mostly teenage members were transported there together. The letters reveal the evolution of a strong ideology and a club bonding within the ghetto walls based on the idea that "only one thing remains for us: hope" – the hope of one day being free people in Israel. There was a strong optimism which the group believed kept them alive. One letter to Rita spoke of a friend's decision not to commit suicide because she wanted to make it to Israel. The letters clarified how Kadimah organized itself within the ghetto and also included a copy of their anthem written while the group hid, after work, on a roof of one of the ghetto buildings.

The letters maintained contact between family and friends. The letters, ironically full of life, contain a patchwork of names and refer to people in the ghetto with Muenzer, almost like a list of old school friends.

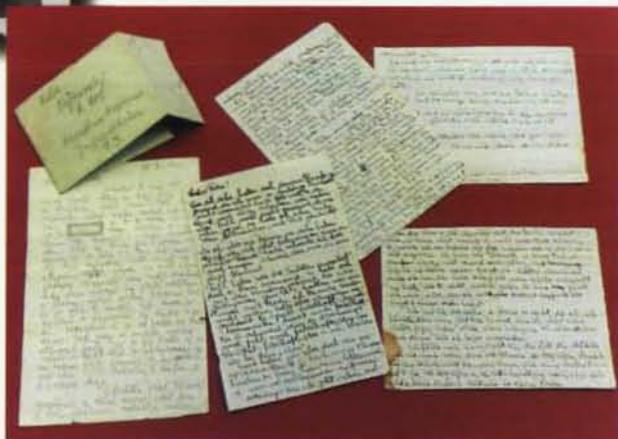


Rita Muenzer (right) and a friend, in Pilsen

wealth of internal ghetto letters to the Yad Vashem Archives; this gesture is in the spirit of Yad Vashem's intensive effort to collect material from the diminishing number of Holocaust survivors.

"Up until now we knew that these letters existed but believed that only very few of the hundreds of letters which were sent secretly inside the ghetto were saved," says Silvia Noll, head of German and Czech division at

buildings, usually contained thoughts about Zionism. "In general, these letters give us a more precise and unique picture of the practical impact of Zionist ideology on the inmates' everyday life," says Noll. The letters showed the deve-



The "Forbidden Messages"

Fortunately, when Muenzer's family was interned, their former housekeeper safeguarded a family photo album. In these photos, the color, happiness and dynamism of Muenzer and her childhood friends are vivid, and give life to the names in the letters. In the collection, there are photos of sports teams which were formed after the *Protektorat* forbade their interaction with the *Czech Sokol* sport association. Rita is practically the only one still alive. Rita can cite the rough geographical whereabouts of the other survivors today, but for most faces it suffices to say: "He did not return." Of her own family, she is the only one still alive.

The flower arrangements in her lounge are a colorful reminder of how she survived: from a young age she had a keen interest in gardening. At Theresienstadt she was employed, along with a very small number of other inmates, to tend to the vegetable garden where food for the Gestapo was grown. The letters, often concerned with food, relate how, to supplement the inmates' diet, she smuggled cucumbers and tomatoes in her dungarees back to her building. She did not regard this *schleusovat* (a coded word for "filtering out") as stealing because the cause was so noble - and the risk so great.

Although the letter writers were young, the letters are mature. "We were forced to grow up unnaturally fast," she recognizes. Yet there is humor. She attributes this to the fact that the youngsters had less fear because of their naivete. Rita and her friends did not know of the pogroms and what she had overheard were stories from Poland which, as a young girl, seemed so far away. This, she acknowledges, was the cardinal error.

When she looks at the photos now, those from before 1940 appear to be out of a dream. When she reads the letters, it is hard to believe that almost none of the sporty and dynamic kids writing and written about survived. While to her they provide a record of her family, friends and her own life, for Yad Vashem, such material assists the researchers in reconstructing lives, movements and stories from the Holocaust period.

Noll believes that while it is impossible to recover entire lists of names of people and places destroyed by the Nazis, collections such as these letters are extremely useful in approaching this target. "These letters add to history," she says, "and especially to the picture of life in Theresienstadt; the internee's view of the outside world, how news of deaths infiltrated, the ranks among the prisoners and the codes used in notes sent within the ghetto."

FIFTY RIGHTEOUS TO BE GUESTS OF ISRAEL

To mark the State of Israel's jubilee year and as a sign of appreciation to the Righteous Among the Nations, Yad Vashem is hosting a representative delegation of 50 Righteous Among the Nations from 22 different countries, from April 28 to May 8, 1998.

To date, 15,670 people have been recognized by Yad Vashem as Righteous Among the Nations - the highest honor bestowed by the Jewish people and the State of Israel on non-Jews. This prestigious title is given to the brave individuals, who, under Nazi oppression, risked their lives and often the lives of their families, to save Jews from death during the Second World War.

The delegates will be the official guests of the State of Israel and will attend several of the state ceremonies for Remembrance Day for Israel's Fallen Soldiers and Israel's Independence Day, including the torch-lighting ceremony at Mount Herzl and the "Jubilee Bells" celebratory event. They will be the guests at the official VE day ceremony marking the Allied Victory over the Nazis, held annually at Yad Vashem, as well as a special concert to be performed by the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra and conducted by Zubin Mehta which will take place on May 4, 1998 in the Warsaw Ghetto Square in Yad Vashem. Additionally, the Prime Minister of Israel will meet with the Righteous Among the Nations and their survivors and families at Yad Vashem, and the President of Israel, the Head of the Knesset and the mayors of the three major cities in Israel - Jerusalem, Tel Aviv and Haifa - will receive the Righteous Among the Nations at festive receptions held in their honor. In this fiftieth year of the establishment of the State of Israel, Yad Vashem has the singular honor of recognizing these altruistic people and bringing the story of their deeds to the public world over. They truly stand as beacons of light to us all.

THE HISTORY OF THE HOLOCAUST: GERMANY

The two-volume book on the Holocaust in Germany is the fourth book to appear in the framework of Yad Vashem's project, "The Comprehensive History of the Holocaust," which is coordinated by Professor Yoav Gelber. This book concludes two generations of scholarly research and study of the Holocaust period in Germany. The history of the German Jews under the Nazi regime from 1933 to 1945 is presented from the German Jewish perspective rather than from the Nazi authorities' perspective: the ideological trends and main political-organizational factions in German Jewry prior to the Nazis' seizure of power; the Jews' responses to the persecutions; the policies and activities of their newly created central institutions; the district communal organizations; the struggle for economic survival in face of the Nazi boycott, legislation and policies of expropriation; the Jewish culture's flourishing under these grim circumstances, the expansion of Jewish independent education, and the final phase—the deportations to the killing centers. Specific chapters deal with particular Jewish populations, such as orthodox Jewry, the youth movements and the Jews in the Resistance groups.

The editor of this integrative scholarly work, the late Dr. Abraham Margalio, died suddenly in 1987, in the midst of his work. After his death, his disciple, Dr. Yehoyakim Cochavi, undertook the book's completion. In addition to the editors, seven prominent scholars contributed chapters in their fields: Dr. A. Barkai; Dr. M. Birenbaum; Prof. K. Kweit; Prof. J. Reinharz; Prof. C. Schatzker; Prof. J. Walk and Dr. Y. Zur.



NEWS

THE ISRAEL PRIZE IN ISRAEL'S JUBILEE YEAR

This year, the prestigious Israel Prize will be awarded to Professor Yehuda Bauer, Head of the Yad Vashem International Center for Holocaust Studies, former MK Sarah Stern-Katan for promoting Jewish history and heritage through public activity in the social and educational fields, and Dan Tzur and Lipa Yahalom, landscape architects whose most renowned project is the Valley of the Communities at Yad Vashem.

The Israel Prize is awarded annually to citizens and organizations for their exceptional contribution to Israeli society. In the jubilee year of the State of Israel, the prize recipients will be noted for their outstanding contribution to Israeli society since its birth fifty years ago.

Professor Yehuda Bauer, who heads the International Center of Holocaust Studies at Yad Vashem, has been hailed for his monumental research in the field of Jewish history, and in particular the Holocaust. The prize committee considered it most fitting in Israel's jubilee year to award the Israel Prize to this distinguished scholar for his work on the destruction of European Jewry and its return to life in the new State of Israel.

Professor Bauer recently spoke at the ceremony held in the Bundestag marking "Memorial Day for the Victims of the Nazis," and received a long, standing ovation. He warned, "that the mass murders that have taken place over the past few years in Rwanda and in Bosnia have proven that the world has learned very little from the Holocaust... The commemoration of the Holocaust is only the first step in teaching and in learning about what took place during the Second World War, about the racism and antisemitism which was responsible for the Holocaust."

Recognized for her lifelong contribution to educational and social activities, Holocaust survivor, Sara Stern-Katan, who was active in the ghetto and in the underground, a member of the Yad Vashem Directorate, will receive the award for life achievement. At the end of the war, she did much to gather and to help rehabilitate child survivors. As a member of Kibbutz Yavne, she contributed greatly to the



Lipa Yahalom



Dan Tzur



Sara Stern-Katan



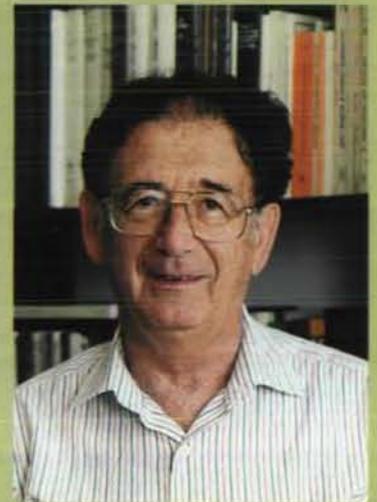
The Valley of the Communities, Yad Vashem

welfare and advancement of issues relating to women, children, family, education and social work.

Dan Tzur and Lipa Yahalom, among the leading landscape architects in Israel today, will be awarded the Israel Prize this year for creating a unique style which has influenced rural and urban landscape design in Israel over many decades. The committee noted that the Valley of the Communities at Yad Vashem was Tzur and Yahalom's "masterpiece" and the architects were praised for this exemplary project. "In Israel's fiftieth year, Yahalom and Tzur's contribution promotes awareness of the importance of the environment and of the landscape amongst its public," explain the judges. Tzur and Yahalom are responsible for the landscaping of many of Israel's national parks, institutions, official gravesites, archaeological parks, and kibbutzim.

The designer Dan Reisinger will receive the Israel prize for design. His works include the frieze on the external walls of the Hall of Names at Yad Vashem, quoting Isaiah 56:5 "And to them I will give in my house and within my walls a memorial (a 'Yad Vashem')..."

The prize giving ceremony, an official state event, will take place on Israel's Independence Day.



Professor Yehuda Bauer

SYMPOSIUM AT YAD VASHEM

Following the success and broad interest in the Yad Vashem exhibition "No child's play," a symposium about Jewish children during the Shoah was held at Yad Vashem in March, sponsored by the Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture. The day was opened by Jerry Hochbaum, Chair of the Memorial Foundation. A series of lectures, given by prominent academics and experts, covered many topics, amongst others, the role of the child in the Holocaust, the children's drawings, the meeting of sabra and Holocaust survivor children and Israeli literature about the Holocaust written for children.

EUROPEAN UNION SUPPORTS RIGHTEOUS AMONG THE NATIONS LEXICON

NEWS

The President of the European Commission, Jacques Santer, who visited Yad Vashem in February, announced that the European Union has committed itself to supporting the Yad Vashem project Lexicon of the Righteous Among the Nations.

The 15 volume Righteous Among the Nations Lexicon, which is also being supported by the Dutch and German governments, is an extensive and important project of the International Center of Holocaust Studies at Yad Vashem. The Lexicon documents thoroughly and succinctly the names and stories of the thousands of non-Jews who risked their lives to save Jews during the Holocaust. The project is headed by Professor Yisrael Gutman, Chief Historian of Yad Vashem.

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

The Lexicon is divided by countries, with the Righteous Among the Nations appearing in alphabetical order. The volumes are edited by experts in the field. The main corpus of the Lexicon will appear in English, while the individual volumes are translated in accordance to the country of the particular Righteous Among the Nations. The volumes of each country contain an historical introduction.

The volumes covering France (edited by Dr. Luciene Lazare) are nearing completion. The editions of Holland (edited by Dr. Yosef Michman), Poland (edited by Dr. Shmuel Krakowski), and Germany (edited by Dr. Daniel Fraenkel) are currently in production. The coordinator of this comprehensive collection is Dr. Sara Bender. To date, Yad Vashem's Commission for the Designation of the Righteous, chaired by former Supreme Court Judge Yaakov Maltz, has awarded this prestigious title to 15,670 individuals.



President of the European Commission Jacques Santer

A NEW EXHIBITION TO OPEN AT YAD VASHEM IN APRIL 1998

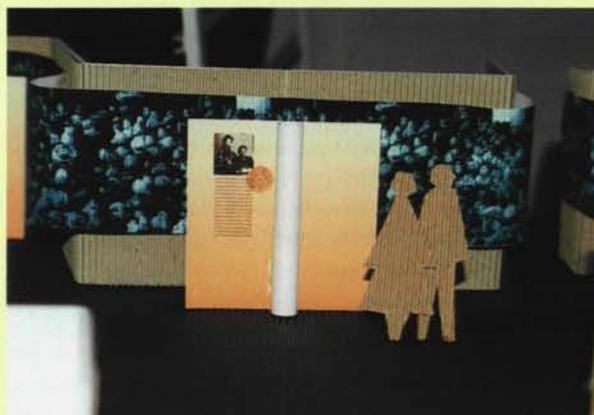
"It is a fantastic comment on the humanity of our times that for thousands and thousands of people a piece of paper with a stamp on it is the difference between life and death." Dorothy Thompson, journalist.

The Nazis depended on the support of millions in order to murder millions. Many more turned a blind eye and did nothing or worse -- they made it harder for the innocent to have a chance to survive.

Foreign diplomats enjoyed a special status in the countries where they served and were in a position to extend significant help to Jewish refugees. For persecuted Jews desperately seeking visas to escape the Nazis, these diplomats' actions were often the difference between life and death. Many used every nuance in the regulations to keep Jews from entering their countries. Yet a few shine as beacons of light in the vast darkness, a few lone lighthouses guiding refugees passed the lethal rocks and through the deadly minefields of the Holocaust.

The new exhibition at Yad Vashem, called "Visas for Life: Diplomats who Rescued Jews" is based on photographs from the private collections of families of diplomats and is being shown in Israel for the very first time. Its venue will be Beit Hakehilot, a building within the commemorative site of the Valley of the Communities.

These few individuals rescued many tens of thousands of lives and were responsible for saving the largest number of Jewish survivors. Yet some of these diplomats paid a heavy personal price for their actions. Swedish diplomat, Raoul Wallenburg, disappeared into a Soviet prison, never to be heard from again. Aristides de Sousa Mendes, the Portuguese Consul General in Bordeaux, was dismissed from the Portuguese Foreign Ministry for having disobeyed orders. He was stripped of his rank and his pension, forced to sell his country home, and his erstwhile friends ostracized him. Partially paralyzed by a stroke, De Sousa Mendes, said, "If so many Jews can suffer because of one person (Hitler), then one Christian can suffer for Jews."



A Model of the exhibition, "Visas for Life"

 **U.S.A.**



The Young Leadership Associates L. to R.: Caroline Arfa, Randi Halperin, Jeffrey Goldstein, Elie Singer, Israeli Consul of Cultural Affairs Rafi Gamzu, Julian Hess (who received the Honorary Citizenship Award on behalf of the Fry family), Estie Agus, Lawrence Burián, Lorne Lieberman and Ronit Kahanowicz.

Yad Vashem welcomes the new Executive Director of the **American Society for Yad Vashem, Jeffrey L. Hodes**. Hodes' extensive fundraising past includes Project Renewal, the UJA, Keren Hayesod, the World Sephardi Federation and the Jewish Agency, in addition to key positions in the private sector. He intends to concentrate on establishing new Yad Vashem societies in **South Florida, Chicago, Texas**, among others. This will all be in addition to his involvement in promoting "Yad Vashem 2001" Masterplan, cultivating future leadership and bringing Yad Vashem to the fore in Israel's jubilee year.

On his last visit to Yad Vashem, the Chairman of the **American Society for Yad Vashem, Eli Zborowski**, met together with the Yad Vashem management to formulate the annual strategy for "Yad Vashem 2001" Masterplan campaign, and the workplan for the society's other major activities in the coming year. He was also briefed about the building progress of the school and archives, in addition to the plans for the Visitors' Center and museum complex.

The Young Leadership Associates of the **American Society for Yad Vashem**, led by **Caroline Arfa**, have been extremely busy since the beginning of the year. Two major events have taken place, both well-attended. In line with the **Young Leadership's** central aims of promoting teaching and awareness of the Holocaust among the next generation, a meeting focusing on education took place with members of Yad Vashem's International School for Holocaust Studies, **Shulamit Imber** and **Richelle Budd-Caplan**. At the meeting, the **Young Leadership** were introduced to the educational philosophy of Yad Vashem. The **Young Leadership** dedicated the other event to the phenomenon of the Righteous Among the Nations. Over 300 youngsters attended the evening, which took place at the Jewish Museum in New York. The focus of the evening was on the late **Varian Fry**, the only American citizen during the war to be recognized as a Righteous Among the Nations. In 1940, as a representative of an American Relief Agency in Marseilles, Fry saved over 2000 Jewish refugees, including many artists and intellectuals. The highlight was the Israel's Consul for Cultural Affairs' presentation of posthumous honorary Israeli citizenship to this distinguished American figure.

 **C**anada

Fundraising activities on the Canadian front include the "Super Wednesday Lecture Series." Co-sponsored by the **Canadian Friends of Boys Town Jerusalem**, the series of four lectures have included **Neal Sher**, Consultant to the Canadian Government on Nazi War Criminals and **Dr. Stephen Berk**, who spoke about "Antisemitism, Poles and Jews." The **Canadian Society**, led by **Hank Rosenbaum**, recently moved to its new premises, and has opened a Resource Center for Teachers and Students.

 **B**razil

The **Sao Paulo Yad Vashem Society**, whose key figures include **Israel Isser Levin, Ernesto Strauss, Jayme Melsohn** and **Jayme Franco**, has been vigorously involved in reviving its activities. A main feature of these events is to impress the Jewish community as to Yad Vashem's importance in commemoration and education about the Holocaust, and especially the "Yad Vashem 2001" Masterplan.



L. to R.: Jayme Franco, Israel Isser Levin, Ernesto Strauss, and Jayme Melsohn

 **N**orway

Yad Vashem received an additional gift from the Chairperson of the Board of the **Christian Hjelp Jodene Hjem** organization, **Anne-Marie Gravidahl**, who recently visited Yad Vashem. The gift will go towards employing new immigrants from Eastern Europe in the Yad Vashem archives.

 **F**rance

The **French Society**, led by its new president, **Dr. Richard Prasquier**, has recently established a new branch in **Lyon** and intends to follow suit in other cities. The recent French-speaking seminar at Yad Vashem, which had the largest attendance ever, including **Dr. Prasquier** and members of the executive committee, has already borne fruit as the society is currently concentrating on the expansion of its educational activities throughout **France**.

Recently, the **French Society's** commendable work with French Righteous Among the Nations, led by the Society's Vice President **Louis Grobart**, has drawn praise from **French President Jacques Chirac**, who noted this small volunteer group's devotion and diligence in researching and preparing the material required to award this unique title to those French who risked their lives to save Jews, in addition to maintaining contact with those already recognized. **President Chirac** has also shown keen interest in the **French** edition of the Lexicon for the Righteous Among the Nations, currently being produced by the International Center of Holocaust Studies at Yad Vashem.

Holland

The Dutch Society, together with the Israeli Embassy in Holland, awarded the title Righteous Among the Nations to 21 people. Many dignitaries from all walks of life, in addition to 600 guests, were present at the widely publicized ceremony, which took place in the University of Amsterdam. Awards were presented to the Righteous, and films were shown, one about the Righteous, and the other especially prepared by Yad Vashem, showing the different sites on the Mount of Remembrance. Another highlight of the event was the awarding of pins marking Israel's jubilee year to the dedicated group of 25 volunteers, who under the coordination of Anne Dunkelgrun of the Israeli Embassy, are in contact with the Dutch Righteous Among the Nations and gather testimonies of those seeking to have people awarded this prestigious title.



The Righteous Among the Nations' Ceremony in Amsterdam

Major news related to Holland includes the launching of the initial preparations for the new and comprehensive computer network for the Yad Vashem database. This major project is financially and technically supported by Dutch brothers, Paul and Jan Baan, who are world leaders in business software applications and computer consultations for companies in the hybrid manufacturing, automotive, electronics, process and heavy equipment project service industries.

Britain

News from the Yad Vashem National Charitable Trust in England, led by Ben Helfgott, includes the purchase of 60 acid-free containers for storing original prints and drawings for the art museum at Yad Vashem and the continuation of its mailing campaign. The Grissman and Lissauer families have completed their support of the Traveling Pedagogical Center, which will be in honor of the Righteous Among the Nations, the late Baron Frederich Carl von Oppenheim, who saved their lives during the Holocaust. A presentation of the Center's educational activities took place in March in the presence of the Grissman and Oppenheim families.

Germany

Henry H. Faktor, the founder and moving spirit of the German Society, *Freundeskreis von Yad Vashem*, whose initiative and drive are responsible for establishing this vibrant and active society, honored the Gertler family for their generous support of the Yad Vashem tuition programs of Diaspora and Israeli educators in teaching about the Holocaust. The gift is in memory of survivors Moritz and Miriam Gertler's parents, who perished in the Holocaust. At the late January event, which was organized together with Bnai Brith Frankfurt, Professor Yehuda Bauer, the Head of the International Center of Holocaust Studies at Yad Vashem, discussed some of the themes from his historic speech to the Bundestag marking Germany's Remembrance Day for the victims of National Socialism commemorated the previous day. Bauer also discussed points relevant to the Goldhagen debate. The other guest speakers were Vice Chairman of the Yad Vashem Directorate, Johanan Bein, who spoke about "Yad Vashem 2001" Masterplan, and journalist, Hersch Fischler, who spoke about the involvement of the German banks in the theft of gold from German Jews by the Nazis. The evening was a great success for this less-than-a-year-old society led by Dr. Ansgar Koschel. The membership includes Speaker of the House, Rita Suessmuth, and Prime Minister of Nordrhein-Westfalen, Johannes Rau, who is Honorary President of the Society.



Henry H. Faktor

Another new and active member to the society is architect Josef Grotte, a survivor originally from Lodz, who has committed himself to supporting Yad Vashem's educational activities both in Israel and in Germany. Grotte, who lost his parents, Avram and Lea, and sister, Rita, in the Holocaust, was one of the key figures in the design and building of Israel's national water carrier.

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Yad Vashem *new*

PUBLICATIONS AND EVENTS

NEW PUBLICATIONS

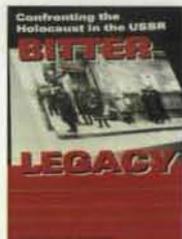
By Alisa Lehrer



Victims and Survivors, The Nazi Persecution of the Jews in the Netherlands 1940 - 1945, by Bob Moore, Arnold, Great Britain: 1997, pp. 340. Moore's fascinating study meticulously documents

and explains the chronological events, circumstances and conditions leading to the destruction of Dutch Jewry and explores the role played by the Dutch during World War II. Despite the

Netherlands' long-standing reputation as a country proud of its tolerant and liberal traditions, 73% of Dutch Jews were murdered in the Holocaust, a figure disproportionate to the other Nazi-occupied Western European countries.



Bitter Legacy, Confronting the Holocaust in the USSR,

ed. Zvi Gittelman, Indiana University Press, U.S.A.: 1997, pp. 321.

The recent opening of the Soviet Archives has allowed scholars to thoroughly research the perpetration of the Holocaust in the Soviet Union. This book is a compilation of articles discussing many different angles of the destruction of Soviet Jewry, and covers issues such as the collaboration of the local people, the relations between the Jewish and local populations and the portrayal and teaching of the Holocaust after the war.

NEW EXHIBITION FOR ISRAEL'S JUBILEE YEAR

A new exhibition is due to open this August in Yad Vashem's museum. It will portray the integration and absorption of the Holocaust survivors during the first decade of the newly founded state. Despite their immigrant status, the Holocaust survivors influenced and contributed to all areas of Israeli society and helped shape the new Israeli identity. The exhibition tells the story of the survivors upon their arrival in Eretz Israel where they were again faced with the perils of war in defending their new homeland, and constituted approximately half of the fighting forces. While they were active in the establishment of the State, many were plagued by feelings of alienation, but their burning desire to belong superceded everything. The integration of the survivors, against this backdrop, will be portrayed in the exhibition in various ways; the survivor as a soldier in the army; the story of Youth Aliyah portrayed in films made in the late 1940s and the early 1950s; the survivors rebuilding of their lives by learning Hebrew, setting up homes and *yishuvim*, or commemorating the Holocaust, a move initiated by the survivors themselves.



The Megilla created by Aryeh Ben-Menachem when he was a POW in Egypt, 1948-1949

EVENTS MAY - JULY '98

7.5.1998 Official VE Day Ceremony, in the presence of Defence Minister Yitzhak Mordechai and Absorption Minister Yuli Edelstein. The ceremony will be attended by thousands of war veterans, IDF representatives and representatives of the Allied states.

13.5.1998 Ceremony in which the title of "Righteous Among the Nations" will be bestowed on the late Charlotte Ravhon of Germany. The award will be received by her children.

25.5.98 Ceremony in which the International Center for Holocaust Studies will award scholarships to research students.

27.5.98 Award ceremony for Yad Vashem Prizes for Educational Achievement, in the presence of the Minister of Education, Culture and Sport, Rabbi Yitzhak Levy. The program includes the awarding of:

1. The Chuno and Blima Najmann Prizes, the first for educational achievement, the second for an educational program and the third awarded to a man or woman for his/her work in the field of Holocaust commemoration.
2. The Leuba Uveeler and late Mark Uveeler Foundation Prizes, for research projects on Holocaust-related topics.
3. The Bruno Brandt Foundation Prize, for a children's book about the Holocaust.

1.7.98 A cantorial evening in the Valley of the Communities: Young cantors studying at the Cantorial Academy in Tel Aviv sing liturgical melodies and traditional Jewish songs.

For further information, please contact the Public Relations and Commemoration Department, tel: 02 675 1614.

REMEMBRANCE DAY

The Eve of Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Day, Wednesday, April 22, 1998

- 20.00** The Official Opening Ceremony of Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Day in the presence of President Ezer Weizman and Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu, **Warsaw Ghetto Square**.
- 22.00** Symposium in the Yad Vashem Auditorium.

Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Day, Thursday, April 23, 1998

- 10.00** Siren
- 10.02** Wreath-laying ceremony with the participation of the President, government representatives, Speaker

of the Knesset, public figures, survivors' organizations, students and delegations from all over the country, **Warsaw Ghetto Square**.

- 10.30-13.00** "Unto Every Person There is a Name" - Recitation of names of Holocaust victims by members of the public, **Hall of Remembrance**.
- 13.00** Main memorial ceremony, **Hall of Remembrance**.
- 10.30-16.00** Continuous screening of films on the Holocaust, **Auditorium**.
- 17:30** Ceremony for youth movements in the presence of the Deputy Minister of Education, Culture and Sport. The ceremony will be attended by thousands of pupils, youth movement members and soldiers, **Warsaw Ghetto Square**.