

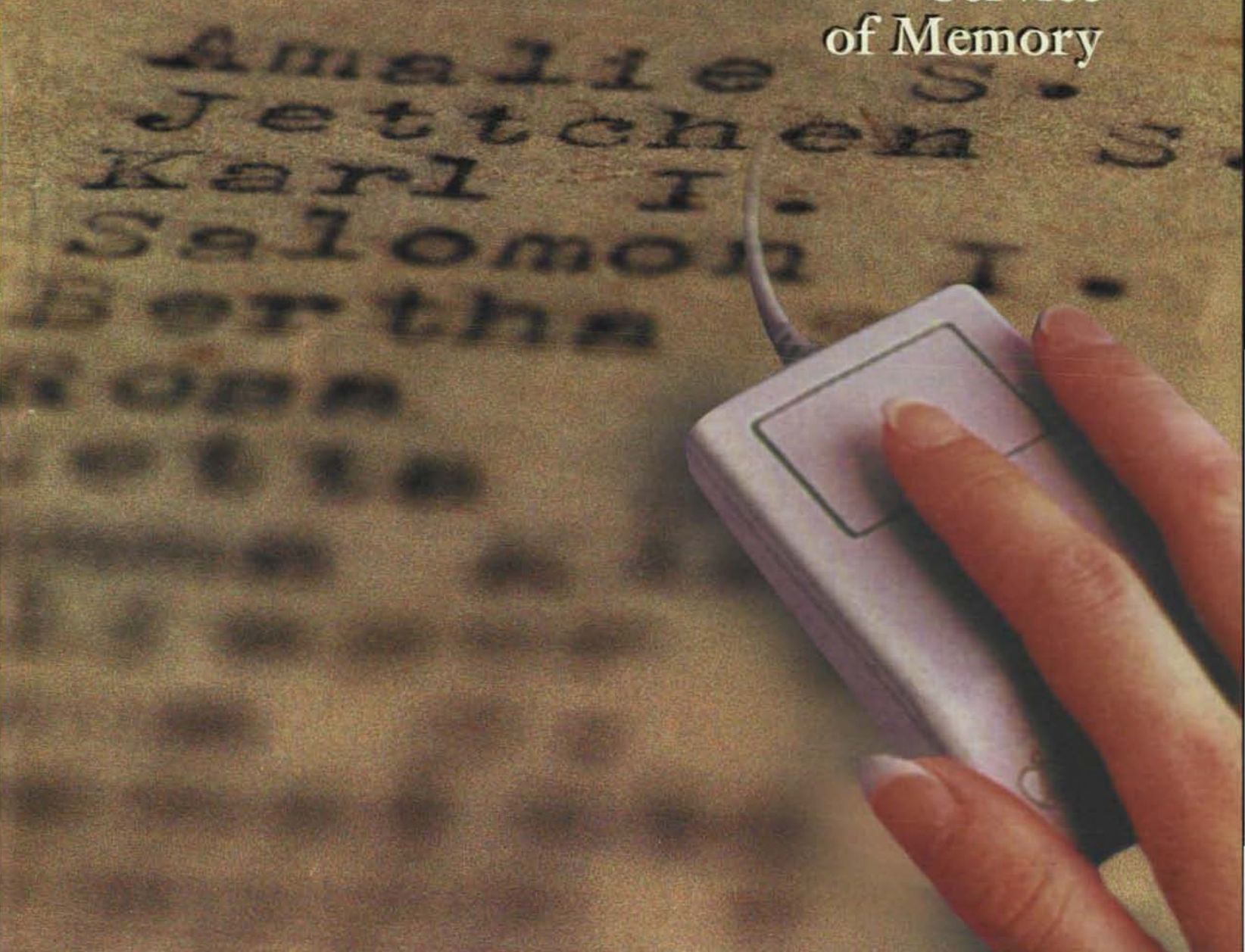
Yad Vashem

JERUSALEM

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Cover Story:

Technology
in the
Service
of Memory





Yad Vashem

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Cover: From a transport list to Theresienstadt.
(Record Group O64, Hermann Weiss Collection,
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Yad Vashem

Editorial

Inspired by the Jerusalem high-holiday spirit, and the prospect of a good new year before us, the Yad Vashem magazine staff has taken upon itself to design the magazine anew for you, our friends worldwide. Guided by your positive feedback on the thematic sections - *Podium*, *Education*, and *Personal*, among others - we have sought to create a permanent niche for them.

Studying and creating the tools for the ongoing examination of the scope of the Holocaust are central to Yad Vashem's mission. This issue of the magazine, at the close of Israel's golden jubilee, addresses the main issues facing Yad Vashem today.

One of the principal aims of the Memorial in the coming years is the computerization of all the Archives and information repositories. Yad Vashem has already embarked on this monumental computerization project and has recently completed the first stage termed the "List of Lists," reviewed in the *Yad Vashem 2001* section. This comprehensive list records over 10,000 lists of Holocaust victims' and survivors' names found in the Archives.

"Under This Blazing Light," the newly opened exhibition reviewed in *Art Focus*, presents the survivors' input in Israel's first decade. The alarming phenomenon of the planting of crosses on the Auschwitz site is dealt with in *Podium*. This and much more is covered in this issue of the magazine that we hope you will find interesting and worth reading.

We would like to thank our outgoing managing editor, Michal Morris Kamil, for her contribution to the magazine, and wish her all the best in her future undertakings. Welcome and *Be'hatslaha* - Good Luck - to our new managing editor, Yvette Nahmia-Messinas.

Yad Vashem Masterplan

2001

The Fragmented Picture

If you were to ask someone from the town of Hotin what his country of origin is, he would no doubt hem and haw over the answer. In World War I, the area passed from Russia to Romania. Between 1940 and 1945, the area changed hands a few times - to the Soviet Union, to Romania and then back to the Soviet Union. Today it is part of the Ukraine. If a Holocaust survivor, a researcher, a banker or an insurance broker would need details on this person, to whom would he turn?

In the volatile cauldron that was Europe in the first half of the 20th century, cities and towns changed their names or were simultaneously referred to differently by their various inhabitants. Administrative regions were in a state of constant flux, and borders often moved. States were founded only to fall a few years later, perhaps to be subsequently re-established.

Individuals often went by more than one name. For example, Jewish men in Hungary who were called Avraham at home called themselves Adolf in public. This custom did not apply anywhere else and thus, this information is only useful for identifying Adolfs and Avrahams from Hungary - a country whose borders changed frequently.

All these details are part of a larger picture which, at the moment, is incomplete. Each geographical place, every political and social issue and each individual's name constitute the scattered mosaic of the Jewish community in Europe before the Holocaust. Most of this information is stored in Yad Vashem's Archives, but is not easily retrievable. Yad Vashem's goal is to computerize all its information repositories, making the mass of information more accessible and thus rebuilding the Jewish mosaic.

Computerization

Yad Vashem's Archives contain innumerable information databases and house more than 50 million pages of documents, as well as hundreds of thousands of photographs and films. This material provides many names of both Holocaust victims and survivors. Additionally, the Hall of Names has collected approximately 3 million names and details of victims recorded on Pages of Testimony, published lists and *Yizkor* books.

As there never was a full list of Jews persecuted in the Holocaust, no archive can possess such a list. However, for decades, Yad Vashem has been collecting countless thousands of local lists created by various agencies during and after the Holocaust. These collections currently hold approximately 10,000 lists, with a rough estimate of 30 million relevant recurrent names. In addition to these lists, the Archives have computerized tools that contain libraries of knowledge about the politics, semantics and geography of Europe in the 20th century, which overcome the pitfalls mentioned above.

This summer, work from the Archives, the Hall of Names and the Library was directed to creating a "list of lists" by locating all the lists of names in Yad Vashem's possession. This

comprehensive list is one of the first stages in Yad Vashem's mammoth computerization project.

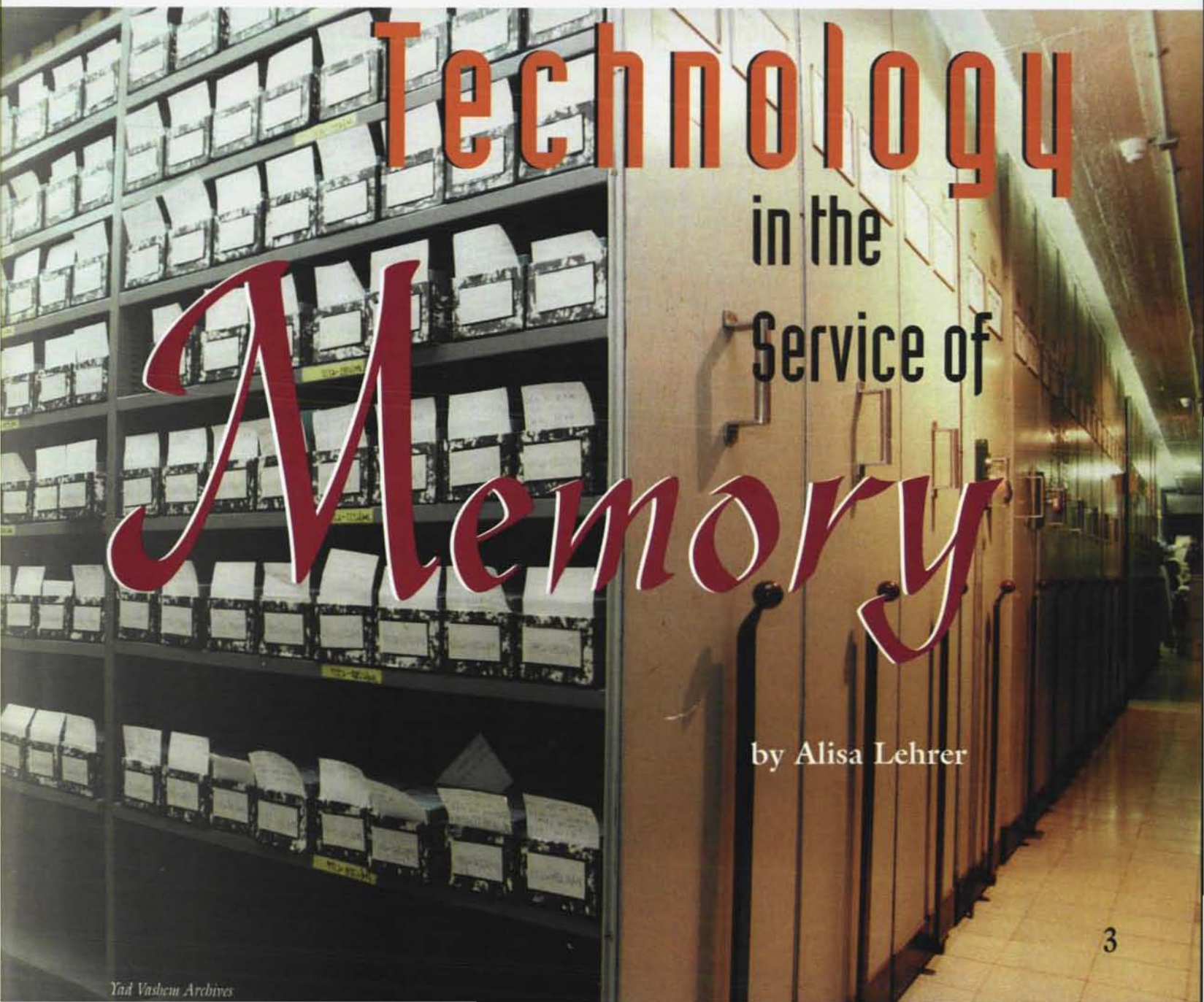
Impact on the Future

"The full impact of the Holocaust on mankind has yet to be fully grasped, and it is part of Yad Vashem's mission to provide the tools for an ongoing examination of this terrible event," says Avner Shalev, Chairman of the Yad Vashem Directorate. "This computerization project offers possibilities for information integration and access that were barely imaginable in the recent past. Yad Vashem estimates that upon completion of this long-term project, the list will number over four million of the six million victims' names, as well as most of the

Holocaust survivors' names."

It is Yad Vashem's conviction that integrated databanks will serve as the major resource in the world for future encounters with the Holocaust and its implications. Only by this complex computerization project, with the help of the professional, historical and archival expertise of the staff, can the invaluable information stored in the Archives be fully accessible. With computerization, one will be able to cross-index Yad Vashem's extensive database with other lists, which will serve as a basis for future negotiations.

This monumental project will aid the present and future generations' attempts to complete the fragmented picture of the six million Jews and their worlds which were brutally destroyed in the Holocaust.



Technology in the Service of Memory

by Alisa Lehrer

Kristallnacht Remembered:

by Galia Limor



“ In the early morning hours, I heard a noise that sounded like a huge wave approaching,” recalls Shimon Banai concerning the events of November 1938. “I went downstairs and from afar, I could see large masses of people. Then some Jews ran up to me, and I inquired what was going on. ‘Run, hide, they are killing Jews, burning houses, looting,’ they cried,” Banai, a Berlin Jew, describes his impressions of Kristallnacht. “They removed all the sacred texts, the Torah scrolls, and they made huge bonfires in the middle of the street, dancing around them... I went downstairs... to see what was happening... Everything was in ruins. I saw people who had been beaten and were covered in blood, people who had been seized by gangs in the streets and beaten... They threw feather blankets and furniture out of windows and threw them on the fire. All the Jewish shops were broken into.”

Shimon Banai's experience was shared by other German and Austrian Jews. The riots began two days after an act of revenge by Herschel Grynszpan, a 17-year old Polish Jew living in France. In early November 1938, he received a postcard from his family in which they wrote that they and other Jews of Polish extraction living in Germany had been deported to Zbaszyn in Poland. They explained that the Polish government refused to recognize their Polish citizenship, and that consequently, the family members no longer had any citizenship at all. They were on the German border, penniless, starving and freezing. On November 7, young Grynszpan went to the German embassy in Paris. After being admitted into the office of the Third Secretary Ernst vom Rath, Grynszpan shot him. Two days later, vom Rath died of his wounds.

With news of vom Rath's death, and following two days of vehement antisemitic incitement in the press and by government

officials, a violent pogrom erupted all across Germany and Austria. Some 1,400 synagogues were plundered and burned and many were completely destroyed; hundreds of private homes and apartments were looted and vandalized; thousands of shops were torched and about one



Baden-Baden Synagogue in Germany during and before Kristallnacht

hundred Jews were killed, with thousands of others injured in vicious attacks. Approximately 30,000 Jews were arrested and sent to Dachau, Buchenwald and Sachsenhausen concentration camps and many perished there.

These riots were a combination of skilled orchestration from above, directed by the well-oiled Nazi propaganda machine and spontaneous acts. While Kristallnacht may have appeared to have been the result of spontaneous violence against Jews, it was clearly premeditated and received the full approval of the Nazi government. The night's bloody events led to a turning point in the German policy towards the Jews, which became even more violent and vicious. Following Kristallnacht, a number of countries throughout the world changed their policies towards Jews who escaped or who were deported from Germany, with some agreeing to take in refugees. As is well-known, however, many Jews remained without a place of refuge.

After the Kristallnacht riots, the streets of Germany and Austria were filled with broken glass from the windows of the synagogues and from Jewish shops and homes that were ravaged and laid waste. This is the source of the name “Kristallnacht” (night of glass).

In 1994, German neo-Nazis set fire to one of Germany's remaining synagogues in Lübeck. Pictures from the past returned to haunt the present. Germans of various religions feared that their country's violent history was repeating itself. Marc Grellert, an architect from Darmstadt, responded by initiating a restoration project for German synagogues destroyed on Kristallnacht

Sixty Years Later

or since used for other purposes. Grellert's project is not involved in actually renovating the synagogues.

With the help of architectural students, the synagogues are “virtually” renovated – on the Internet. The students participating in the project are currently working on some 15 synagogues destroyed during the war. The students use the original blueprints of the synagogues, as well as old photographs and testimonies of Jews who worshipped in the synagogues and are still alive. One of the synagogues in Frankfurt, for example, was reconstructed with the help of a famous painting by Max Liebermann, painted in 1919. Several three-dimensional synagogues have already been completed and can be seen on the Internet site at <http://www.cad.architektur.tu-darmstadt.de>

Study Kit on German Jewry

To commemorate the sixtieth anniversary of Kristallnacht, the International School for Holocaust Studies of Yad Vashem, in conjunction with the Division for Social and Youth Education and the Curriculum Center of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport, has produced a study kit in English, Hebrew, French, and German which tells the story of German Jews from the 1920s until the pogroms of the night of November 9, 1938, known as Kristallnacht. The kit includes posters, videocassettes and a study book.

The eighteen posters, each 50cm x 70cm in size, include photographs, quotations and dates, creating a chronological-historical continuity. The videocassette contains filmed testimonies of Jews who experienced the horrific events of Kristallnacht. The study book contains a central article about the fate of Germany's Jews in the years 1933-1938, personal recollections and reflections, testimonies and suggestions for activities with pupils.

The kit is intended for use in junior high school and high school.

Yad Vashem Education

The staff of the International School for Holocaust Studies at Yad Vashem firmly believes that Holocaust education is their primary mission. Over the years, they have been privileged to work with thousands of committed teachers throughout the world. Due to an overwhelming demand in recent years for quality teacher-training programs in Holocaust education, the School has established an overseas programming department.

Expert Yad Vashem educators held seminars throughout New York and New Jersey in January 1998. Senior staff members also gave workshops in Seattle, Toronto, Montreal, San Francisco and Bakersfield in March. In June, Shulamit Imber, Pedagogical Director of the International School for Holocaust Studies, gave teacher-training seminars in Greater Chicago, Houston and Kansas City. Lillian Polus Gerstner, Executive Director of the Holocaust Memorial Foundation of Illinois, noted that, "The seminar...was a remarkable experience. The over two dozen teachers, staff and board members who attended were unanimous in their praise and thanks for this exceptional opportunity. All the units, incorporating posters, photographs, slides, video and CD-ROM, were extremely interesting and professionally assembled."

Yad Vashem teacher-training programs are tailored to the specific needs of each community. The educational materials and pedagogical approaches of the International School place a strong emphasis on Jewish life before, during and after the Holocaust. Students are encouraged to learn how people confronted ethical dilemmas on a daily basis and made difficult decisions under insurmountable circumstances. The age-appropriate educational materials (including books, guides, multimedia, poster sets and videos) enable universal aspects and moral values to be taught to both Jewish and non-Jewish pupils.



Shulamit Imber, Pedagogical Director of Yad Vashem's School, gives a teacher-training workshop in Rummeneide, New Jersey

Please direct any questions regarding the overseas programming of Yad Vashem to Richelle Budd Caplan, Coordinator for Overseas Programming, International School for Holocaust Studies, Yad Vashem, P.O. Box 3477, Jerusalem 91034 Israel. Tel. 972-2-675-1693; Fax 972-2-643-3511; e-mail: mshalem@yad-vashem.org.il

Quality Venture Award

In the framework of a competition held by the Standards Institution of Israel, Yad Vashem's International School for Holocaust Studies received the Quality Venture Award for 1998. In honor of the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the State of Israel, the award was granted to 50 different bodies in Israel, including the IDF, the Ministry of Defense, Bar Ilan and Be'er Sheva universities.

Professor Avishai Braverman, Chairman of the Public Committee that chose the prize-winning ventures, told Dr. Motti Shalem, Director of the International School for Holocaust Studies of Yad Vashem, that the Committee recognized the School as a high-quality institution exhibiting creativity and innovation.

Mobile in the Army

In July and August, Yad Vashem operated its Mobile Education Unit, which was well-received, in various IDF units.

The Mobile Education Unit traveled to remote army bases on the Lebanese border, the Jordan Valley and in the south of the country, and organized educational activities for soldiers on active duty.

The activities centered on various issues concerning the Holocaust, Jewish and Israeli identity and the integration of Holocaust survivors into Israeli society and their manifold contributions. The soldiers and their commanders expressed keen interest in the subjects discussed, and it was not uncommon for the debates to extend beyond the original time frame scheduled.

The physical conditions in the IDF bases made it difficult for the staff to properly set up the unit, but did not detract from the quality of the discussions or the educational value of the activities. Following this successful endeavor, similar activities are being planned for the future.

Yad Vashem in Moscow

The International School for Holocaust Studies of Yad Vashem, in conjunction with the Holocaust Center in Moscow and the European Council based in Strasbourg, organized an international conference on the subject of teaching the Holocaust, held on October 7-9, 1998, in Moscow. Yad Vashem was represented by a delegation from the school, headed by the school director, Dr. Motti Shalem, who was joined by Shulamit Imber, Dr. Irit Abramski-Bligh and Masha Pollack-Rosenberg.

Representatives from many countries, including Belgium, England, Switzerland and the European Union, took part in the conference. All the participants are involved in research and teaching of the Holocaust in their respective countries. Following the conference, the Yad Vashem delegation organized a pedagogical training seminar in Moscow for Jewish and non-Jewish teachers. The seminar's aim was to provide a framework for the exchange of ideas and to enrich the training of Holocaust instruction in the CIS.

Educational activity in Moscow is of utmost importance, primarily because it involves Jewish communities who for so many years were cut off from the free world and western thought. Consequently, most history students in the CIS are only partially aware of the unique Jewish aspects of the Holocaust, the role of antisemitism in Nazi ideology, and the vast Jewish cultural treasures that were destroyed in the Holocaust.

At the seminar, led by Dr. Irit Abramski-Bligh, pedagogical tools and methods were presented and study kits, prepared by the International School for Holocaust Studies of Yad Vashem, were distributed to help participants learn about European Jewry's fate, especially in light of the current wave of antisemitism in the various countries of the CIS.

The International School for Holocaust Studies of Yad Vashem hopes that the seminar's success will lay the foundation for similar seminars in the future.

To Tommy, a book of drawings prepared by Bedřich Fritta for his son, Tommy, opens with a picture of a large cake with three candles. Is this a birthday cake? A painful surprise awaits the reader on the following page. A small child is standing on a suitcase, gazing outside. A bird flies to a bare tree which stands in front of a high wall. The caption accompanying the drawing reads, "To Tommy on his third birthday Theresienstadt, January 1, 1944."

Bedřich Fritta, a well-known artist from Prague, was deported with his wife Hansi and son Thomas to the Theresienstadt ghetto, together with the remaining Jews of Prague. Thomas was only a few months old at the time and did not remember life outside the walls.

In honor of little Tommy's third birthday, Fritta prepared an album with 56 drawings depicting the child's routine as well as life in the great world on the outside - a world without walls, filled with animals that make different sounds, a world with music from various instruments, a world of plentiful markets filled with food, and holidays by the seashore. With a loving hand and a heart full of hope, the father sketched an optimistic, colorful life for his young son, adding greetings of love and hope that all the child's wishes



Drawings from Tommy's Album

be fulfilled in the next year, when the father would prepare a new picture album for him.

Bedřich Fritta and his wife Hansi perished in the Holocaust. Little Tommy was adopted by artist Leo Hass and his wife Erna, who had lived with the Fritta family in the ghetto and had survived.

The International School for Holocaust Studies of Yad Vashem has published Fritta's unique album as a book for children in Hebrew. It will be accompanied by a teacher's guide for kindergarten, first and second grade. In addition, Yad Vashem will be publishing a special exclusive edition of *To Tommy*.

Chava Alberstein On Stage

מיין שוועסטער חיה

מיין שוועסטער חיה מיט די גרינע אויגן,
מיין שוועסטער חיה מיט די שווארצע צעפ-
די שוועסטער חיה וואס האט מיך דערציגן
אויף ספאטשע-גאס, אין הייז מיט קדומע סונע.

די מאמע איז אוועק פון שטוב באגינען,
ווען אויפן הימל האט ערשט קום געהעלט.
זי איז אוועק אין קראם אריין פארדיגען
דאס בידגע-דראבע גראשעריקע נעלט.

און חיה איז געבליבן מיט די ברידער,
און זי האט זיי געקארמעט און געהיט,
און זי פלעגט זינגען זיי די שיינע לידער,
פארנאכט, ווען קליינע קינדער ווערן מיד.

מיין שוועסטער חיה מיט די גרינע אויגן,
מיין שוועסטער חיה מיט די לאנגע האר-
די שוועסטער חיה, וואס האט מיך דערציגן,
איז נאך נישט אלס געווען קיין צענדליג יאר.

זי האט גערויסע, געקאכט, דערלאנגט דאס עסן,
זי האט געצוואגן אונדז די קליינע קעס,
נאר שפילן זיך מיט אונדז האט זי פארנעסן-
די שוועסטער חיה מיט די שווארצע צעפ.

מיין שוועסטער חיה מיט די אויגן גרינע,
א רייטש האט אין טרעבלינקע זי פארברענט.
און איך בין אין דער יידישער מדינה
דער סאמע לעבסטער, וואס האט זי געקענט.

פאר איר שרייב איך אויף יידיש טייגע לידער
אין סעג די שרעקלעכע פון אונדזער צייט.
ביי גאס אליין איז זי א בת-חידה
און הימל זינגט זי ביי זיין רעכטער זייט.

A Special Interview for Yad Vashem

by Michal Morris Kamil

My sister Khaye

My sister Khaye, her eyes were green,
My sister Khaye, her braids were black
Sister Khaye, it was she who raised me
In the house on Smotshe Street with tumble-
down steps.

Mother left the house at dawn
When the sky had hardly lightened.
She went off to the shop, to earn
A wretched penny's worth of change.

And Khaye stayed with the boys,
She fed them and watched over them.
And at evening, when little kids get tired,
She'd sing them pretty songs.

My sister Khaye, her eyes were green,
My sister Khaye, her hair was long,
Sister Khaye, it was she who raised me,
She wasn't even ten years old.

She cleaned and cooked and served the food,
She washed all our little heads,
All she forgot was to play with us,
Sister Khaye, her braids were black.

My sister Khaye with her eyes of green
Was burnt by a German in Treblinka.
And I am in the Jewish State,
The very last one who knew her.

It's for her that I write my poems in Yiddish
In these terrible days of our times.
To God Himself she's an only daughter,
She sits in heaven at His right hand.

Binem Heller (d.1998)

There is an essence of longing and melancholy in the melodious ode, *Mayn Shvester Khaye*. It is reminiscent of the ballads which were sung by

American Joan Baez, Irish Mary O'Hara and others, of lost loves, of pining for nature and of mourning loss. And yet the words, sung in Yiddish, are jarringly severe and speak of deprivation, fear and death.

Binem Heller, Zhame Telesin, A. Olmi, and Itsik Manger belonged to a genre of Yiddish poets who lived in the terrible years of the Holocaust. Some of the poets survived and witnessed the establishment of the modern Jewish State of Israel. Despite the fact that Hebrew was now considered the modern Jewish language, they continued to write verse in Yiddish, the language of the European Diaspora which to many was now part of the Jewish museum of the past. The works of these Israeli poets have recently come to light in a new album jointly recorded by Israel's foremost balladeer and troubadour, Chava Alberstein, and an American Jewish revivalist group, The Klezmatics. "The Well," produced by Ben Mink and recorded at Avatar Studios in New York, features original music composed and set to these Yiddish poems by Alberstein and arranged by the Klezmatics.

Chava Alberstein, "The First Lady of Israeli Song," and a daughter of survivors whose entire family perished in the Shoah, immigrated to Israel from Szczecin, Poland, in 1951, and grew up in the *maabarah* (temporary housing) of *Sha'ar Aliya* in the first years of the State. Surrounded by a highly musical family, and trained on the accordion, Alberstein was strongly influenced by the giants of American folk music. It is significant both personally and historically, that her first album, at the age of 17, was in Yiddish, during a period when the Israeli music scene's emphasis was on developing a unique genre of Israeli folk song.

"It wasn't out of nostalgic feelings. Yiddish has never been something archaeological for me. A folk singer always looks for authentic and relevant material, which he or she can identify with. In the 50s, there were no real Israeli folk songs. I wanted something of my own. I discovered some songbooks, which my parents brought from Poland. I translated this traditional

music into folk music, with the aid of my guitar. It was quite radical. It attracted many youngsters and was highly acclaimed by the musical vanguard of the time."

But Alberstein never reneged on Israeli music. On the contrary, she sees Yiddish and Israeli folk music as complimentary. "It's odd. Yiddish is considered the language of the past. And yet, it is Hebrew that is an ancient language. Since the State, within fifty years, the Hebrew language has developed and been transformed. Yiddish, on the other hand, was the daily language among Jews in Eastern Europe and was a humorous and vibrant language, full of life. Now suddenly, it is a language that has no future."

The origins of her first album were found in a prize-winning documentary film "Too Early to be Quiet, Too Late to Sing," that Alberstein produced together with her filmmaking husband, Nadav Levitan. The film focusses on the last of the Israeli Yiddish poets. Alberstein comments remorsefully, "I found it imperative to document the authentic Yiddish. In a sense, for me, making the film was a way of bidding the language farewell. I was terribly sad. We made the film under extreme pressure, as it was a race against the clock since nearly all the poets had passed away. Strangely, it was me who became reluctant to let go."

Following the completion of the film, Alberstein began to compose music to Yiddish lyrics, and discovered a flow of creativity. "My love for Yiddish is neither nationalistic nor religious. It is cultural. It is a language that is warm, sensitive, sentimental and free. The verse in Hebrew, on the other hand, is self-critical, sharp and reserved. Every language has an inner melody, if you flow with it. In Yiddish, I sing about disease and hunger, and about the mother who raises ten children. Who sings about this today? These songs are about the crux of life." Alberstein concludes, "Yiddish is a language that is important to preserve as it no longer exists in the lands of its origins. The immigrants brought with them a language from that particular point in time. While the language will not develop, it is still a source of enrichment and pleasure for those who study it."

Survivors' International Conference

by Alisa Lehrer

In honor of the State of Israel's jubilee year, Holocaust survivors, Jewish fighters and partisans, and camp inmates participated in a three-day conference in Israel this October. Delegations from over 20 countries from all over the world, including first-time delegations from Uzbekistan, Belarus, Latvia and Russia, participated.

The conference was opened in Tel Aviv by the President of the State of Israel, Ezer Weizman. In his opening remarks, the President expressed his deep admiration for the Holocaust survivors' motivation and idealism upon arriving in Israel and the substantial part they played in the fight and establishment of the State. Other speakers at the event included Chairman of the Jewish Agency, Avraham Burg, Chairman of the Yad Vashem Directorate, Avner Shalev, and Chairman of the World Federation of Jewish Fighters, Partisans and Camp Inmates, Stefan Grayek, who headed the organizing committee for the conference.



Conference participants at the new exhibition "Under This Blazing Light," at Yad Vashem

Discussions and lectures were held on the second day of the conference. Many issues were addressed, including the image of the Holocaust survivors in Israel and abroad and the matters of compensation, stolen property and insurance claims. The conference participants decided to form an international confederation of Holocaust survivors and fighter organizations that will coordinate activities between all the groups.

Hundreds of survivors were guided throughout the Yad Vashem exhibits on the last day of the conference and laid wreaths in the Hall of Remembrance in memory of the victims.

A special event honoring the survivors was held, following the opening of the new exhibition at Yad Vashem, "'Under This Blazing Light': Holocaust Survivors in Israel – The First Decade." Mayor of Jerusalem, Ehud Olmert MK., Chairman of the International Council of Yad Vashem, Dr. Josef Burg, Avner Shalev and a representative of the Survivors and Fighters, David Yurek Plonski, addressed the survivors. "On October 22, 1973, my son fell in the Yom Kippur War on Mount Hermon. It was difficult and there is no comfort for the grief. He is the only one, however, of my family, my family of over 100 people, who received a Jewish burial," said Yurek in his speech.

THE WILF FAMILY

by Rochel Berman

A STORY OF SURVIVAL, SACRIFICE AND SUCCESS

“ There were only two Jews in my class in high school. We were totally isolated from the rest of the students. We were not allowed to participate in sports, no one ever talked to us and the teachers were distant. It was as if there was an organized boycott against the Jews.” Joseph Wilf, Chairman of the Campaign for “Yad Vashem 2001” vividly recalls the pervasive antisemitism in pre-war Poland. Yet, despite discrimination and the horrors of the Holocaust, Joseph's life and that of his extended family stand as eloquent testimony to the heroism and tenacity of the Jewish people.

When World War II broke out, Joseph, his siblings Harry and Bella, together with their parents, Oscar and Ella Wilf, were deported by the Russians from their home in Jaroslaw to a Siberian labor camp. All survived, except for Bella who died in the Warsaw Ghetto. The end of the war found them physically and mentally exhausted. While the Wilfs were determined to return to Jaroslaw following the liberation, the pogroms which erupted in Poland in 1946 caused them to flee to the American occupied zone of Germany where Joseph met his future wife, Elizabeth Fisch (known as Suzie).

Elizabeth, daughter of Marcus and Miriam Fisch, was a young girl when the Germans occupied her hometown of Lvov. Yet, the experiences are deeply rooted in her consciousness. She recalls, “We were in the Lvov Ghetto until it was liquidated. With the help of

a Jewish friend who was a militiaman, we managed to make our way to the Aryan side. Because my mother had Aryan papers for herself, for my brother Erwin and for me, she was able to secure refuge for us on the farm of a peasant woman. For two years, we hid my father in a dugout under the barn without the knowledge of the peasant woman. At night we took turns and secretly brought him food and an occasional change of clothing. Our family's survival is truly a miracle."

The Wilfs married in 1949, and immigrated to the United States in 1950. In 1954 Joseph and his late brother Harry founded Garden Homes, Inc., a real estate development company

supports other Holocaust-related affiliations (Joseph Wilf is Chairman of the March of the Living, North America) and numerous cultural, educational and social endeavors, including, the United Jewish Appeal, Israel Bonds and the Jewish Educational Center of Elizabeth, NJ. Joseph Wilf is Vice-President of the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany and is also active on behalf of the Jewish Agency, and the Joint Distribution Committee.

Joseph Wilf's many honors and awards include the Louis Brandeis Humanitarian Award of the Zionist Organization of America, the David Ben Gurion Peace medal of the Israel Bond Organization, and an honorary Doctor

Zygmunt, an attorney and a partner in Garden Homes, Inc., recently joined his father and his 17 year-old son, Jason, on the 1998 March of the Living. "Seeing the sites of the destruction first-hand, I became painfully aware of the fragility of the Jews during the Shoah. For Jason, it was a unique opportunity to learn about the most tragic period of Jewish history and to be connected with his grandparents' roots." Zygmunt serves on the Board of the American Society for Yad Vashem and actively supports the work of the Shoah Foundation and the Holocaust education programs which are mandatory in New Jersey. Similarly, he is actively involved in Israeli and local communal affairs.

He is married to the former Audrey Schwartz. In addition to their son Jason, they have another son, Jonathan and two daughters, Elana and Stephanie.

Mark Wilf, an attorney and partner in Garden Homes, Inc., is Chairman of the UJA National Young Leadership Cabinet. He is married to the former Jane Frieder and together they represent the vanguard of the Yad Vashem Young Leadership. Mark and Jane have lent their leadership talents and energies to a variety of Jewish communal endeavors, including the Jewish Educational Center and Israel Bonds. They have three children - Steven, Daniel and Rachel.

In 1985, Mark Wilf, then 23 years old had a defining and life-transforming experience. Like his older brother, he accompanied his father on a trip to Poland and Russia. The primary purpose of the trip was to revisit the pre-war homes of his parents. Mark says, "The two weeks were an eye-opener. I knew my parents were survivors,

but I didn't know many of the specifics. I was struck by the fact that there were no Jews left in their towns, despite the fact that they had previously been thriving centers of Jewish life. Yet, how normal it all seemed - the apartments, the schools, the main streets were unchanged. The old people from their neighborhood remembered my parents and had assumed that they had perished along with all the other Jews. At that moment, I became determined to spare no effort to ensure the safety and security of the Jewish people."



Wilf family at Jason Wilf's Bar Mitzvah in 1993. Back row: (left) Joseph Wilf, Audrey Wilf, Zygmunt Wilf, Jane Wilf, Mark Wilf holding son, Steven. Front row: Jeffrey Wilf, Elizabeth Wilf, Jonathan Wilf, Jason Wilf, Miriam Fisch, Elena Wilf

in New Jersey. Paralleling their achievements in business are the Wilf's involvement in philanthropic causes and their efforts to enhance the lives of the Jewish people both in the United States and Israel.

Joseph and Harry Wilf were among the original founders of the American Society for Yad Vashem. Today, Joseph is a Vice-Chairman of the Society; he and Elizabeth are benefactors of Yad Vashem's Museum Campaign and of the Valley of the Communities.

In addition, the Wilf Family Foundation

of Law degree from Yeshiva University and the Rabbinical College of America.

The Talmud tells us: "Whoever teaches his son teaches not only his son, but also his son's son - and so on to the end of generations." The Wilfs have adhered admirably to this tenet. Their sons, Zygmunt and Mark, both have a passionate yearning to serve the Jewish people in Israel and throughout the Diaspora. A third son, Sidney, who was also actively involved in Jewish communal activities, died in 1989. He is survived by one son, Jeffrey.



The Gates Open Wide



Haifa Port, November 1947 (The JNF Archives)

The inscription "The Door to the Land Opens from Within" appears atop a round bulletin board, whose surface is covered by posters of the time. A poster signed by the Union of Hebrew Workers in Eretz Israel dated May 1, 1945 depicts men and women, their clothes marked with the yellow star, walking away from a camp shaped in the form of a swastika. The poster reads "Aliyah and redemption in the homeland."



Temporary
January

Search Bureau for Missing Relatives



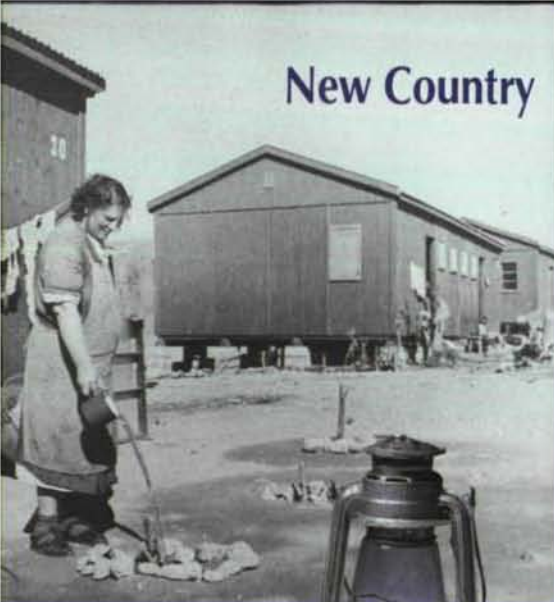
The Jewish Agency's Search Bureau for Missing Relatives, which was established in 1945, assisted survivors and Israel's pre-war residents of European extraction in the search for their families via special radio broadcasts. Three old wooden radios and an assortment of handwritten letters dated around 1945 illustrate the survivors' efforts at tracing their missing relatives - efforts which were only too seldom successful.

"Mine Eyes Witnessed the Sorrow"

Many survivors suppressed their life stories for years, while others spoke of their experiences immediately and were engaged in shaping the memory of the Holocaust in Israel. In 1953 the Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance-Yad Vashem Law was passed. The Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Day, established by law in 1959, was the result of the survivors' initiative and effort.



New Country



Neighborhood for immigrants in the Negev, (The Central Zionist Archives)



Holocaust survivors settled throughout the country. Some were helped by relatives, some joined kibbutzim and moshavim, and some lived in cramped transit camps. There were those who, with great organizational capacity and initiative, started new agricultural settlements that gave rise to dozens of moshavim, creating a new unrecognizable Israeli landscape in a short period of time.

“Yehudi, Daber Ivrit” - “Jew, Speak Hebrew”

The reconstructed public notice boards of the 50s exemplify the cultural pluralism and mutual influence between those already living in Israel and recent arrivals. From the moment of arrival, immigrants integrated into the local spheres of politics, culture, security, arts and entertainment, and participated in shaping the new Israeli identity. A Council for Culture, established in 1952, worked for legislation of the Language Instruction Law.



Srutik, the most well-known Israeli cartoon, was created by a Holocaust survivor, Gardos Kariel Dos.

“Under This Blazing Light”

by Yvette Nahmia-Messinas

“You must follow my route. It is the only one for the Jewish people, for the Jewish people’s fate lies in its own hands.” Abba Naor wrote these words in a letter to his father upon leaving for Palestine three months after being liberated from Dachau. Abba Naor was one of nearly 70,000 Holocaust survivors who arrived prior to May 1948 in what was then Palestine. With the establishment of the State and until 1951, an additional 300,000 Holocaust survivors came to Israel as part of the massive aliyah wave. A black-and-white photograph of Abba Naor alongside a copy of his letter to his father introduce the new exhibition, “Under This Blazing Light: Holocaust Survivors in Israel: The First Decade,” which opened at Yad Vashem’s Art Museum in October.

The exhibition, which consists primarily of old photographs, posters, artifacts, a documentary film and audiovisual presentations, takes the visitor back in time, starting from 1945, to the birth and first steps of the State. The exhibition conveys the atmosphere and feeling in Eretz Yisrael at that time. Several thematic sections portray the survivors’ various experiences from the moment of their embarkation to Israel: the arrival, the search for missing relatives, the War of Independence, the settling of the land, Youth Aliyah and also, the new Israeli culture and the commemoration of the Holocaust.

Walking away from the exhibition area one cannot stop thinking of how these people, who went through hell, had the energy, strength and will to return to life and to live, learn, fight and act towards the establishment and building of the State of Israel.



Raising the makeshift ink flag in Eilat, March 1948 (The Cabor Archives, Lavon Institute)

The Whole Nation is the Army



Many myths surround the recruitment of Holocaust survivors to the war effort. The most famous myth is that of Holocaust survivors who had just disembarked from the ships and were sent off, strangers and estranged as they were, to the battlefields of Latrun, where they fell nameless. In actuality, out of a total of 43 casualties that fell in the Latrun battle, 15 were Holocaust survivors. Holocaust survivors constituted about half of the fighting force in the second phase of the war that started on May 15, 1948, a day after the Declaration of Independence of the State of Israel.

History has determined Auschwitz to be a pilgrimage destination of unprecedented somberness, a symbol of Nazi terror, a location where cemetery and living memory merge, and the haunting tones of genocide still resonate. Yet the interpretation of the site, the creation of its very narrative, has been the focus of controversy ever since its liberation. Both Poles and Jews have contended their right to the site, as a monument to their own suffering. According to Canadian sociologist, Iwona Irwin-Zarecka: "Auschwitz... is not, for Poles, a symbol of Jewish suffering. Rather, it is a [...] symbol of man's inhumanity to man and a symbol of the Polish tragedy at the hands of the Nazis." Contrarily, from the perspective of Jewish survivors, Yad Vashem and other Holocaust Memorials, Auschwitz is the largest Jewish graveyard in the world where 1.2 million Jews were killed during the Holocaust.

The issue of post-Holocaust usage of the site and its planning as a museum has always been problematic. The appropriation of memory is a central issue. Different associations linked to the site have complicated the already cloudy issue of memory ownership. Physical symbolism is an effective way for a claimant to define his attachment. But it is due to this very symbolism that the recent confrontation has evolved.

In contrast to Birkenau, where the crosses erected were removed, the top, at least, of a twenty-three foot Papal cross is visible outside Auschwitz's perimeter fence. This is the only religious symbolism at the site of a camp where 93 percent of those exterminated were Jewish. Indeed, since 1978, Auschwitz-Birkenau has been under the aegis of UNESCO which stressed the site's educational role and significance. In 1979, Pope John Paul II held a Papal Mass at Birkenau, Auschwitz's sister camp, at which the large cross was set up. In 1988, a group of Carmelite nuns established a convent next to Auschwitz, and moved the cross in front of the convent. Although the convent moved to an educational center further away from Auschwitz, the cross remained in place.

Today, the Papal cross is surrounded by hundreds of other smaller crosses (some up to 13-foot tall). The new crosses have been laid by Kazimierz Switon, a right-wing Catholic extremist who claims to be responding to Jewish groups' requests to have the Papal cross removed from the site. His answer was to begin a forty-two day hunger strike, request that an additional 152

crosses be erected - as a memory to the 152 Poles killed by German troops at the site in 1942 - and threaten to set himself on fire if the original cross were to be removed.

Professor Jan Karski, a former member of the Polish underground who reported to the West at the time of the war about the massive killing of Jews and about what was happening inside the Warsaw Ghetto, and later honored as a Righteous Among the Nations by Yad Vashem, claimed: "Polish authorities agreed to respect the principle, established through international dialogue, that the area of this damned soil should be free of religious connotations....." But he added, "There appear to be people in Poland without respect for their country and the authority of the Church who, in violation of the Bishop in charge of the Diocese including Oswiecim [Auschwitz], bring crosses to the gravel pit."

Years of dialogue and relationship-building are being threatened by the current situation. Professor Yisrael Gutman, Chief Historian and member of Yad Vashem in the International Council of Auschwitz, commented, "The negotiations and Polish-Jewish dialogue will continue only on condition that the crosses are removed." He added, "The Polish Church, government and police are taking steps against the extremists."

In a recent letter sent to Yad Vashem, Marek Siwicki, Polish Secretary of State, on behalf of the Polish President, Aleksander Kwasniewski, stated, "While the problem of the crosses remains to be solved mainly by the Catholic Church, we are of the opinion that all sides, including the Polish authorities, should express their opinion on the problem. The return to status quo ante undoubtedly is a precondition for solving this difficult problem." The Archbishop of Poland, the bishops who represent the Catholic Church and the Polish Prime Minister Jerzy Buzek agree with this statement. The President added, "...it is [our] duty, the Poles, and not of anybody else,

WHOSE MEMO

by Daniel J. Chalfen

to bear the responsibility for taking care of this tragic graveyard."

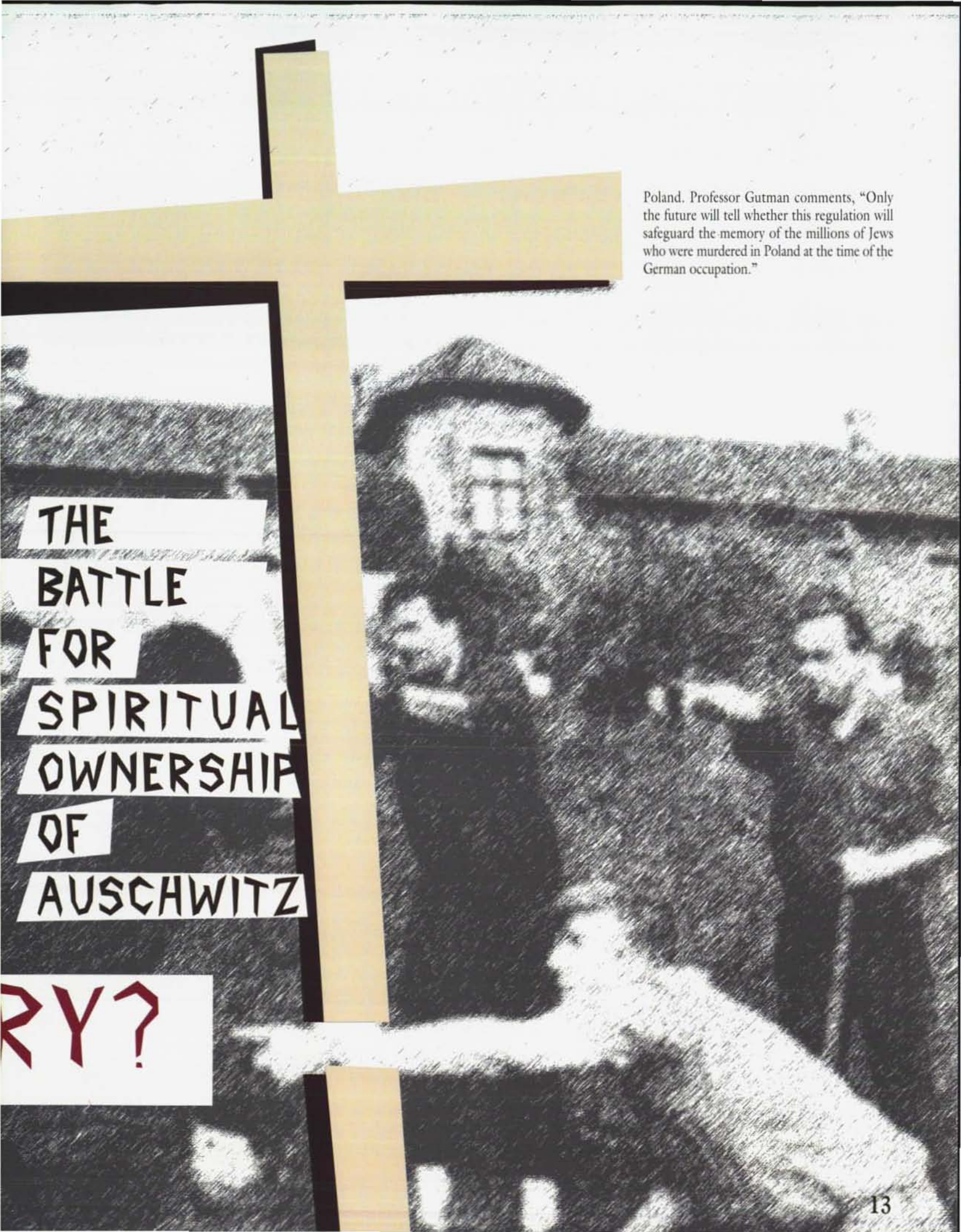
Indeed, after a series of confrontations regarding the Auschwitz site - the convent and a proposed supermarket - a program was proposed in 1997, titled "Program Oświęcimski" which stated that the site should be educational and contain no religious or other symbolism of any kind. The status quo was upheld and the already existing Papal cross allowed to remain. But this agreement was not sufficient to several Jewish groups who believe that the large Papal cross remaining in place negates the underlying assumption that the site be preserved as it was after the war.

The cross, in the eyes of many Jews, victims and survivors of the Holocaust gives rise to fear and memories of Christian antisemitism. With crosses erected on the site by Catholic extremists, the Jewish memory of the site is relegated to second place and Polish suffering is portrayed in its stead. The result could be the prevention of future discussions about the site between different involved parties.

"This provocative act is a violation of the agreement of understanding reached between the international bodies, according to which, no religious, ideological, or political symbols would be erected on the site," explained the Yad Vashem Directorate in a recent letter to the Polish authorities. "Over a million people were murdered in Auschwitz and they did not receive a proper burial. It was agreed that the site would continue to serve as a memorial and that only a museum for educational purposes would be allowed to remain there."

The demand to remove all but the Papal cross is now being examined by law. The case has been taken to court following the extremists' claims that the area where the crosses are erected is leased and that therefore the church leaders' orders need not be obeyed. Dialogue and negotiations on an international level have ceased until the completion of the judicial proceedings and the removal of the crosses. A regulation has been initiated by the Polish government to legally

anchor the status of memorial sites in places where mass killings of Jews were perpetrated in



Poland. Professor Gutman comments, "Only the future will tell whether this regulation will safeguard the memory of the millions of Jews who were murdered in Poland at the time of the German occupation."

THE
BATTLE
FOR
SPIRITUAL
OWNERSHIP
OF
AUSCHWITZ

RY?

One year ago, the collections room at Yad Vashem received a unique collection of musical instruments which included two small violins, a tiny cello, a miniature guitar, two tiny drums and a diminutive dulcimer. These instruments were especially made for the specific dimensions of seven dwarfs, all members of the same family – a family of dwarf musicians. This family survived the horrors of Auschwitz because Dr. Josef Mengele conducted his infamous medical experiments on them.

Shimshon Obitz, a diminutive native of the city of Sighet in Romania, married two sisters of normal height, Berta and Blanca, one after the other. These two women gave him ten children in all, three of normal height and seven dwarfs. After the father's death, Blanca tried to find a solution for the ten children. She had each study a different instrument. Within a short time, the siblings formed a band and began to appear all over Romania and other countries in Europe. This solution kept them together so that they could look out for each other and assured them a decent livelihood.

In August, 1944, the Nazis occupied Romania. The Jews, among them the Obitz dwarf family, were quickly transferred to the Dragomerfalva Ghetto, and a month later were put on trains to Auschwitz. Upon their arrival in Auschwitz, they came under the protection of Dr. Mengele. The Nazi doctor scrutinized them with icy eyes and said, "Now I will have work for another 20 years." The Obitz family received special treatment. They were housed in pleasant colorful surroundings, an island of hope in the hell that was Auschwitz. Their lodgings were appointed with specially fitted accessories and furniture adapted to their size, and they were given plenty of food.

This special treatment came at a heavy price: The family members were forced to undergo Mengele's horrific experiments. Blood was taken from them each day, their hair was pulled out, but worst of all were the gynecological experiments and the extended suffering, often for days at a time following each experiment - whose purpose was to decipher the growth gene and the reason for dwarfism. Shimshon, the newborn baby of one of the "normal" sisters, suffered the most. Mengele performed barbarous experiments on Shimshon, hoping to discover if he would be a dwarf or of normal height. Mengele forbade the dwarfs to eat the soup distributed to the regular prisoners in the camp, which was inferior and provided them with milk which they saved for Lea, Shimshon's mother.

Mengele would take the dwarfs with him on lecture tours, exhibit them naked on stage, and point to the various parts of their exposed

bodies with a long pointer, for all to see. In her book, *Satan's Grace*, Elizabeth Moshkovitz nee Obitz describes the hell the dwarfs were put through from the moment they arrived in Auschwitz, at the hands of the satanic Mengele. The evil doctor, however, was also their savior – he kept them alive and out of the crematorium.

When they first arrived at Auschwitz, the dwarfs explained that they needed additional people to help them function, and that without such help they would not be able to carry out even the simplest of tasks. The camp staff complied with this request and the dwarfs chose people they knew from among the camp inmates, and thus, the dwarfs were responsible for saving the lives of about another 20 "ordinary" people, who would have been killed in the gas chambers.

Collecting Memories

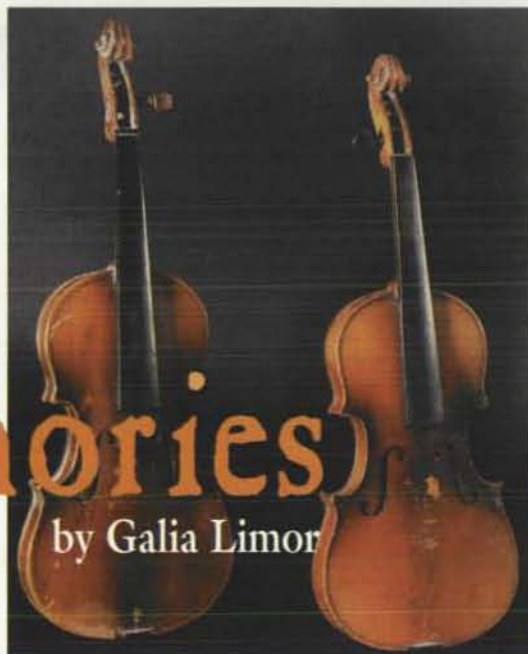
After the war, the Obitz family returned to their hometown and found their instruments.

A short time later, they decided to leave Sighet and immigrate to Israel. They arrived in Haifa and all lived in one apartment, especially adapted to their needs. The sink was low, as were the tables, chairs, and toilet. The musical instruments passed through many hands and were almost sold to the Jewish Museum of Berlin. The director of the museum, however, realized that the unique instruments belong in Yad Vashem's Museum in Jerusalem. The instruments were then lent to Yad Vashem's Museum for one year until the money could be found to purchase them. Now that the year has passed, and the required sum has not yet been found, Yad Vashem is looking for donors.

The Obitz family instruments are just one example of many items, each with its own moving story, currently stored in Yad Vashem's collections room. Yad Vashem aspires to preserve each and every item that belonged to individuals or groups who lived during the time of the Nazis and World War II, and goes to great length to obtain these objects.

Anyone who has personal, family or community items such as clothing, jewelry, pictures, documents, household goods, toys, or ritual objects used by Jews during the war, and who is willing to consign them to Yad Vashem can get in touch with Ms. Haviva Peled-Carmeli, who oversees the collection of such items.

The miniature musical instruments of the Obitz family





Yad Vashem News



*The Terezin Music Anthology, Vol IV,
Koch International Classics CD*

Yad Vashem supports alternative forms of commemoration and over the years has been affiliated with various artistic, theatrical and musical groups wishing to commemorate the horrors of the Holocaust. The Terezin Music Memorial Project, under the patronage of Václav Havel, President of the Czech Republic, and directed by Professor David Bloch, has been restoring and preserving the music of the Terezin ghetto. Among the internees in the ghetto were talented musicians who continued to write music despite the dire conditions of the ghetto. The new *Terezin Music Anthology: Volume IV, Al S'fod (Do Not Lament) – Hebrew and Jewish Instrumental and Vocal Works*, contains all the specifically Jewish music written in the ghetto. The recording was produced by the Terezin Music Memorial Project and in association with Yad Vashem.

The satirical cabarets performed in the ghetto were another aspect of Terezin's cultural life. The cabarets include the works of renowned Prague and Viennese poets, such as Ilse Weber, Leo Strauss, and musical composers, Viktor Ullmann, Karel Švenk and Martin Roman. The Terezin cabaret has been restored by a group of dedicated Israeli professionals, directed by Yisrael Gurion, and has been translated and produced by Kobi Luria. The group gave nine performances at the Acre Festival, in addition to an official performance planned at Yad Vashem. Yad Vashem, in association with the Culture Wing of the Jerusalem Municipality, is supporting and financing this talented group.

International Conferences

by Dr. Tikva Fatal-Knaani

Over the years, Yad Vashem has organized numerous international conferences dealing with various aspects of the Holocaust. The conference lectures are published in Hebrew and in English and are used by researchers, students and the general public interested in Holocaust studies. The International Center for Holocaust Research at Yad Vashem is currently preparing three international conferences to take place between January 1999 and March 2000 in cooperation with the *Institut Für Sozialforschung* in Hamburg, headed by Dr. Jan Philip Reemtsma.

The first of the three conferences, "The Holocaust in Jewish History – History and Consciousness," will be held at Yad Vashem, Jerusalem. The second, "The European Population during World War II and the Holocaust," will take place in Warsaw in conjunction with the Warsaw and Cracow Universities and the Jewish Historical Institute of Warsaw. The third conference, "The Impact of the Holocaust on Contemporary Civilization," will be held in cooperation with Brandeis University.

The first conference, to be hosted by Yad Vashem on Monday-Thursday, January 4-7, 1999, will examine the influence of the Holocaust on Jewish historic writing dealing with periods prior to the Holocaust as well as the influence of the Holocaust on post-Holocaust Jewish ideologies.

This conference will focus on three areas:

- An examination of whether and how the Holocaust influenced the historian's perspective on other periods of Jewish history;

- A comparison of different interpretations of the Holocaust from different Jewish perspectives;

- A comparison of different Jewish communities' reactions to the Holocaust during and after the Holocaust period.

A number of prominent figures in the social sciences will participate in the conference, including Professor Pierre Birnbaum of Paris, Professor Gavin Langmuir of California, Professor Anita Shapira of Tel Aviv. Professor Steven T. Katz will deliver the keynote lecture.

Graduates' Course

by Kathryn Berman



Participants in the graduates' course at the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising monument in Poland, August 1998

This summer, 39 educators participated in the first-ever graduates course in Poland and Israel led by Ephraim Kaye and Kathryn Berman, of the International School for Holocaust Studies. Pola Susswein, a Holocaust survivor from Cracow now living in Tel Aviv, accompanied the group. The participants traveled from the USA, Canada, South Africa, Australia and Israel and met in Warsaw. During the 8-day tour they visited former death camps, Treblinka, Majdanek, Auschwitz-Birkenau, and labor-camp Plaszow. A special in-depth program was organized for the educators by local museum officials at Majdanek and Auschwitz-Birkenau. The group was shown around former "Jewish" Lublin by a graduate of the Yad Vashem courses for Polish teachers. The group also visited towns where Jewish life had existed before World War II.

Returning to Yad Vashem for an additional seven days, participants had the opportunity of listening to lectures and having discussions with Holocaust experts Professor Yehuda Bauer and Professor David Bankier, among others. The group exchanged teaching methods with Israeli teachers, and were shown the latest educational materials from the School. A new film on Uri Orlev's book, *Island on Bird Street*, was screened and discussed with the author.

Another graduates' course will take place in two years time.

Visits at Yad Vashem



Baroness Margaret Thatcher and Governor of New Jersey, Christine Todd Whitman visited Yad Vashem in August



Islam Karimov, President of the Republic of Uzbekistan at Yad Vashem in September



Romanian Prime Minister, Radu Vasile, with the Director of the Hall of Names, Alexander Avraham, in the Historical Museum in August



Turkish Prime Minister, Mesut Yilmaz, at the Children's Memorial in September

New Memorial Book



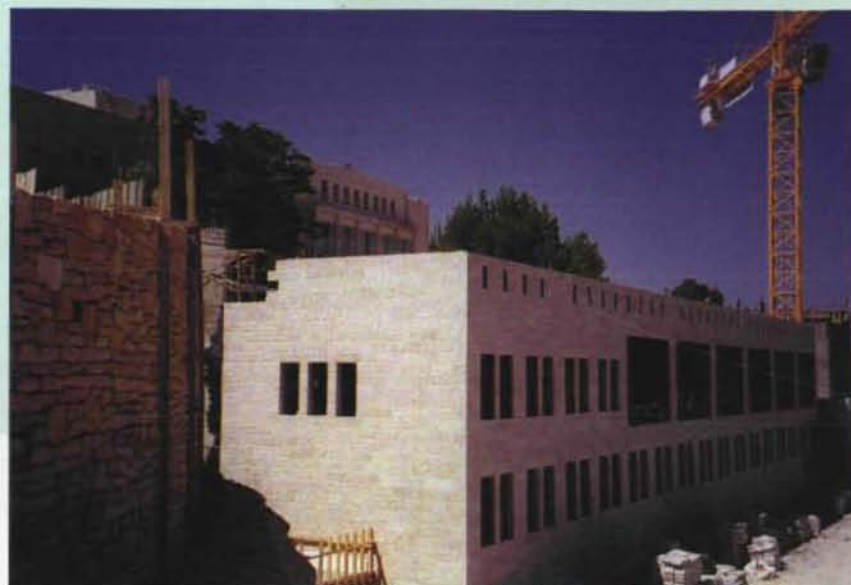
A memorial book of the Jews of Székesfehérvár and its environs was presented to Yad Vashem.

In the picture: Editor Dr. Eliezer Even presents the book to Johanan Bein, Vice-Chairman of the Yad Vashem Directorate.

CORRECTION:

We regret the error in the Yad Vashem magazine, volume 10 "The Tree of Life." The subtitle below the picture of Robert Maistriau should have read: Belgian Robert Maistriau, a member of an underground group, attacked a train loaded with 1400 Jews from Belgium who were sent from Mechelen (Malines) to Auschwitz. 208 people succeeded in escaping. This courageous act is unique in the history of the Shoah.

Planning and Building in Progress

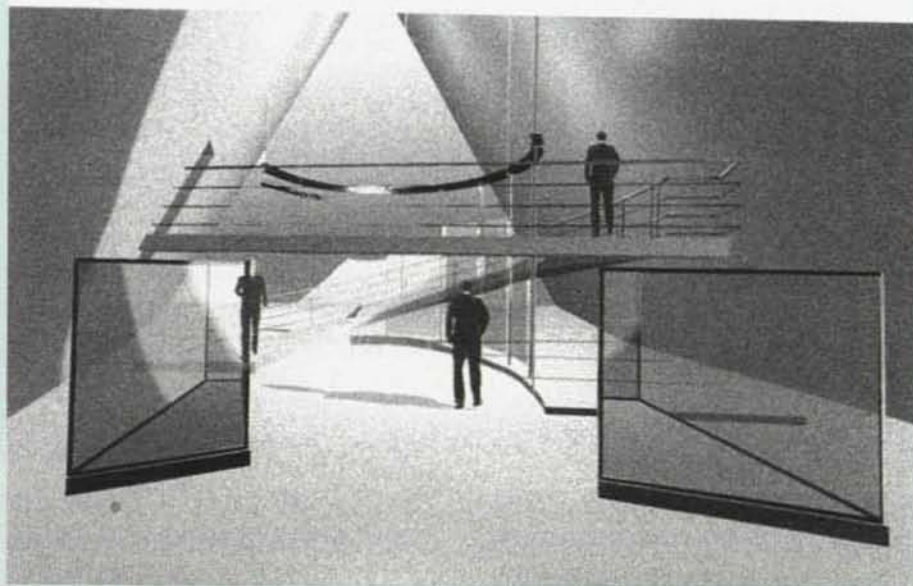


New buildings for the Archives by architect Daniel Lanski, and the International School for Holocaust Studies by architect David Guggenheim in association with architect Daniel Mintz, are nearing completion. In the picture: the new Archives building.



International Task Force

The government of Sweden has initiated the creation of an international political task force. Member states include the United States, Great Britain, Israel and Germany. The aim of the task force is to provide a political umbrella for Holocaust educational efforts worldwide, as well as to initiate various activities to promote this process. Yad Vashem is participating in task force discussions, and Professor Yehuda Bauer, Head of the International Center for Holocaust Studies at Yad Vashem, is the official advisor to the task force.



The planning and design of the display halls of the new Historical Museum are in progress. In the picture: computer assisted design of the exhibition area by the designer Dorit Harel.


Seeking Information

Yad Vashem is interested in receiving any information about the artist Fritz Schleifer, who was a prisoner in the Gurs camp (France). On Passover 1941, he drew a picture of a rabbi (the late Rabbi Yehuda Ansbacher) giving a sermon to a large audience.

Yad Vashem is grateful for any assistance in this matter.

Please send any information to:

Tirza Oren
Yad Vashem Museum
P.O.Box 3477
Jerusalem 91034
Fax: 972-2-643-3511



U.S.A.

The Jubilee Tribute Dinner of the **American Society**, headed by **Eli Zborowski**, will take place in New York on November 22. **Vicky** and **Joseph Y. Safra** will be the recipients of the Yad Vashem First International Humanitarian Award. **Joseph J. Bukiet** will be the recipient of the Yad Vashem Remembrance Award. These awards honor their contribution to Jewish life and their dedication to remembrance. **Joseph Safra**, a founder of the Safra Foundation in Brazil and **Vicky Safra**, founder and editor of the *Morasha* magazine, articulate the message of Yad Vashem: "As Jews, we have an obligation to tell and retell the story of the Shoah, mankind's darkest chapter... Yad Vashem is that tangible evidence for us and for generations yet to come. It is for all time a memorial, a place of learning and a holy place." **Joseph Bukiet**, a survivor, founder of the Bukiet Building & Management Co. in Clifton, NJ, and Vice Chairman of the **American Society** for Yad Vashem believes, "If I can teach just one person that prejudice is evil and that it can be directed against anyone, then I feel that I have succeeded." 1100 guests will attend the dinner, among them leaders of the Jewish community, diplomats, ambassadors to the United Nations and New York based Consul Generals.

Walter H. Weiner, Chairman & CEO of the Republic National Bank of New York, is the Dinner's General Chairman. **Jill M. Considine**, Chairman of the New York Clearing House Association, and **Harvey M. Krueger**, Vice Chairman of Lehman Brothers, are the Dinner's Co-Chairmen. **Edgar Bronfman**, Chairman of the World Jewish Congress and **Israel Singer**, Secretary General of the World Jewish Congress and Co-Chairman of the World Jewish Restitution Organization, will serve as Dinner Chairmen. **Dr. Joseph Burg**, Chairman of the Yad Vashem International Council will attend the dinner and address the guests.

A commemorative journal, entitled *A World Remembered*, will be distributed at the Jubilee Tribute Dinner. **Melvin Jules Bukiet**, **Michael Bukiet**, *Esq.* and **Stuart Rabner**, *Esq.* are the chairs of the journal's committee.


Ira Drukier, Vice-Chairman of the **American Society**, son of a Holocaust survivor and a close friend of Yad Vashem, has pledged a major gift towards the building of a new gate - a monument to the Holocaust survivors who established new lives after the Holocaust. The gate, designed by world-famous architect **Moshe Safdie**, will be seven meters long and will separate the transportation and parking area from the entrance plaza. An inscription on the gate, which will be seen at the end of one's visit to Yad Vashem, will give expression to the saga of the Holocaust survivors' journey to hell and their dynamic return to life.

The **American Society**, a major partner in the "Yad Vashem 2001" Masterplan, delivered its quarterly contribution in October. The Society fulfills its commitment and successfully co-ordinates and manages its fundraising activities.



Canada

Anna Dan, **Helen Rosenbaum** and other central activists of the Women's chapter of the **Canadian Society**, led by **Hank Rosenbaum**, organized a successful Ladies' dinner in November, honoring women Holocaust survivors, with guest speaker **Dr. Ruth Westheimer**. **Avner Shalev**, Chairman of the Yad Vashem Directorate, attended the dinner.



Belgium

Avner Shalev and **Dr. Cynthia Haft**, Head of the French speaking countries' desk at Yad Vashem, attended a special luncheon held at the Israel Ambassador's residence in Brussels. The luncheon marked the renewal of the activities of the **Belgian Society**, headed by **Maurice Pioro**. **Avner Shalev**, on his visit, paid tribute to the Belgian victims of the Holocaust at Charleroi and at Anderlecht. **Avner Shalev** visited the Mechelen Holocaust Memorial Museum, whose collection and extensive archive material capture the story of the Belgian Jews in the Holocaust. **Ward Adriaens**, the Museum's curator proposed the creation of a joint seminar organized by Yad Vashem and the Museum that will meet the needs of local educators, museologists and historians.

The **Belgian Society** has expressed interest in supporting the computerization of the archives at Yad Vashem and the archives' entrance hall. Additionally, Yad Vashem plans to renew its activities in **Antwerp**.



Brazil

Avner Shalev and architect **Moshe Safdie**, together with **Simcha Salach**, Director of the Yad Vashem Foundation and **Daniel Gater**, Head of Yad Vashem's Latin American desk, spent a few days this August in **Brazil**, following the renewal of the activities of the Yad Vashem Society in **Sao Paulo**. Marking the renewal, a celebratory evening was held at the Hebraic Jewish Community Center. "Yad Vashem 2001" was presented by Shalev and Safdie to 150 leading community figures. **Vera Bobrow**, President of the Federation, **Ernesto Strauss**, President of the Society and **Dorit Shavit**, Israeli Consul in Brazil addressed the guests. **Edmundo Safdie**, President of the Banco Cidade, which sponsored the delegation's trip, accepted the appointment of Honorary President of the Society and will take up his position after a festive ceremony planned for next year.

Another event was a luncheon held in honor of the Society and the Jerusalem delegation. **Edmundo Safdie**, **Shelly** and **Moshe Safra**, Deputy Consul of Israel **Ran Yaacov**, **Vera Bobrow** and prominent members of the community were amongst the guests.

Eugenia Halbreich, a Holocaust survivor and her son, **Gustavo** vowed never to forget the Holocaust and pledged a gift towards the "Yad Vashem 2001" Masterplan. **Eugenia Halbreich** emphasized that it is imperative that man "help [...] build the memories, help Yad Vashem [...] Help for the sake of your future and the future of your children."

Moshe Safdie delivered a lecture on his architectural work at the Museum of Modern Art. He focussed on the architectural plans of the new Yad Vashem Historical Museum and the Visitors Center.

Israel Isser Levin, **Jaime Franko**, **Ernesto Strauss**, **Jayme Melsohn** and other members of the Society's board successfully organized these events, which received full media coverage. The Sheraton Mofarrej Hotel generously hosted the Yad Vashem delegation during their stay.



Holland

The **Dutch Society** is planning a concert scheduled in December, marking the renewal of the Society's activities and fundraising.



Germany

After attending the Israel Philharmonic Concert at Yad Vashem in May, **Professor Udo Reiter**, President of ARD, the German State Television Network, decided to produce a documentary on Yad Vashem, which will show how Yad Vashem links the past and the future, with

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a special focus on the "Yad Vashem 2001" Masterplan. The film, directed by **Andrea Hauner**, was shot in August and includes interviews with Yad Vashem's staff as well as volunteers and visitors.

The *Institut Für Sozialforschung* in Hamburg, headed by **Dr. Jan Philip Reemstma**, will fund three academic conferences, organized by the Yad Vashem International Center for Holocaust Studies. The conferences will take place at Yad Vashem, Brandeis University and Warsaw from January 1999 through to March 2000.

The **Baron Friedrich Carl von Oppenheim** Chair for the study of Racism, Antisemitism and the Holocaust, donated by the **Oppenheim** family, will commence its research activities following an opening ceremony at Yad Vashem in November. **Professor Yehuda Bauer**, Head of the International Center for Holocaust Studies, will be the keynote speaker at the event and members of the Oppenheim family will attend the ceremony. This year, **Professor David Cesarani** and **Dr. Avraham Barkai** will take up the post. **Prof. Cesarani** is the Parkes-Weiner professor of 20th Century European Jewish History and Culture at the University of Southampton, England and the Director of the Weiner Library and Institute of Contemporary History in London. **Dr. Barkai** is a world expert on the economic aspect both of National Socialism as such and on its anti-Jewish aspects. Additionally, the Oppenheim family supports **Dr. Irmtrud Wojak's** research on Fritz Bauer. **Dr. Wojak** has been accepted as a scholar at Yad Vashem's International Center.

England

A five day conference, attended by forty educators, was organized by the **Beth Shalom Holocaust Memorial Centre**, in partnership with the **National Charitable Trust of Yad Vashem in England**, headed by **Ben Helfgott** and the Yad Vashem International School for Holocaust Studies in Jerusalem, represented by **Ephraim Kaye**. The conference discussed the history of the Holocaust from academic and pedagogic perspectives.

France

With the assistance of the **French Society**, chaired by **Dr. Richard Prasquier**, an agreement was signed between the French government and Yad Vashem, regarding the publication of the French Volume of the Righteous Among the Nations Lexicon. France joins the Dutch and German governments, as well as the European Union, in supporting this momentous lexicon.

The French Society will inaugurate a new branch in **Nice** at the beginning of December.

Norway

Anne-Marie Gravdahl, Chairwoman of the Board of the Christian "Hjelp Jodene Hjem" organization headed a 20 member delegation to Yad Vashem this September. At the ceremony, **Anne-Marie Gravdahl** pledged her continuing support towards employing new immigrants from Eastern Europe in the Yad Vashem Archives.

Israel

Dudu Fischer generously donated his performance at the special ceremony in honor of the Righteous Among the Nations delegation that took place in the Valley of the Communities in May, in the presence of the Israeli Prime Minister, **Binyamin Netanyahu**. The delegation was hosted in Israel by Yad Vashem and the "50th Anniversary of the State of Israel Celebrations Association."

David and Rachel Viner, with the assistance of their trustee **Alexander Rosenberg**, pledged a gift towards the computerization of the Holocaust victims' names, undertaken by Yad Vashem's Hall of Names.

Matityahu Zukerman and **Nehama Sadovski Zukerman** donated a seminar room in the new International School for Holocaust Studies building that is under construction.

The **Aaron Gutwirth** Fund has pledged to annually support scholarships for higher education, awarded by the International Center for Holocaust Studies.



From Model To Construction

The construction works of the new Yad Vashem Entrance Complex commenced in August.

The completion of the first stage, the excavation and development works, is scheduled for Spring 1999.

The construction of the Visitors' Center (*Mevoah*) and the parking facilities will begin soon after.

The Visitors' Center (*Mevoah*) is being constructed with the generous support of David and Fela Shapell from Los Angeles and with the assistance of the Government of Israel-Ministry of Tourism. Architect: Moshe Safdie Architects Ltd.

Belgium and the Holocaust - Jews, Belgians, Germans, ed. Dan Michman, Yad Vashem, Jerusalem, 1998, 600 pp.



This collection of essays, edited by Prof. Dan Michman, presents the research of Belgian, French, and Israeli

scholars on the Holocaust in Belgium. Themes include: the composition of Belgian Jewry before the war; Nazi anti-Jewish policies; attitudes of various segments of Belgian society to the Jews before, during, and after the occupation; Jewish strategies and activities for survival; problematics of reconstruction in the aftermath of the war; contacts with the Yishuv in Palestine; emigration to the United States; and the policies of postwar commemoration.

EVENTS

September - November

- 28.9.98 Annual memorial service for the victims of Babi-Yar
- 16.10.98 Memorial for Italian Jewish victims of Nazi terror. Screening of the film, *Memoria*, directed by Prof. Liliana Picciotto Fargion
- 20.10.98 Memorial for victims from the Baltic States
- 9.11.98 Ceremony marking 60 years since Kristallnacht
- 10.11.98 Symposium marking publication of the volume, *The History of the Holocaust in Germany*
- 22.11.98 Inauguration of the Baron Friedrich Carl von Oppenheim Chair in the Yad Vashem International Center for Holocaust Studies

December - January

- 9.12.98 Annual Jacob Buchman Memorial Prize
- 14-17.12.98 International conference to be held by the Janusz Korczak Association in cooperation with Yad Vashem and other organizations
- 20.12.98 Annual memorial service for victims of Bogdanovka
- 4-7.1.99 First in a series of three international conferences to be held by the Yad Vashem International Center for Holocaust Studies. The conference will focus on "The Holocaust in Jewish History-History and Consciousness"

Jean Ziegler, *The Swiss, the Gold, and the Dead*, New York: Harcourt Brace, 1997, 322 pp.



Ziegler, a member of the National Council of the Swiss Federation and professor of sociology, argues that in the name of "neutrality" and

"good business," Swiss bankers knowingly accepted plundered gold and laundered dirty Nazi money, thereby helping to finance a bankrupt Germany and prolong the war. Engendering much controversy, Ziegler claims that the Swiss bureaucracy actively prevented Jewish refugees from gaining asylum and that Swiss industrialists provided the Nazi war machine with crucial material.