

# JERUSALEM Yad Vashem

QUARTERLY MAGAZINE, VOL. 12, WINTER 1999

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MIRROR OF HISTORY

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Pictures and Sculptures Were  
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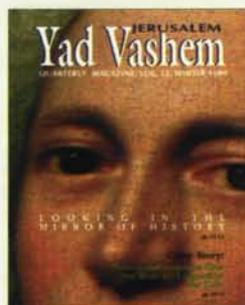
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Yad Vashem  
**Editorial**

**M**ore than half a century after the Holocaust, the world and especially Europe is forced to re-examine its past. Following investigative media reports and numerous lawsuits filed by Holocaust survivors and Jewish organizations, European governments, institutions and firms have begun to research, rethink and reflect upon their history. Committees of historians look through files and archives in order to assess confiscated properties, looted artworks, non-reimbursed policies and exploited labor. The staff and the archives at Yad Vashem assist and enable scholars in implementing these tasks.

In this issue of the Yad Vashem magazine three articles in the sections *Podium* and *Art Focus* address the theme of looted art and property. In *Podium*, "Looking in the Mirror of History" presents the moral and historical aspects on the debate over material restitution. Yad Vashem's participation in the Washington conference on Holocaust-era assets, is also reviewed. In *Art Focus*, the article "Pictures and Sculptures Were Not Made to Languish in the Dark" introduces readers to artworks from the Mauerbach collection that were owned by Jewish families before the war.

Fifty years after the Holocaust few survivors are still alive. Monetary compensation comes too late for most of them. It is still not too late however, for the countries, their governments, institutions and private firms to change their policy. Accept rather than deny responsibility. Open rather than close access to archival material. Seek rather than hide the truth. And support rather than negate justice. For these, it is still not too late.



Cover: Detail from Balthasar Denner, *Portrait of a Gentleman*, oil on canvas, 75x61.5. pp.10-11

**A**ny association between the Holocaust, on the one hand, and cabaret and satire, on the other, may sound grotesque and offensive, but, the cabaret "Hooray for Life," on stage at Yad Vashem in January, reveals a unique and fascinating link between them. The cabaret is a collection of songs and sketches depicting life in the Theresienstadt ghetto. In addition to the ongoing commentary, which enriches the audience's knowledge about the history of the ghetto, the songs and sketches shed new light on life in Theresienstadt.

Thus, for example, the cabaret begins with an explanation about the ghetto. An actress greets the audience and points out that they are very lucky to visit such an impressive place,

# Hooray

by Galia Limor

where, she is sure, they will enjoy themselves. Following a discussion of the building style of the Theresienstadt fortress and admiration for the lovely and idyllic Czech countryside, she promises, "Ah, this view and this vacation is something you will not quickly forget." The opening march then begins:

Empress Maria Theresa  
 Did a mighty fortress design,  
 That no enemy could assail,  
 That no army could surprise.

And after a few verses:

Suddenly something strange occurred,  
 Something quite insane,  
 Of all people – it was the Jews that did the  
 fortress assail,  
 Without arms or even a fight.

The play is based on texts from cabarets produced in the Theresienstadt ghetto. Kobi Luria wrote and edited the play. Ruth Bondi, herself a survivor of the Theresienstadt ghetto and Auschwitz, and other survivors helped him collect the selections which serve as the basis for the performance. Israel Gurion directed the play and Hannah HaCohen was the musical director. Kobi Luria also translated some of the songs; other songs were already translated



# for Life The Theresienstadt Cabaret

Actors at the "Hooray for Life" cabaret performance. From right to left: Shai Ben Yaacov, Tal Amir, Israel Treistman, Lilach Kaspi

in the past by Lea Goldberg and Shimon Lev-Ari. Leo Strauss – son of the King of the Viennese operetta, Oscar Strauss – composed some of the melodies which accompany the texts and which were played by the pianist Shai Ben Yaacov. Many of the authors of the original texts upon which the play is based perished in the Holocaust.

The songs and sketches portray the way people lived in Theresienstadt, as reflected on the stages of the ghetto underground. The cabarets were born in the terrible reality of the ghetto, but they offer a different and surprising angle, life in the ghetto with a smile and with humor. "When the smile is recalled," says Luria, "the survivors I met felt that their dignity had been restored to them. Creating black humor and art under those circumstances took much courage."

A description of life in the camp in one of the verses of "The Invitation":

Every problem here is solved,  
Worries, concern – they disappear.  
Just one small question nags,  
How do we get out of here?

"I laugh, therefore I am," wrote cabaret

artist Karel Švenk, whose character is portrayed in the play. His statement is perhaps the essence of the camp inmates' world-view. They wrote songs and sang them. They held on to life, unbearable as it was, but never stopped creating wonderful art. They kept on laughing until the final moments of their lives.

Parts of the play reflect the fact that the original authors had no qualms about poking fun at themselves. Thus, for example, the song "A Theater Ticket" describes the passion for culture in Theresienstadt. One inmate loved opera so much that he was willing to undergo trials and tribulations to get opera tickets. Finally, after failing to do so, he ended up in a mental institution.

In another song, the audience becomes acquainted with the events in Lidice, the village whose inhabitants were executed in retribution for the murder of Heidrich. They were buried by inmates of Theresienstadt "who were led there and came back with the flock." Another song tells the story of a small lonely suitcase from Frankfurt, worried about its old blind owner, from whom it has been separated.

One of the final songs "Carousel," was considered one of the most successful ever staged in Theresienstadt. It describes a ride on a wooden horse in a circle that leads to nowhere but turns into a unique journey of its own. It is an allegory of life in the camp, and perhaps an allegory of the very essence of Theresienstadt itself.

The finale, written by Dagmar Hilrope and composed by Hanna Cohen, is called "May," the month in which the inmates of Theresienstadt were liberated. It is a paean to freedom.

The play's actors, Tal Amir, Israel Treistman and Lilach Kaspi, must contend with challenging and complex material. Through their talents and the talents of the other artists and participants in the play, the art of Theresienstadt continues to live on, even though, almost all of those involved in the writing of the original text, perished in the Holocaust.

"I was very moved to see native Israelis take up this subject, so difficult for me and for them, and treat it with respect and dignity. I hope that through its humor, the play will speak to the generations who did not experience the Holocaust," says Ruth Bondi.

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 SITE MAP



And to them will I give in my house and within my walls a memorial... that shall not be cut off.  
 וְלָהֶם אֶתְכֶּנֶס בְּבֵיתִי וְעַל כִּיְסֵי אֶתְכֶּנֶס וְלֹא יִכָּרֵץ

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by Rachel Barkai

Welcome to Yad Vashem's new improved Internet site! You are invited to surf the site and view over 600 pages including historical information about the Holocaust, archival documents, museum artifacts and scholarly works. Articles, pictures and internal links present the activities of Yad Vashem in the areas of commemoration, education and research. The visitor can plan a detailed visit to Yad Vashem using the interactive on-line map while previewing the museums, exhibitions and information facilities. A search request can be submitted

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THE HALL OF NAMES  
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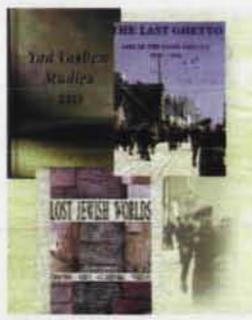
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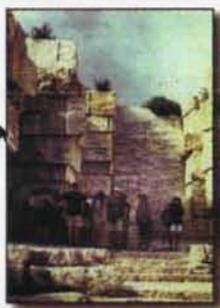
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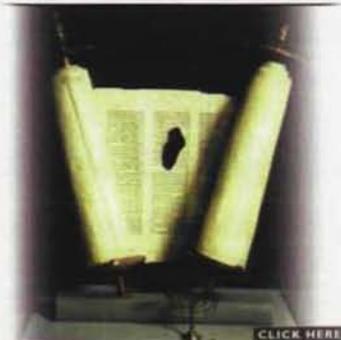
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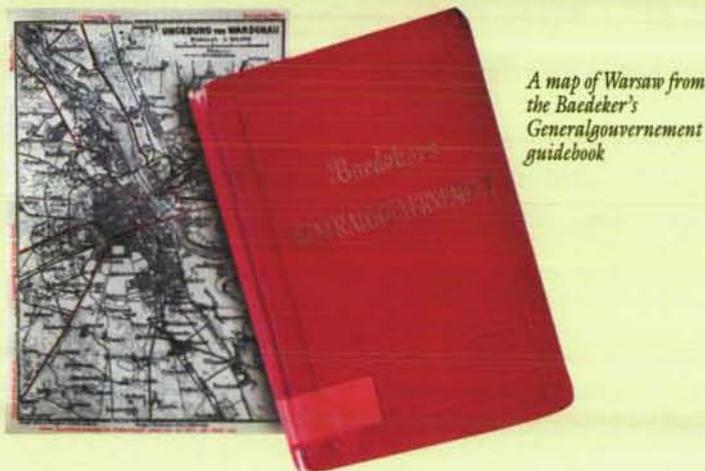
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## Baedeker's Travel Guidebook

Among the most fascinating yet appalling items in the library's collection is the Baedeker's guidebook for the Generalgouvernement, which was published in 1943 in Leipzig by one of the earliest publishing houses specializing in tourism. The first Baedeker guidebook appeared in 1827, and soon the series became indispensable for many a European tourist. *Das Generalgouvernement Reisehandbuch*, authored by the namesake of the founder of the publishing house, Karl Baedeker, was meant to be such a guide for German tourists (presumably businessmen



A map of Warsaw from the Baedeker's Generalgouvernement guidebook

or military personnel) in occupied Poland. The very idea of there being a travel guide for the region of Poland which was the charnel house of Polish and much of European Jewry is clearly repugnant to us today.

According to the book's introduction, the information presented is correct as of May 1942, although at least one population table is dated November 1942. The book hardly mentions Jews, and it is chilling for precisely that reason: Poland is discussed without Jews just at the time that the Jews were being murdered. Even when Jews are mentioned, as Martin Gilbert indicates in his book, *Holocaust Journey*, they are spoken of only as no longer living in a certain place. Such is the case for the Jewish quarter of Krakow, Kazimierz. According to Gilbert, the 1944 version of the guide contains more references of this sort, indirectly reflecting the results of the murderous onslaught of 1942-43.

Ironically, the presence of Jews is hidden in many of the book's pages. The figures given for district populations, seem to include Jews - but actually the statistics were no longer accurate, since by the time the book appeared many of those included had already been murdered. The various city plans also inadvertently suggest the presence of Jews, because they include the areas of the various ghettos - of course without designating them as such.

Several of the more infamous sites in Poland are mentioned by Baedeker. Auschwitz is said to be an industrial city of 12,000 with one good hotel - and nothing more is noted. Belzec is mentioned as a railroad stop. Neither Chelmno nor Sobibor is cited. One of the most macabre items in the book is a suggested train trip from Warsaw to Bialystok, by way of Malkinia. Malkinia was the nearest train station to Treblinka. As the lines of the book were being prepared for publication, most of the Jews of the Warsaw ghetto were being sent to their deaths in Treblinka, by way of Malkinia.

The author is the Director of the Yad Vashem Library

## German Course

Following the visit of the Education Minister of Nordrhein-Westfalen, Germany's largest federal state (with a population of over 17 million), to Yad Vashem in early 1998, a cooperative educational framework was established between the two. Nordrhein-Westfalen funds and organizes teacher participation from its local school system sending group of teachers to courses held at Yad Vashem. In October-December 1998, two groups participated in a nine-day teachers' course at Yad Vashem. Theo Schwedman, a high school teacher who was also the local information center's representative, was appointed by the Nordrhein-Westfalen Education Ministry to coordinate the contact with Yad Vashem.

The course studies were approached from the historical and pedagogical perspectives. The historical one focussed on the Jewish world before the Holocaust, the lives of the Jews under Nazi rule, and Jewish and Israeli treatment of the memory of the Holocaust. Additionally, the participants were presented with the various pedagogical approaches and educational programs produced at Yad Vashem in recent years. During the course, the German teachers met Holocaust survivors.

Meetings between Germans and Israelis concerning the Holocaust are always emotionally charged. The courses encourage a dialogue under the assumption that each side has a different point of view and way of looking at the past. Additionally, each has different educational needs. The Jewish perspective may and should enrich the way teachers from Nordrhein-Westfalen confront German history. The possibility of conducting additional courses in the future, or alternatively, arranging meetings between representatives of Yad Vashem and teachers in Germany is being discussed, in order to assist their curriculum presentation and help them contend with the educational challenges they face.

## Immigrant Children at the School

Yad Vashem and the Bina Center at Efal Seminar won the Ministry of Education tender to prepare and run three-day seminars on the topic of Jewish and Zionist identity for immigrant children.

The first day of the seminar will be devoted to the subject of the Holocaust and heroism in Jewish identity, and will be held at Yad Vashem. The students' visit to Yad Vashem will accomplish several aims: provide an understanding of the uniqueness of the Holocaust and of Jewish destiny; see how Jews confronted the dilemmas of daily life; learn about the armed Jewish resistance during the Holocaust in the ghettos and camps; and hear survivors' stories and understand their personal sacrifice.

In preparation for the seminars, the International School for Holocaust Studies at Yad Vashem has trained a staff of instructors in Russian and other languages, and has created a special curriculum and audio-visual aids.

## New Textbook

by Naama Galil

A new textbook for teaching the Holocaust in Israeli high schools is currently approaching completion. Professor Yisrael Gutman and staff from the development section of the International School for Holocaust Studies at Yad Vashem authored the book. Yad Vashem, in conjunction with the Zalman Shazar Center, will publish the book, which will become an integral part of the Ministry of Education's new history curriculum. The book will soon be approved by the Ministry of Education for use in the Ministry's official matriculation examination. The textbook will be produced in a unique graphic format and will feature documents, photographs and a variety of maps to illustrate the history of the Holocaust.

In 1981, the official educational policy regarding the study of the Holocaust changed significantly. It was decided that Holocaust studies would be compulsory in high school curricula all over the country as well as in Ministry of Education matriculation tests. This official governmental decision reflected the approach that it is unthinkable that a student complete the Israeli educational system without a firm basis in Holocaust studies. In 1983, following this decision, Professors Yisrael Gutman and Haim Shatzker jointly authored the first edition of *The Holocaust and its Significance*, the first attempt to formulate a comprehensive curriculum. A more extensive edition of the book was published in 1987.

In light of research developments in Holocaust studies and educational insights attained over the years, a new version of the textbook has become necessary. This new version was based on several learning and educational principles:

- Expanding the students' historical knowledge, while introducing a broader historical context of Jewish and general history.
- Introducing the student to the world of the Jewish people during the Holocaust, while opening a window to the cultural world and daily life in the period prior to and during the Holocaust, and in addition drawing the students closer to the world of the Jews during the ghetto and camps period via diaries and personal testimonies from this period.
- Exposing the students to the human and ethical dilemmas in the experiences of the Holocaust.

The book will provide a broad, varied and up-to-date historical foundation for the study of the topic. The writers have sought to reinforce the students' empathy with the Jewish world that once was and to present the human dimension in all its complexity. This presentation of the history of the Holocaust embraces the imperative to remember the Holocaust and shapes a humane Jewish-Israeli identity 50 years after the trauma of the Holocaust. A teacher's guide with didactic suggestions and additional background information will accompany the book.

## Spanish Course by Avraham Milgram

The Spanish-language course, held at Yad Vashem for over 20 years, is one of Yad Vashem's oldest teacher-training frameworks for instructors from abroad. Hundreds of teachers from Jewish schools in Latin America have taken part in these courses over the years. Participants include educators from Argentina and other Spanish-speaking countries, many with an excellent command of Hebrew and Yiddish. In recent years, fluency in Hebrew and Yiddish has lessened and the professional profile of the participants has changed accordingly.

The most recent course, which took place at Yad Vashem in January 1999, included some 40 participants from Brazil, Argentina, Portugal, Uruguay and Venezuela. Of the 40, about one-third teach in universities in Latin America and Portugal, one-third teach in Jewish schools, and the remaining third are professionals involved in various projects dealing with the Holocaust, such as the Shoah Visual History Foundation founded by Steven Spielberg and others. In recent years there is an increase in the number of non-Jewish participants who wish to gain a deeper understanding of the Holocaust.

## New Map



This 70x100cm map shows all the camps and their deployment throughout Europe. With the map, one can differentiate between the concentration camps, work camps, extermination camps, transition camps, sites of mass murder and murder sites that belong to the "euthanasia" operation. Additionally, there is also a smaller map that depicts the Auschwitz camp and its subsidiary camps which serves as an example of the structure and scope of the main camps.

Within moments of meeting David Cesarani, it becomes clear that this personable and unassuming family man is not only delightful company, but also the possessor of a remarkably sharp mind and a penetrating understanding of history. He can expound with impressive breadth and depth on many subjects and without pretensions. Professor David Cesarani is the Director of the Wiener Library and the Institute of Contemporary History in London and Professor of Modern Jewish History and Culture at Southampton University. He currently holds the Baron Friedrich Carl von Oppenheim Chair at Yad Vashem, where he is researching the rescue activities of the writer, Arthur Koestler, during the Holocaust. Cesarani tentatively concludes that “at least in the case of Arthur Koestler, the [rescue] proposals were eminently practical and foundered on the complacency, indifference or outright hostility of Allied officials.”

On how he came to study the Holocaust, he says: “There was nothing on the Holocaust or Jewish issues when I was growing up in Britain. Jews were invisible in the public realm. They were pleased to be allowed to live in Britain, and they didn’t want to make waves.”

Cesarani’s path to studying the Holocaust began with his pursuit of a fuller Jewish identity. His father had been raised without much Jewish identity and discovered this identity in the British Communist party, where he fell in love with secular Jewish culture. David went further, volunteering twice on a kibbutz. After devouring Jewish history books in the summer of 1978, and completing a BA in History at Cambridge University, he went on to Columbia University in New York, to do an MA in Jewish History. He was fascinated by the experience of meeting Peter Bergson (Hillel Kook), “a real live Jewish hero for whom Jewish identity was national and secular.” His PhD dissertation at Oxford dealt with the Zionist movement in Britain during the interwar period.

“In 1987, I came to the attention of MP Greville Janner – He asked me to look into documents in the Public Record Office to see if there was any evidence to support the suspicion that there might be Nazis living in Britain. Well, I was a historian; I know my way around the Public Record Office. So, I went ahead and checked it out. I was shocked. I found extensive information. My God, they had brought over a whole SS division! And that was only part of the

story. And these guys knew who they were bringing over.”

These findings helped lead to the dramatic legislation that opened the way to war crimes investigations and trials in England, and to Cesarani’s well-known book, *Justice Delayed*. “That gave me Holocaust credentials,” he says. He has continued “to pick up the relevant background knowledge along the way.”

“Studying the Holocaust is like a fever; you have to work it through,” he believes.

Asked to comment on the state of Holocaust-related research, Cesarani is impressed

these contemporary issues – war criminals, property, banks, art, etc. – to come up?” He sees these current topics “as a laboratory for examining contemporary issues. People displace their anxiety about contemporary genocides that they don’t want to get involved in, onto the Holocaust and antisemitism.”

What is the important unfinished business of studying the Holocaust?

“We need a synoptic economic history of the period – of the Nazis and the neutral powers. We need to synthesize our bits of knowledge on who knew what and when.”

## TOUCHED BY THE “FEVER”

### A TALK WITH DAVID CESARANI

by David Silberklang



*Prof. David Cesarani addressing the public at the inauguration of the Oppenheim Chair*

by the recent research that has taken advantage of newly-opened archives in the former Communist Bloc countries and elsewhere, and by the new questions being asked about this material. The advances being made by the current generation of German historians, such as Gotz Aly, Ulrich Herbert, and others in analyzing the perpetrators and German society during the Nazi regime is particularly worthy of note. “They are getting into archives that others haven’t even heard of,” he says. Cesarani puts this research in context with British historian Ian Kershaw’s new biography of Hitler, which “clearly shows that Hitler was a bad administrator. He would come to the office late, work for an hour, leave early for lunch, and that was it. Looking for Hitler’s direct involvement in the day-to-day affairs of killing, or for a written order to kill the Jews is simply the wrong way to look at Nazi Germany.”

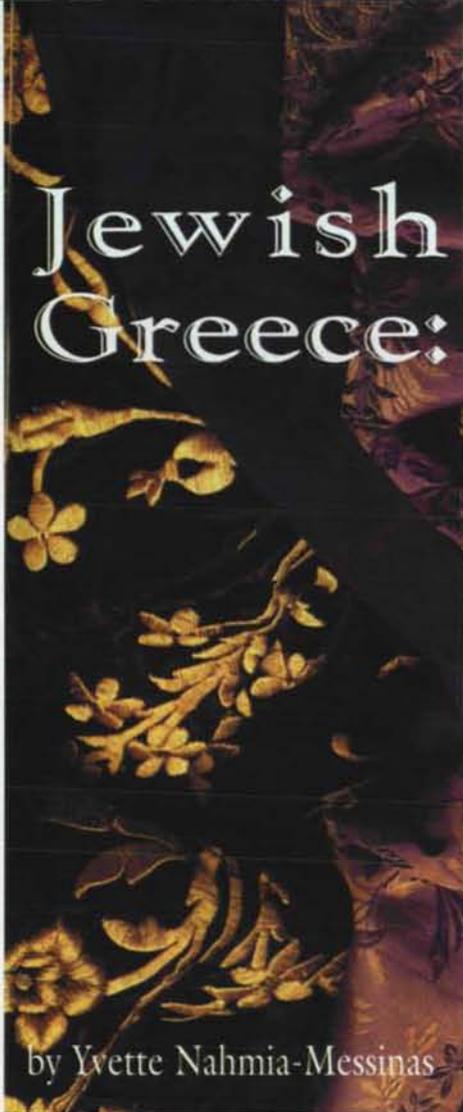
“I’d like to look at the impact of the Holocaust on postwar society, politics and culture, globally,” Cesarani says regarding his own research plans. “Why did it take so long for all

A two-hour interview is hardly sufficient, and David’s four-year-old son, Daniel, beckoned. For the sake of the study of the Holocaust, we can only hope that David Cesarani remains afflicted with this “fever” for some time to come.

*The author is the Editor of the Yad Vashem Studies*

#### OPPENHEIM CHAIR

The inauguration of the Baron Friedrich Carl von Oppenheim Chair for the study of Racism, Antisemitism and the Holocaust took place at Yad Vashem on November 22, 1998. “Yad Vashem recognizes and acknowledges the generosity of the family of Baron Friedrich Carl von Oppenheim, one of the Righteous Among the Nations, in establishing this Chair,” said Avner Shalev, Chairman of the Yad Vashem Directorate in his address to the many guests and scholars who attended the ceremony. Professor Yehuda Bauer, Head of the International Institute for Holocaust Research, presented an overview titled, “From a Historian’s Workshop - Recent Research on the Holocaust.” He noted, “It will take us decades to investigate, sometimes even to decipher, the material that we have at Yad Vashem alone, well over 50 million pages of documentation, and many more millions in other archives.” Professor David Cesarani, who held the Oppenheim Chair this semester and is doing research on Arthur Koestler, expressed his appreciation for the opportunity to spend these months working at Yad Vashem. Dr. Avraham Barkai, a world expert on the economic aspect of National Socialism, will also take up the post this year.



# Jewish Greece:

by Yvette Nahmia-Messinas

*Textiles belonging to Greek Jews*

**T**evet kai Shevat katse kamme rehat. Only a remnant of Greek Jews have survived who can fully understand this proverb. It contains three different languages spoken in the Mediterranean, and reflects the interwoven influences on the Greek Romaniote Jewish culture. Judaeo-Greek and Turkish idioms, expressions and proverbs colored the spoken language of the Jewish population in Romaniote communities such as Ioannina, where 1,870 Romaniotes lived on the eve of the Second World War. The life of these communities, which dates back to antiquity, as well as that of the numerous Sephardic and few Ashkenazic communities in Greece, is portrayed in the *Pinkas Hakehillot - Yavan, The Encyclopedia of Jewish Communities: Greece*, that has just been published by Yad Vashem.

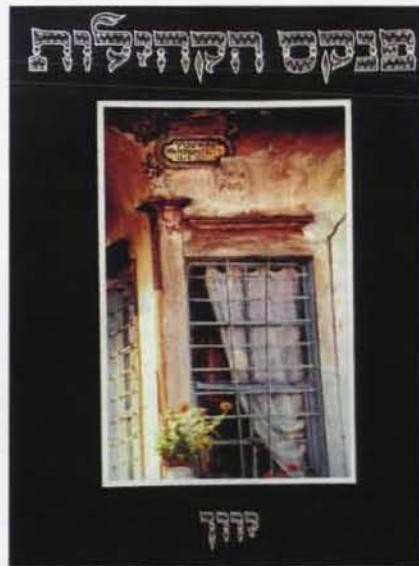
*Tevet kai Shevat katse kamme rehat:* In the months of *Tevet* and *Shvat* you should sit (*katse*) and rest (*kamme rehat*). *Tevet* and *Shvat*, two months in the Jewish lunar calendar, correspond to the months of January and February, months during which the northern city of Ioannina was covered with snow, its lake frozen. During the winter season, business was slow, and the city's residents could rest in the warmth and comfort

of their homes. In the winter of 1944 however, the Jews of Ioannina were under German occupation, and aware of the mass deportations of the Jews of Salonika a year earlier, could find no rest. On March 25, early on a Sabbath

## A Voyage Through Time

morning, in the heavy snow, the Jews of Ioannina were taken to a concentration camp in Larissa, from where they were later transported in railroad cattle cars to their death in Auschwitz-Birkenau.

"Less than 50 Jews remain in the once thriving Jewish community of Ioannina. Their distinctive Judaeo-Greek language, songs, *piyyutim* (religious poetry), *minhag* (ritual) and customs have, with a few remaining traces, been destroyed with them," says Dr. Bracha Rivlin, Yad Vashem historian, editor and author of the *Pinkas Hakehillot - Yavan*. "Today Ioannina Jews live outside the *Kastro* (fortress) on the site of the former synagogue on Max Nordau street. After the Holocaust, this street was renamed Yossef Eliya, after the Ioannina-born Jewish poet and Talmudist. Eliya studied and taught at the Alliance school of the city," recalls Joya Aroyo, Ioannina-born Holocaust survivor now living in Tel Aviv. Only the synagogue *Kal Kadosh Yashan* inside the *Kastro* survived the war. The wooden seats, mostly empty even on the high holidays, and the 1,838 names carved on marble plaques hanging on the walls, give witness to the people's loss.



*En este mundo sufrimos porque somos Jidios. En otro mundo sufriremos porque no fuemos buenos Jidios.*

"In this world we suffer because we are

Jews. In the world to come we will suffer because we were not good Jews." Indeed, Salonika's Sephardic community suffered greatly because of its Jewishness. Only 1,950 Jews, out of a population of 56,000, survived the Holocaust.

David Howell, a Salonika-born Jew who left Greece before the war, and lives in Tel Aviv, recalls life in Salonika. "At home, we spoke French and Judaeo-Spanish (Ladino), my mother spoke no Greek. I went to the Alliance school and was a member of *HaKoah*, the Jewish boy scouts. I prayed at the Siniora Fakima Synagogue, formally known as Beit Shaul." The older generation of the 1,000-member Jewish community of the city-port of Salonika still speak Judaeo-Spanish. A few of the melodious *canticas* and *romances* (songs and ballads) have been adopted by Greek singers, but the majority can only be found in museum recordings.

The Jewish population of Salonika grew extensively under the rule of Sultan Beyazit II, who invited the Jews to the Ottoman empire, at the time of their expulsion from Spain and later Portugal. With the influx of 20,000 Sephardic Jews in 1492, culture and business blossomed, and a wealth of religious, social and educational services was established. In 1512, Don Yehuda Gedalia opened the first printing press in the city.

"Each Jewish community in Spain and Portugal transferred its microcosm to Salonika. Synagogues, carrying names such as Castile, Aragon, Catalonia, Lisbon, Gerush Sefarad and Portugal, served as centers of communal life along with the school, Talmud Torah, Beit Din, hospital, charity center and burial society," says Dr. Bracha Rivlin who, together with the Chairman of the Yad Vashem Directorate Avner Shalev, attended the unveiling of the Holocaust monument in Salonika in November 1997.

Today there are no more than 5,000 Jews living in Greece and a few remaining Jewish sites to tell the story of the community. The *Pinkas Hakehillot - Yavan* takes the reader on a voyage through time, recounting the history of the Greek Jewish communities from antiquity until the present. With more than 70 entries of Jewish communities in Greece, an appendix on Albania, and maps and period photographs, the *Pinkas* illustrates the rich life that once was and is no more. The *Pinkasei Hakehillot* project, supported by the Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture and its Executive Vice-President, Dr. Jerry Hochbaum, is one of Yad Vashem's most important projects commemorating the Holocaust.

# Pictures and Sculptures Were

“ Pictures were not painted or sculptures made to languish in darkness. They were created to enhance the surroundings of our lives. The works to be sold today are not great masterpieces, but comfortable images which graced vanished worlds. With their introduction into the light, a poignant chapter can be closed. May those who acquire them not forget their provenance.”

With these lines, Lynn H. Nicholas concluded her introduction to the Christie's Auction House catalogue in Vienna, October 1996. Offered for sale were over one thousand articles identified as Jewish property confiscated in Austria by the Nazis and whose rightful pre-war owners were not located. The auction followed legislation in 1995, which transferred the legal ownership of the property to the Jewish Federation of Austrian Jewish Communities, with the provision that it be sold in a public auction, the proceeds of which were to be used for the benefit of Holocaust victims and their families.

In 1994, when representatives of the Austrian government approached Paul Gross, then President of the Federation of Austrian Jewish Communities, concerning the transfer of legal ownership of the property, he could not have

imagined that he would be involved in such a significant pivot in the history of the confiscation of Jewish-owned art during the period of Nazi rule. The sale was the first of its kind – the first auction of confiscated Jewish property whose proceeds were pledged to the benefit of victims of Nazi persecution and their families. The auction served as a historic precedent and landmark.

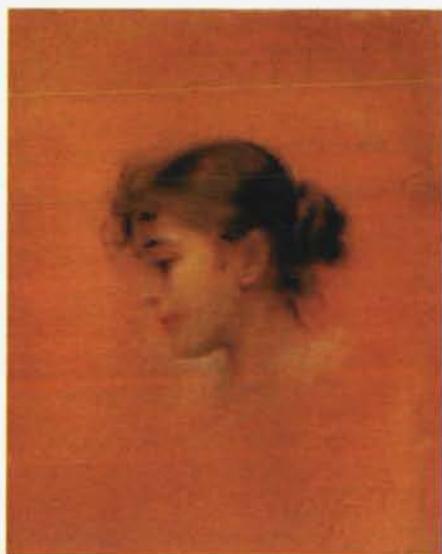
The auction was the culmination of a long and laborious process, which began in 1955 when some 10,000 works of art were returned to Austria by the Allies. Private individual applications for claims of these works were not given serious attention until 1984 when the prestigious art magazine, *Art News*, published an article titled “A Legacy of Shame: Nazi Loot in Austria,” written by Andrew Decker. The publication of the article prompted the Chancellor of Austria to enact a new law by

which the claim submission process would be renewed. This in fact resulted in the submission of many new claims. Those

works that remained unclaimed following this new round of claims were stored in the 14th century Mauerbach monastery, located north of Vienna. The collection is now known as the Mauerbach Collection.

Ronald Lauder, World Jewish Congress Treasurer, purchased some 20 articles in the Mauerbach Collection auction in Vienna, which he then donated to the Yad Vashem Art Museum's collections. The artifacts and art pieces are a living testimony to the artistic vision and cultural values embedded in the communities' lifestyle that were destroyed. The vanished world reflected in these artworks and artifacts allows us a brief glimpse into the vibrant cultural entity of the Jewish communities of Austria and the extent of their integration into the country's cultural fabric. For those who perished – with neither grave nor tombstone – the exhibition of looted art serves as a memorial, illustrating to museum patrons the scope and nature of the cultural loss to the Jewish people. The cultural legacy of those who perished is portrayed in the exhibition of artifacts and artworks to be on display at the Yad Vashem Art Museum in the coming months.

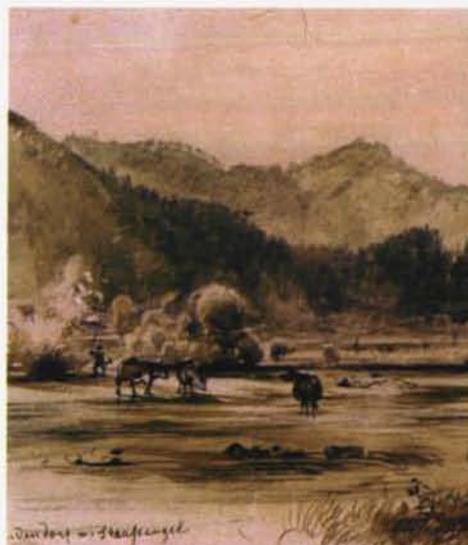
*The author is the Senior Curator of the Yad Vashem Art Museum*



*Follower of Franz von Lenbach, Young Girl in Profile, pencil and pastel on cardboard 61.3x49.2*



*A German Baroque-style side chair.*



*Rudolf Von Alt, Judendorf and Strassengel near Graz, watercolor, ink and pencil on cardboard, 13.4x23.5*

# Not Made to Languish in the Dark

Works  
from the  
Mauerbach  
Collection  
exhibited  
at Yad Vashem

By Yehudit Shendar



*A blue and white  
baluster jar, Qing  
Dynasty,  
from the Mauerbach  
Collection*



*Balthasar Denner, Portrait of a Gentleman, oil on canvas, 75x61.5*



*Erwin Pendl, Feldsberg Castle, Liechtenstein, watercolor on paper, 27x35.5*



*A fruit bowl, third  
quarter of the 19th  
century, silver plated,  
from the Mauerbach  
Collection*

# Holocaust-era Assets Conference

by Alisa Lehrer

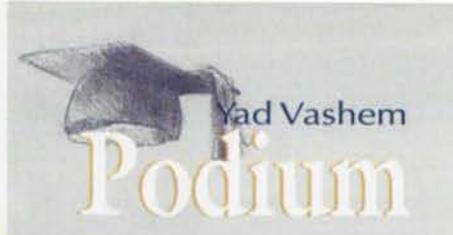
The Holocaust-era Assets conference held in Washington in December, hosted by the United States State Department and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, brought 44 nation delegations and 15 non-governmental organizations together to discuss the unresolved issues of the return of assets to Holocaust survivors. Detailed guidelines were adopted for the restitution of looted art. Stuart Eizenstat, the US Undersecretary of State called for insurance companies to join the International Insurance Commission dealing with dormant insurance policies. Eastern European countries were asked to legislate the return of private property to their rightful owners but no consensus was reached about confiscated communal property.

Avner Shalev, Chairman of the Yad Vashem Directorate, participated in the conference as a member of the official Israeli delegation. Yad Vashem was also listed as a non-governmental organization and as a member of the break-out session on the importance of Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research.

At the conference, Yad Vashem officially released the first completed stage of its massive computerization project which received top media coverage all over the world. Avner Shalev chaired the break-out session on Archives and Books, calling for all archives to open their doors and noting in particular the Vatican Archives and other private and industrial companies' archives. Dr. Yaacov Lozowick, Director of the Archives, presented Yad Vashem's computerization project, which details over 10,000 lists recording over 20 million recurrent names. The computerization of the world's largest information repository on the Holocaust will aid Holocaust survivors and their heirs to pursue their claims. Professor Yehuda Bauer, Head of the International Institute for Holocaust Research, gave a lecture on the importance of Holocaust education and on the problems and dilemmas that arise when teaching and researching the Holocaust. Shulamit Imber, Pedagogical Director of the International School for Holocaust Studies, presented Yad Vashem's educational perspective and the newest educational materials.

Avner Shalev commented, "It is vital that these issues be resolved as soon as possible so that justice be restored to the waning generation of Holocaust survivors. It is of course commendable and impressive that so many world nations participated in the conference but now they must get to work."

A meeting of the Intergovernmental Task Force on Education, Remembrance and Research took place after the end of the conference, at which Avner Shalev represented both the government of Israel and Yad Vashem. Professor Bauer is the independent academic advisor to the Task Force. Plans were unveiled for the conducting of Holocaust education worldwide.



Looted  
art from  
Czechoslovakia

by Itamar Levin

No less than 44 countries sent representatives to Washington this past December to the international conference on art and property seized by the Nazis. This broad representation testified to the great interest this subject arouses worldwide - from Australia to Albania and from Argentina to Norway.

However, the return of Jewish property plundered during the Holocaust is not merely a material issue, despite the considerable importance of this aspect. The renewed struggle over the return of this property has important moral and historical aspects as well.

A central point to be remembered in this context is that the events discussed now are not necessarily directly connected to Nazism and the Holocaust. The Nazis looting of their victims before and after their deaths is a historical fact which has already been examined historiographically (although to a limited extent). Germany has paid and still pays huge sums - 55 billion dollars so far - for the physical and material damages to its victims. While some German companies have still not paid restitution, particularly for bank accounts and forced labor, the lion's share of the German material issues has been settled.

Now, the main struggle centers on the return of seized property in other countries - Germany's allies, occupied countries, neutral countries and even countries that fought against the Nazis. What happened to the Jewish bank accounts in Switzerland? Why weren't Italian Jews indemnified? How can the assets seized by the Nazis and nationalized by Eastern European countries be obtained? Did the United States retain property without heirs for itself? What part did the Vichy and Quisling governments play in the plundering of the Jewish people? Why didn't Britain restore property confiscated by the "trustee of enemy property"? These are just a few of the major questions on the agenda.

A more probing investigation of these questions and others will reveal that they relate to the behavior of European countries after the Holocaust - after the fate of the Jews of Europe was known to all, when the Holocaust survivors were trying to get their lives back together, when the entire civilized world expressed shock and





# IN THE MIRROR OF HISTORY



outrage at the pictures and films coming out of Auschwitz, Dachau and Bergen-Belsen. However, even during those years, countries inside and outside of Europe – liberal democratic countries for the most part – were busy taking victims' property for themselves. In some countries it was government policy (Eastern Europe, Britain, Austria); in other countries, the private sector could do so because the government turned a blind eye (Switzerland, Sweden, Holland); some countries never bothered to atone for their crime of collaboration during the Nazi occupation (France, Norway).

At that time, the general approach in Europe was, in the words of Edgar Bronfman, President of the World Jewish Congress, "The Jews are dead, the hell with them." The communists in Eastern Europe could not have nationalized Jewish public property and vast amounts of private property so easily if the communities or private owners had been alive. France and Austria could not have divvied up Jewish art and cultural treasures to museums and libraries if the members of their Jewish communities had not been mass murdered. The Dutch could not have taken up residence in Jewish homes and apartments if their owners had not been slaughtered. And the Swiss banks could not have taken over tens of thousands of bank accounts if they had not been convinced that their owners would never come to claim them.

It is horrifying that this cold and cynical plunder of Jewish property actually encompassed the entire European continent. From the moment the Pandora's box was opened four years ago, a similar picture was revealed wherever the spotlight focused: The Jews were murdered, and whatever remained of their property after the Nazi pillage was stolen by their neighbors and sometimes by their governments. What face does Europe – with no dictatorships any longer within its bounds - see today when it looks in the mirror of history?

That same mirror also reflects somber pictures from dark chapters in the history of some of those countries which collaborated with Nazi Germany. The Quisling regime which stole the Norwegian Jews' last pennies, before they were loaded onto the ships that took them to Auschwitz; Austrians "inherited" tens of thousands of apartments with everything they contained because of their eager acceptance of the Anshchluss; the Vichy government in France took an active role in the plundering of French Jewish property; and of course, neutral Switzerland, without which Berlin could not have laundered its stolen gold and art works, and which drove tens of thousand of Jews away from its borders to their deaths.

For some European countries, the material reckoning leads to a moral reckoning as well. Switzerland is courageously – if sometimes hesitantly and to the sound of strident tones – dealing with the painful truth of its past. Norway, in a pioneering step, has compensated Norwegian Jews while carefully reexamining its history in the shadow of the Quisling government. Sadly, however, for the time being, these countries are the exception rather than the rule.

Not surprisingly, those countries which continue to evade material responsibility also evade moral responsibility. Austria continues to claim that since it was the Nazis' first victim, it does not have to compensate the victims. Additionally, it has not sufficiently acknowledged the true facts. France continues to maintain that it did all that was necessary to restore Jewish property, while refusing to contend with the role of the Vichy government during the Holocaust. Although Britain has begun the compensation process, it does not deal with the question of closing the gates of Eretz Israel, refusing to admit refugees from Nazi Germany seeking asylum. The United States has yet to launch a real inquiry into its role in the property affair, and has not yet examined its own tough exclusionary immigration policy toward the refugees from Nazi Germany.

Another difficult aspect of the struggle over property is the antisemitic responses that have occurred. In this matter, it must be stated clearly: antisemitism has always existed and always will, with or without excuses. There is nothing more absurd than the claim that the danger of antisemitism should stop the struggle to restore stolen Jewish property, looted before, during and after the Holocaust. Action must be taken coupled with an awareness of the danger. There can be no struggle more justified, both materially and morally.

*The author is the Globes deputy editor and author of 'The Last Deposit: Holocaust Victims' Accounts in Swiss Banks' (forthcoming Praeger publishers).*

*Confiscated  
Jewish  
property from Czechoslovakia.*

Primo Levi, the well-known Italian-Jewish Holocaust survivor and author of many books, often expressed the despair of concentration camp inmates at the horrors experienced there: "We became aware that our language lacks words to express this offense, the demolition of man." At the same time, the fact that Levi did not allow this despair to completely sap his will to survive, in the hell

of status from hired laborer to concentration camp inmate – but Lorenzo dismissed it with a shrug of his shoulders. This went on every day for six months.

Primo Levi wanted to somehow inform his mother, who was in hiding in Italy, that he was still alive. Again, Lorenzo Perrone came to the rescue, by agreeing to rewrite in his own handwriting a coded message by Levi, addressed

momentum." Perrone also gave the lightly clad Levi a rag of clothing to wear under his prisoner uniform, to keep him a bit warmer during the cold winter months of late 1944. For all this, Lorenzo Perrone neither asked nor accepted any promise of future rewards, because in Primo Levi's words, "he was good and simple."

After the war, Primo Levi pondered the significance of the goodness displayed by this

# Primo Levi's Hassid

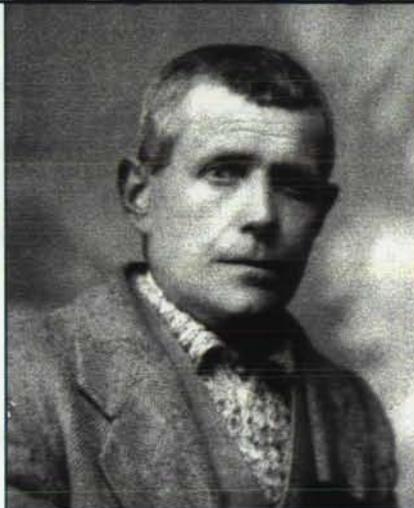
by Dr. Mordecai Paldiel

on earth that was Auschwitz, is in no small measure to be credited to his chance meeting with a total stranger in that infamous camp – an Italian bricklayer named Lorenzo Perrone.

Perrone was not a prisoner like the thousands of others who filled this camp, but a hired civilian laborer, part of an Italian firm that had been contracted for a construction project in the camp facility. These workers were afforded somewhat more comfortable conditions; they slept on cots, had free days on Sundays, and one-or two-week vacations. They were also paid for their labor, could communicate with relatives and friends in Italy, and even receive clothing and food packages.

Primo Levi, who was deported to Auschwitz in 1944, was assigned to the same area where the Italian masons worked. By pure chance, Levi's *Kapo* picked him to be the helper for two masons that he had never seen before, one of whom was Lorenzo Perrone. The two struck up a conversation in Italian. Several days later, Lorenzo brought to the surprised Levi an army mess tin full of soup, and told him to bring it back before the evening, so he could replenish it for the next day. From then on, every day, for a period of six months, Perrone supplied the starving Levi with soup, sometimes adding a slice of bread. Levi testifies that without the vital additional four to five hundred calories to the camp's meager daily diet, he would not have survived the long ordeal.

Lorenzo found a way to steal the soup, by slyly sneaking into the camp kitchen when everyone was asleep in the late hours of the night, and taking from the soup pot's leftovers. Primo Levi warned him of the danger if apprehended – the sudden and brutal change



Lorenzo Perrone, a Righteous Among the Nations



Primo Levi

to a certain non-Jewish woman in Italy, which was sufficiently clear to the recipient, without at the same time attracting the censor's attention. In August 1944, Levi received a response via Perrone, in the form of a package, which contained ersatz chocolate, cookies, and powdered milk. "To describe its real value, the impact it had on me is beyond the powers of ordinary language. That unexpected, improbable, impossible package was like a meteorite, a heavenly object, charged with symbols, immensely precious, and with an enormous

simple bricklayer, in a place which symbolized "the demolition of man." A man helping another human being out of pure altruism, in a place like Auschwitz, "was incomprehensible, alien, like a savior who has come from heaven." In his post-war writings, replete with words of despair at life in the camps, such as in the following 1946 poem: "Consider whether this is a man, who labors in the mud, who knows no peace, who fights for a crust of bread, who dies at a yes or a no," Levi was also able to pen words of praise to Lorenzo Perrone, who represented to Levi the ideal pure man; "not so much for his material aid, as for his having constantly reminded me by his presence, by his natural plain manner of being good, that there still existed a just world outside our own, something and someone still pure and whole, not corrupt, not savage... for which it was worth surviving... Thanks to Lorenzo, I managed not to forget that I myself was a man."

Rescuer and rescued have since passed from this world. Recently the Commission for the Designation of the Righteous bestowed the Righteous Among the Nations title on Lorenzo Perrone, following a request in this regard by Dr. Renzo Levi (Primo Levi's son, named after his father's benefactor). A medal and certificate of honor were dispatched to the Israeli embassy in Rome; in the near future, the embassy will present them in a dignified and public ceremony to the rescuer's next-of-kin. Lorenzo Perrone's name will also be immortalized at Yad Vashem in the Garden of the Righteous, as well as in the forthcoming Lexicon of the Righteous, which is currently in preparation.

*The author is the Director of the Righteous Among the Nations Department*



Yad Vashem

News

by Dr. Tikva Fatal-Knaani

## International Conference

An international conference, "The Holocaust and Jewish History – History and Consciousness" was held at Yad Vashem on Monday-Thursday, January 4-7, 1999.

to examine how the Holocaust has influenced Jewish historic writings in recent decades, to investigate whether a reassessment of Jewish history following the Holocaust is called for, and to examine the influences of the Holocaust on Jewish ideological trends.

The conference focussed on three areas: An analysis of Jewish-Gentile confrontations and internal Jewish confrontations throughout history in the wake of the Holocaust – historical and historiographical reflections from the Middle Ages up to the modern period; a comparison of various European Jewish communities' reactions to the Holocaust during the Holocaust period itself, in light of their different histories: an overview – Eastern Europe; Central and Western Europe; North Africa; an overview of interpretations of the Holocaust from different Jewish perspectives in the post Holocaust period. This section included lectures relating to the interpretation of the Holocaust

as reflected in Jewish nationality and the integration of the Holocaust in religious ideologies. It also included a symposium on the topic, "Jewish Personalities at Crossroads." The symposium discussed the impact of the Holocaust on the paths chosen by David Ben Gurion, Abba Kovner and Stephen Wise. Participants in the symposium included Prof. Anita Shapira, Dr. Dina Porat and Prof. Henry Feingold.

The conference commenced with a keynote lecture, "Jewish History after the Holocaust," delivered by Prof. Steven T. Katz. Guest lectures at the conference were delivered by speakers from the United States, France, Germany and Israel, coming from diverse areas of instruction and research: philosophy (Prof. Gershon Greenberg and Dr. Adi Ofir); social sciences (Prof. Pierre Birnbaum and Prof. Menahem Friedman); theology (Rabbi Irving Greenberg and Prof. Richard Rubinstein); law (Prof. Amnon Rubinstein); religious thought (Prof. Avi Sagi and Dr. Kim Caplan); history (Prof. Mordechai Altshuler, Prof. Shmuel Almog, Dr. Yitzhak Arad, Prof. Yehuda Bauer, Prof. Yisrael Gutman, Dr. Rafael Vago, Prof. Robert Wistrich, Dr. Idit Zertal, Dr. Eli Lederhandler, Prof. Robert Liberles, Prof. Gavin Langmuir, Prof. Trude Maurer, Prof. Matiyahu Minc, Prof. Dan Michman, Dr. Yosef Michman, Prof. Kenneth Stow, Prof. Dalia Ofer, Prof. Renee Pozanski, Prof. Yonatan Frankel, Dr. Yaron Tzur, Prof. Dov Kulka, and Dr. Ofer Schiff);

The conference, which will be extensively covered in the next issue of the Yad Vashem magazine was attended by researchers, students and interested members of the public at large. The conference was held in Hebrew and in English with simultaneous translation.

by Dr. Tikva Fatal-Knaani

## Researchers' Symposium

Following publication of the book, *Nationalsozialistische Vernichtungspolitik 1939-1945* (The National Socialist Policy of Extermination 1939 – 1945), Dr. Ulrich Herbert, Dr. Dieter Pohl, Dr. Christian Gerlach and

Dr. Michael Wildt will give lectures at the researchers' symposium, on Wednesday, March 17, 1999. Dr. Herbert, who also authored a comprehensive essay, "New Answers and Questions about Holocaust History" edited the book which includes a collection of articles dealing with the Holocaust of European Jewry, with an emphasis on the Jews of Eastern Europe. Among the authors are young scholars whose approach, according to Yad Vashem's chief historian Prof. Yisrael Gutman, is critical of the research methods used until now in Germany. The researchers concentrate on defined topics and places in an attempt to achieve synthesis, based on a thorough investigation of all sources. A new methodological approach, as well as an innovative perspective review the Nazi policy.

Prof. Gutman contends that the book deals with the material with a fresh perspective and presents a new generation of researchers in Germany who are revising the material of their predecessors and arriving at important new conclusions. Dr. Herbert has appealed to East Germany to discuss Jewish materials that have been published. He demands that the victims cease to be perceived as an amorphous group. The guest lecturers from Germany will speak to a limited forum of researchers who meet regularly. Prof. Gutman and Prof. Bauer will respond to the speakers and an open discussion will follow for all the participants.

The book is currently being translated from German into Hebrew.

## Buchman Prize

The annual Jacob Buchman Memorial Prize, in memory of Buchman's wife Esther and daughter Hanaleh, was awarded this December to Professor Dov Kulka for his book, *Deutsches Judentum unter dem Nationalsozialismus, Band 1* (*German Jewry under National-Socialist Rule, Volume 1*) and to Professor Aharon Appelfeld for his book, *Michre Hakerach* (*The Ice Mine*).

The audience at the ceremony was surprised and moved by Professor Kulka's personal



From right to left: Prof. Dov Kulka and Prof. Aharon Appelfeld receiving the Buchman Prize

confession. He revealed part of a recorded testimony relating his childhood in the camp of Theresienstadt and later in the children's block in Auschwitz. He told the audience that for eight years he documented his testimony on audio-tapes, which he calls, "...scenes of the metropolis of death... the observations of a person... in the bits of memory and imagination that remain from the confused world of the child that was."

Professor Kulka's book presents the involvement and activities of the German Jewish leadership which steered the Jewish community during the difficult years of 1933-1939.

Professor Appelfeld stressed that the members of his generation who immigrated to Israel after the Holocaust repressed the past in their attempt to become part of the young and vital society they had reached, and in his opinion this is one of the reasons why hardly any literature has been written about the Holocaust.

Professor Appelfeld's book, *The Ice Mine*, is different from his previous books because it is very personal, mainly an autobiographical account of the intense life inside the ghetto, the Aktions, the deportations and the daily routine of cruelty and death. It also describes the wondrous interpersonal relationships which developed among the abused and humiliated Jews, who were trying to survive and find answers to questions about human existence. In *The Ice Mine*, Appelfeld touches on the very heart of the Holocaust, on "those areas where the soul is silent."

# Highlights of Workplan '99

1999 will mark the completion of the first stage of Yad Vashem's 2001 Masterplan, with the opening of the new Archives building, the International School for Holocaust Studies, the family square and the family path. Additionally, Yad Vashem will continue construction of the new entrance complex and the Visitor's Center (*Mevoah*). The planning of the museum complex - architecture and design - will be completed and the building of the new historical museum as well as the redesign of the Hall of Names will commence.

Following the opening of the Archives building, new work methods and filing systems will be implemented and the second stage of the computerization of information repositories will be set in motion. The film and photograph archive will be scanned on to computer. All file descriptions and catalogue data will be recorded in English allowing the general public more accessibility to the archives. The Hall of Names will continue to computerize the approximately three million names of Holocaust victims and will launch an urgent campaign to collect as many names of Holocaust victims from families within Israel and abroad.

The new International School for Holocaust Studies building will be inaugurated in the coming year. A second International Conference on Holocaust Education will be held under the auspices of the International Task Force for Holocaust Education. The school will continue to offer teacher-training courses for over 900 teachers in Israel and will hold 15 international courses for educators from abroad. A new comprehensive textbook written by Professor Israel Gutman will be published this year and the multimedia program of the history of the Holocaust will be completed and distributed. Over 100,000 pupils and soldiers are expected to attend educational seminars at the School.

"Unto Every Person There is a Name" will be the main theme of this year's Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Day ceremonies and activities. Yad Vashem will launch a new and improved Internet site which will be updated and developed over the year. An inauguration ceremony for the Archives and the International School for Holocaust Studies buildings will be held.

The International Institute for Holocaust Research will host 12 scholars

this year and will organize the first of three international conferences planned, in Jerusalem. This conference will investigate the place of the Holocaust in Jewish history. German scholars will present their new research at a symposium to be held in March. Research into the plundering of the property of the Jews of Europe will be intensified.

A new department for Yad Vashem publications has been established to coordinate the printing and distribution of the 20 books planned for publication this year and the 30 books currently in various stages of

production. Three new volumes of the Encyclopedia of Jewish Communities namely, Greece-Albania, Poland-Volume 6 and Poland-Volume 7 are at press. Six additional volumes are nearing completion. An agreement has been signed with the Jerusalem Publishing House and the New York University Press to co-publish a three volume encyclopedia in English as a synopsis of the mammoth Hebrew Encyclopedia of Jewish Communities.

Special work teams have been established to plan each of the historical sections to be exhibited in the new museum. The vigorous collection of objects prior and during the Holocaust will continue, as well as the collection of art from the same period. Smaller versions of the "No Child's Play" exhibition will be produced for travel abroad. An information center for looted art will be planned and built. Approximately 700 applications for recognition as Righteous Among the Nations will be processed this year. The first volume of the Lexicon for the Righteous Among the Nations dedicated to the French Righteous, will go to print this year.

A telecommunications center, including a communications infrastructure, computers and telephone exchange, will be set up.

The Yad Vashem Foundation will continue to cooperate with Yad Vashem Societies all over the world, helping them to expand and intensify their efforts and activities. The Foundation will focus on fundraising efforts to raise the resources needed for the Yad Vashem 2001 Masterplan.

An International Board of Trustees will be established and begin working from Yad Vashem, Jerusalem.

The Israeli Society for Yad Vashem will commence its activities this year. The Society will coordinate and lead the campaign in Israel for the collection of Holocaust victims' names and will raise the funds needed to run the campaign.

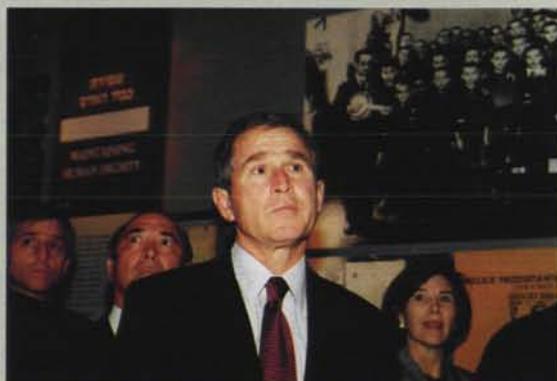
## Did you know ?

- 1,562,769 visited Yad Vashem in 1998, including 100,000 students, youth and soldiers.
- The International School for Holocaust Studies held 15 seminars attended by 660 teachers, including junior and high school teachers, immigrant teachers and escorts for groups to Poland. The seminars took place at Yad Vashem, in Givatayim, Beersheva, Nir Galim, Rishon Le Zion, Petach Tikva, Kedumim, Netanya and Kfar Saba. The school also gave 12 courses to 329 teachers from countries as diverse as Austria, Italy, England, U.S.A., Germany, South Africa, Hungary, Israel, Poland, Czechoslovakia, France, Canada and Sweden.
- The International Institute for Holocaust Research gave 13 workshops and 5 symposia as well as 16 scholarships for M.A. and Doctorate students.

# Visits at Yad Vashem



President of Germany, Roman Herzog, and his wife at the exhibition "No Child's Play" guided by Prof. Yehuda Bauer, on November 16, 1998



George Bush, Governor of Texas, Michael Overlund Leavitt, Governor of Utah, Marc Racicot, Governor of Montana, and Argeo Paul Cellucci, Governor of Cincinnati, visited Yad Vashem on November 30, 1998. In the picture: George Bush at the Historical Museum



From right to left: The Duke of Kent and Dr. Robert Rozett at the Historical Museum on November 9, 1998



Michael D. Harris, Prime Minister of Ontario, Canada at his visit to the Historical Museum on October 13, 1998



Saul Kagan

Miller, President of the Claims Conference, recently reaffirmed support, in light of further additions to the development project.

After 48 years of loyal and devoted service to the Jewish people, Saul Kagan, Executive Vice-President of the Conference of Jewish Material Claims against Germany, has announced his retirement from the post. Saul Kagan has placed Holocaust commemoration at the forefront of his work. Since the beginning of Yad Vashem, the Claims Conference has supported and promoted Yad Vashem as the pioneer and leading center for Holocaust commemoration and documentation. Pledging to raise a third of the total costs of the comprehensive Yad Vashem 2001 Masterplan, among others the new Archives building and the computerization project, Rabbi Israel

## Encyclopedia of Jewish Communities - Western and Northern Poland

by Abraham Wein

The encyclopedia of the Jewish communities of Western and Northern Poland, edited by Abraham Wein (for the districts of Poznan, Pomerania and well as the free city of Gdansk-Danzig and its environs) is the seventh in a series of eight volumes on Poland. The encyclopedia deals with an area which was annexed to Prussia at the time of the division of Poland at the end of the eighteenth century, and particularly focuses on the period after the Vienna Congress of 1815, until after World War I with the re-establishment of the Polish Republic (1918-1919).

Methodologically, and in subject matter, this encyclopedia resembles the other encyclopedias in the series. It is, however, unique in several important aspects. The Jews living in the 69 towns and villages presented in the encyclopedia underwent a process of "Germanization" and therefore developed differently from the other Jews of Poland (in language, community administration, educational system, culture and welfare). The authorities took advantage of the Jews to "Germanize" the other populations in the area, most of whom were Poles. The Jews therefore received preferential treatment in administration and in various positions in the legal system. Nonetheless, the Jewish population of the area began to diminish from the late nineteenth century until the end of the Prussian rule. In villages with less than 1,500 inhabitants, the number of Jews was often reduced to a few dozen people, because for various reasons, Jews preferred to live inside Germany or to immigrate abroad. The authors of this series deviated from the practice in the previous encyclopedias and included entries on Jewish communities of less than 100 people as well.

The encyclopedia, which will be published in January, is preceded by an introduction and includes a bibliography, keys to people and places, maps and illustrations.

## U.S.A.

American President **Bill Clinton**, Vice President **Al Gore**, Brazilian President **Fernando Henrique Cardoso**, Israeli President **Ezer Weizman**, and Prime Minister **Benjamin Netanyahu** are only a few among other prominent politicians, academics and businessmen who wrote special messages in support of the American Society for Yad Vashem on the festive occasion of the Society's Jubilee Tribute Dinner.



*From left to right: Evelyn Singer, Israel Singer, Vicky Safra, Joseph Safra, and Eli Zborowski at the Jubilee Tribute Dinner*



*Mr and Mrs Joseph Bukiet with their son, Melvin Bukiet, and several grandchildren at the Jubilee Tribute Dinner*

The Dinner, a highly successful event on the New York cultural scene, took place on November 22, under the auspices of the American Society for Yad Vashem led by **Eli Zborowski**. **Vicky and Joseph Safra** were the recipients of the First International Yad Vashem Humanitarian Award, and **Joseph J. Bukiet** was the recipient of the 1998 Yad

Vashem Remembrance Award. 1200 participants, representing twenty-two countries, among them leaders of the Jewish community, diplomats, ambassadors, and businessmen, as well as members of the Young Leadership - children and grandchildren of survivors - honored the event. Presiding at the program was **Dr. Israel Singer**, World Jewish Congress Secretary General, who served as dinner chairman with **Edgar Bronfman**, World Jewish Congress President and **Walter H. Weiner**, Chairman and CEO of the Republic National Bank of New York. **Dr. Singer** praised the accomplishments of Yad Vashem under the direction of **Avner Shalev** and its Societies under the direction of **Eli Zborowski**. "Yad Vashem will enter the next century," he said, "with the distinction of being the only major Holocaust resource that is exclusively devoted to the martyrdom and heroism of the Jews." The guest speaker, **Dr. Josef Burg**, chairman of the Yad Vashem International Council and former Israeli Minister of the Interior, Health, Religious Affairs and other Ministries for a period of over thirty years, accentuated the uniqueness of the Holocaust and of Jewish survival. "Only the Jews died because of their Jewishness (...) We have survived our enemies. We have outlived the wicked: Living is our revenge, our consolation."

"I express what everyone here feels about **Vicky and Joseph Safra**, when I say that in honoring them, we honored ourselves," were **Eli Zborowski's** opening comments. Their leadership in supporting the people of Israel - their concern for the good of people everywhere - are reflections of the best the human heart has to offer. The Safras were introduced by **Gideon Patt**, former Israeli Minister of Trade and Industry, and CEO, Development Corp. for Israel.

Senator **Frank R. Lautenberg**, US Senator from the State of New Jersey, presented the Remembrance Award to **Joseph Bukiet**, a New Jersey resident. **Eli Zborowski** described **Joseph Bukiet** as a person who "was able to transform the experience of his pain and sufferings during the Holocaust into a strong belief in the future. He converted his strength for survival into a skill to lecture and teach young people about hope."

The families of **Harry and Joseph Wilf**, **Joseph Wilf**, **Mrs Judith Wilf**, the widow of the late **Harry Wilf** and the children of **Harry and Joseph Wilf** - **Leonard Wilf**, **Zygmunt Wilf** and **Mark Wilf** - donated a high, seven-figure contribution towards the building of the new Historical Museum of Yad Vashem. The family's generosity and support of the Yad Vashem 2001 Masterplan, and especially their commitment in establishing the new Historical Museum at the Memorial, help safeguard the legacy of the Holocaust for the coming generations.

On January 10, the Young Leadership Associates of the American Society headed by **Caroline Arfa**, organized the largest ever, teacher-training course on the Holocaust that has taken place in New York. About 200 participants attended workshops, lectures and presentations of educational resources given by **Shulamit Imber**, and other senior educators to an interested group of academics, teachers and community leaders.

**Avner Shalev**, **Dr. Josef Burg** and **Eli Zborowski** welcomed the new Atlanta Chapter that was established by the American Society on Sunday, November 8, 1998, and called for the creation of additional chapters. This new chapter was launched at a meeting at the home of **Joy Kunian**, who together with **Carol and Bob Nemo**, **Lois and Larry Frank** and **Arlene and Harvey Wagner** founded the Atlanta Chapter, with great participation by Cantor **Isaac** and **Betty Goodfriend**, who are Holocaust survivors. The first event of the Atlanta Chapter of the Society took place on January 13. A fundraising event is scheduled for April 27, 1999. For more information on the Atlanta friends of Yad Vashem call 404-255-9065 or 404-239-0085.

## Canada

On November 4, at their Annual Dinner, the Canadian Society for Yad Vashem, in cooperation with the State of Israel Bonds Women's Division, paid homage to six incredible women survivors. This year the dinner co-chairs were **Anna Dan**, **Shirley Greenbaum**, **Ruti Kinar** and **Helen Rosenbaum**. The keynote speaker was **Dr. Ruth Westheimer**. **Avner Shalev**, Chairman of the Yad Vashem Directorate,



*Dr. Ruth Westheimer (center), keynote speaker, surrounded by the honorees. Left to right: Fanny Pillersdorf, Anita Ekstein, Rose Ziner, Genia Grossman, Gerda Frieberg and Faye Schulman*

spoke to an audience of over 500 people, and a video was screened presenting the progress of the School.

An event initiated by **Dr. Joel Dimitry**, Past Chairman of the Canadian Society for Yad Vashem, honoring 50 survivors from across Canada, took place in

Ottawa on November 18, 1998. **Dr. Dimitry**, and the Canadian Society led by **Hank Rosenbaum**, organized the event and contributed to its success. The chance reunion of **Leah Kaufman** from Montreal and **Jack Rosen** of Hamilton, who in 1948 traveled together to Canada on the boat S. S. Sturgis, was very moving.



## France

On December 13, 1998, the **Nice-Alpes Maritime Society** for Yad Vashem was inaugurated in Nice in a festive evening at which the first Hanukkah candle was lit. Over 450 people came to listen to **Avner Shalev**, Chairman of the Yad Vashem Directorate, give his address and blessing to the formation of this committee, in the presence of **Dr. Richard Prasquier**, the nationwide President of the French Society, **Dr. Jacques Eloit**, the main protagonist behind the establishment of the Nice chapter and its new Head, **Serge Klarsfeld**, who addressed the group, and outstanding community figures, lay and religious leaders. The committee will organize educational and social events and support Yad Vashem in its French language courses for teachers and community leaders, a project supported by the French Jewish community, that are currently held annually at Yad Vashem's School.



## Germany

The **German Society** will be structured anew on a national basis. Efforts are being made to include new members and activists who will support and promote the activities of Yad Vashem.

The first screening of the German State Television Network ARD documentary on Yad Vashem took place in Germany, on November 9, 1998. **Professor Udo Reiter**, President of ARD, informed Yad Vashem of his interest in producing an expanded, improved and more up-to-date version that will address an international audience. The ARD Television Network is planning to organize in cooperation with the **German Society**, a special screening of the film, in the presence of the director, a panel of scholars and prominent guests at the ARD studios in Frankfurt, ten days before the documentary's release on television in June 1999. **Christof Radzyninski**, a close supporter of the Yad Vashem activity in Germany, is wholeheartedly involved in promoting and publicizing this effort in particular, as well as the Yad Vashem activity in general.



## Holland

On December 6, 1998, the Dutch Society organized a concert whose benefits will be allocated to Yad Vashem. The Cultural Attache of the **Israeli Embassy**, **Mr. Ilan Fluss**, attended the event. The well-known Dutch actress and singer, **Jasperina de Jong**, performed together with pianist, **Gerard Bouwhuis**. Her excellent voice and charisma made this event a great success. The aim of the evening was to enable Yad Vashem to purchase a suction disc for the archives, an important device for the cleaning of old and precious documents. The participants contributed towards this aim, and enjoyed a very successful musical evening.



## Brazil

The **Brazilian Society** is planning to host the exhibition "No Child's Play". At the opening it will formally appoint **Edmundo Safdie** Honorary President of the Society. The new nucleus of the **Sao Paulo Society** will also be announced at the event.



## Israel

In November 1998, the Yad Vashem Directorate decided to form a society for Yad Vashem in Israel, to be called the **Israeli Society for Yad Vashem**. **Avner Shalev**, Chairman of the Yad Vashem Directorate, will serve as President of the Society; **Yoram Berger**, one of the owners of Vita Quality Food Ltd., will be Chairman; and **Yaron Ashkenazi**, former Director of the Israel Desk at the Yad Vashem Foundation, will be Managing Chairman.

The members of the Society will take part in the commemoration and educational activities of the Yad Vashem Authority. Additionally, the Society will solicit resources in Israel to fund development programs as part of "Yad Vashem 2001."

Recently, following the decision by the Yad Vashem Directorate to promote the campaign for the collection of Holocaust victims' names, the Israeli Yad Vashem Society has taken upon itself to implement the collection of pages of testimony in Israel (See back cover for additional information.)

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Vice Chairmen of the International Council: Dr. Yitzhak Arad  
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Chairman of the Directorate: Avner Shalev

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