

Yad Vashem

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A TRIBUTE to the
A Special Issue for Remembrance Day

JEWISH FAMILY

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Cover: A Jewish wedding during the Holocaust in Brussels.

This special issue for Holocaust Remembrance Day pays tribute to the Jewish family, the mothers and fathers, sons and daughters, sisters, and brothers and to the grandparents, and other relatives who did not survive the Holocaust. To the end of their lives they did not forsake the ties that bound them together. To Morris and Mazal, Yaacov and Gerta, Solomon and Hannah and each and every relative and friend.

This issue also pays tribute to all those family members who survived and carry on their families' legacy. These include Ze'ev Portnoy, Yehuda Sztternfeld, Nata Osmo Gattegno, Felix Zandman, Kopel Kolpanitski and Sylvia Shertzer Aharon, this year's torchlighters. They transmit the memory of another culture and another way of life and reinforce the dream that their children and grandchildren will build and live in a better world.

Together with the Jewish people's dedication to remembering the Holocaust and learning from it, the Stockholm Forum on the Holocaust indicates that the international community has committed itself to fostering Holocaust education, research, and commemoration. This commitment amounts to a promise, which, if sincere, represents progress in the direction of the development of our humanity.

May this be the year that the nations of the world make a concerted effort to remember the Holocaust and ensure that crimes against humanity will never again be tolerated!

Yvette Nahmia-Messinas
Managing Editor

Yad Vashem Speaks Out

Yad Vashem expresses its apprehension concerning the admission of the Freedom Party to the Government of Austria and believes that this development should sound an alarm to European democracies.

Fifty-five years after the Holocaust, remembrance has acquired cultural and political meaning in the European and International community. As we witness the ascendancy of Holocaust awareness, and as teaching the Holocaust gains importance, it is troubling that a man who has praised Nazi policies, and a party whose platform includes elements of intolerance and xenophobia, can be accepted as a partner in a governing coalition.

One reason Austria could elect a man who represents such views is that, to this day, Austria has not disclosed the historical truth regarding its role in WWII, or taken responsibility for its actions and positions during that period.

Study of the Holocaust in Austria must be bolstered, so in early 2000, the International School for Holocaust Studies sent the Head of the Department of German Speaking Countries to Austria to plan joint educational seminar programs at Yad Vashem for Austrian teachers and educators. The first of three such seminars will begin at Yad Vashem this coming September.

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Yad Vashem condemns Syria's political use of the Holocaust.

Syria's statements make blunt and crude use of Holocaust remembrance in a political conflict. Thus, Syria has joined the core group of Holocaust deniers.

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David Irving is a falsifier of history and a Holocaust denier.

Irving's libel suit against Deborah Lipstadt and Penguin publishers, litigated in England, is so outrageous as to be absurd. Although the trial is consistent with the fundamentals of British law, its very existence is an affront to common sense because it elevates false and manipulative allegations to the same plane as historical reality and facts. It is hard to accept that such a trial could take place amidst today's realities, as these Holocaust deniers are obviously fully aware of the magnitude of the Holocaust and the way it was conducted. Their sole intent is to deny the historical facts in order to strengthen radical neo-Nazi and neo-Fascist movements that imperil the world and humankind.

by Professor Israel Gutman

“S ince the beginning of the war, the Jews in the occupied countries had been living under an all-pervasive regimen of persecution and terror. The beleaguered Jewish leadership sought ways to escape or joined the underground, bringing activity at the public level to an almost total halt. As all social order collapsed and the tide of deprivation rose steadily, the Jewish family, providing some light and solace, became a bastion in the confrontation with terror. The strong values and relationships that the Jewish family has nurtured at all times withstood a daunting ordeal in the struggle for survival, as long as it was allowed to remain intact and as long as a glimmer of hope remained.

In the realities of occupation and ghettoization, the structure and functioning of the family was drastically transformed. In most cases, fathers immediately lost their source of livelihood and guiding authority as heads of household; often they were taken away for forced labor and to labor camps. Under these circumstances, the aplomb, courage, and devotion of mothers and wives in the family unit came to the fore with greater intensity.

The leading historian and chronicler of the time, Emanuel Ringelblum, recorded the following in his diary in June 1942: “The future historian will have to devote an appropriate page to the Jewish woman in the war. She will claim an important page in the history of the Jewish people for her courage and steadfastness, by virtue of which thousands of families were able to overcome the terror of the times.”

Women took action on behalf of their households. They engaged in smuggling, obtaining means of sustenance illegally and in constant danger. By means of self-denial, they amassed small portions of food that they mainly distributed to their children. Many women also



Children in the Warsaw ghetto. Yad Vashem Photo Archive

engaged in assistance and caregiving work for the hungriest and most downtrodden elements in the Jewish population. Ringelblum notes that "The [volunteer] women are very important in the social assistance [enterprise], which is now in need of fresh forces that have not yet been depleted."

A special place in the endurance of the family is reserved for children, including some aged seven and eight. Through the ghetto checkpoints, stringently guarded by armed police, and over and under the wall, hundreds of children slipped onto the other, the "Aryan," side of town. There, by begging and miscellaneous devices, they obtained minuscule quantities of food. They

the tragedy of mothers who willingly turned onto the final path with their children.

The liquidation of the ghettos extinguished the traditional Jewish family. Only one in a hundred survived the murderer's hand. These include the last inmates in the camps, those dependent on assistance from members of the surrounding peoples, and those deep in the forests. In the camps, a few laborers, mostly men, survived under conditions of slavery. Women who lived in hiding, under false identities, had an easier time. In special cases in which an opportunity to save a child arose, parents wrestled with doubts about the separation that might possibly condemn the youngster to eternal

forests and some survived.

In all these modalities of survival and struggle, there were almost always a few individuals whose bodies suffered terrible deprivation, but whose souls were illuminated by memories of their loving and supportive families.

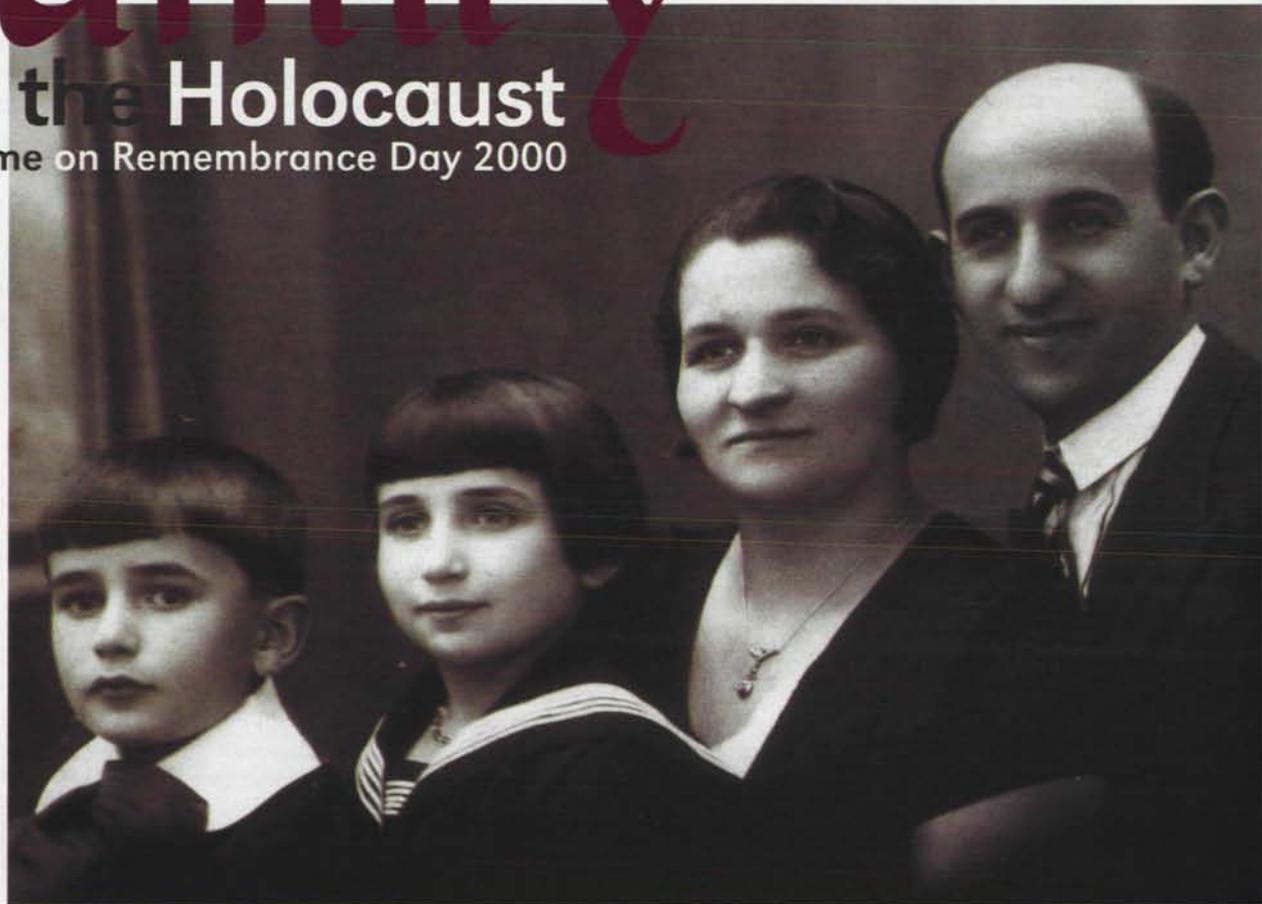
When the war ended, the survivors invariably conducted searches for a parent, a child, a sibling, or young relative who may have survived. Wherever the last Jews congregated, whether they met briefly along the routes of clandestine immigration to Palestine, every available surface on their dwellings' walls was covered with thick layers of notes bearing names and questions

The Jewish Family in the Holocaust

The Central Theme on Remembrance Day 2000

swallowed a bit themselves and brought the rest to the hungry people at home. Many of these children paid for this with their lives. The Jewish poet Henryka Lazobert concludes a poem written in the Warsaw ghetto about the "little smuggler" who has been struck by a German murderer's bullet with the following lines: "The dust of the street has become a grave/ A young child's fate is sealed./ And only one concern is frozen on his lips:/Whom have you got, dear soul, to bring you more bread tomorrow."

Some of the most moving episodes of that time concern children who, persecuted, wandered alone in the dark from village to village. Boys of Bar Mitzvah age led and protected their younger siblings. A photograph from the ghetto shows a boy, dressed in tatters, diligently feeding his little sister beside him. Above all, these episodes reflect the intensity of the human bond and partnership that defined the Jewish family, regardless of their tragedy and ultimate fate. This was the tragedy of those who were captured twice, three times, even five times, the tragedy of families that marched to the railroad car together to avoid separation, and



A Jewish family prior to the Holocaust. No information as to their fate is known. Yad Vashem Photo Archive

displacement from the family and the Jewish heritage.

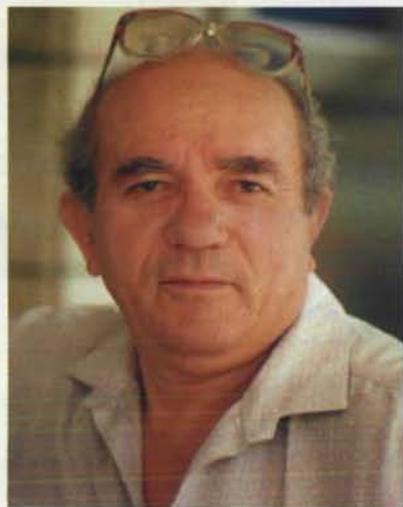
The resistance movement in the ghettos and forests was composed of young fighters, both boys and girls, whose task entailed separation from their families. Women who served in the partisans were not given the status of fighters, regardless of the difficulty of their ordeal. In a few cases, Jewish families formed groups in the

requesting information from those visiting the area who might know the fate, and, perhaps, the whereabouts of sought-after loved ones. Most of these searches were in vain; only a few miraculous cases ended in cries of relief and the release of the pent-up tears of reunited relatives.

The author is the Chief Historian of Yad Vashem

Against All Odds

A Survivor's



Moshe Trosman

by Orit Ohayon Madar

Luck, lots of luck. That's what kept my family together," was Moshe Trosman's response to the inevitable question of how he and his family had survived in the forests for so long. Against all odds, he, his father, brother, his mother, and his sister managed to flee from the market yard where the Nazis had gathered the inhabitants of Rokitna and its vicinity (Rowno district) to deliver them to extermination. Moshe's account is, in fact, that of a family determined to survive and stay together.

Before the war, the Trosmans lived uneventfully with their extended family. "My father had a business, selling barrels of oil and food, that he had built from nothing. We had a large house and were definitely well off." Moshe recalls the Jewish and Zionist ambience of his home at that time: "We went to synagogue every Friday and Saturday, we attended a Jewish school, and we spoke Yiddish. Father even wanted to settle in Palestine and give up his property, but under pressure from the family, he stayed."

Moshe was only seven years old in 1939, when the advent of Soviet rule in Rokitna transformed his life: "When the Soviets came, father lost his business and became an employee at a meat factory." Moshe describes the family's deep concern about his father's life, which was in danger. Even then, Moshe says, only his father's great resourcefulness and experience as a seasoned merchant kept him alive.

Life under Soviet rule was undoubtedly difficult, for the Trosmans, as for many other families. However, it was only the beginning of an unendurably grim period, one of imminent death, when the Nazis entered Rokitna in 1941.

When the Germans reached Rokitna, one of the first events was the establishment of the Judenrat. "The Germans wanted someone who would run the business for them," Moshe relates, "so every now and then the Judenrat would hand us new decrees—to turn over house pets, to gather jewelry, to wear a yellow patch, etc."

When rumors about the establishment of a ghetto in Rokitna began to circulate, Moshe's father, Yehiel, swapped houses with a Gentile who lived in the intended area of the ghetto. Thus, their future bleak, the extended Trosman family moved to the ghetto. As time passed, the Nazi decrees made their lives intolerable.

On 26 August 1942, the Jews were ordered to assemble for the last time. The purpose was to liquidate the ghetto. "The day they summoned us to the yard, there was already a feeling in the air that something was about to happen," Moshe recalls. "That very evening, Mother dressed us in an extra layer of clothing, and that is how we reported to the yard. There we were separated into men and women and were counted."

What prompted you to escape from the yard suddenly?

"They hadn't closed the exit from the yard. If they had, we would have been killed. In any case, one woman saw soldiers approaching with

rifles and she began to scream. *Shema Israel!* A mass escape began at once."

How did the Germans respond?

"They fired in all directions. A bullet struck me in the knee; if my father had not come back for me, I would have been left there to die."

Amidst the commotion, Yehiel Trosman and his injured son Moshe fled into the forest. Shortly afterwards, they were joined by Moshe's older brother. However, almost three months went by until they located Moshe's mother and sister, who had managed to escape from the inferno into the forest. Throughout that time, his mother had carried her daughter on her shoulders.

When the family was reunited in the forest, they faced a harsh winter. Frozen, starving, and ill, the Trosmans endured by joining the partisans and depending upon the help of local inhabitants.

Did your father have a specific plan? Was there a destination he wanted to reach in order to survive?

"There was no plan. How could there be?" Moshe says in amazement. "The only thing that concerned us then was how to find food and shelter in order to make it through that day. No one thought about the next day, let alone the day after."

While in the forest, the Trosmans discovered what had become of the Jews of Rokitna. From the yard, they had been led to trains that delivered them to a killing valley in Sarny (Rowno district). Moshe's uncle, who had fled



Itta Trosman



Yehiel Trosman

FIRST STEPS

Holocaust Education in Austria

by Richelle Budd Caplan and Yariv Lapid

Stories

naked from the valley and reached the forest, told the Trosmans what had happened.

"After two winters, in January 1944, Rokitna was liberated and we were able to return," Moshe relates. This, however, did not mark the end of the family's agony. Moshe's father, Yehiel, was shot by the *Banderists* (a band of Ukrainians who fought against the Soviets) and was buried there where his remains lie to this day.

"My father was a special man who helped many people at a time when helping people was hard," said Moshe in his testimony to Yad Vashem.

The Trosmans' story did not end with the liberation; after the war, they struggled to resettle in Palestine. They were deported from the coast of Palestine to Cyprus, and Moshe, then fifteen years old, was smuggled in a sack into the country by his brother and sister-in-law.

"I have visited Rokitna four times with my brother, sister, wife, and children, and together we built a memorial to my father," he says, summarizing his miraculous tale.

"Lots of luck." At the end of our conversation I was reminded of Moshe Trosman's remark about the luck and intuition that delivered the Trosman family from the inferno to the only possible consolation: the new home that Moshe Trosman built in Ramat Gan with his wife, the four children they raised, and their ten grandchildren.

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Yariv Lapid with a group of Austrian youth during his recent visit to Austria to coordinate Holocaust education

On 26 January 2000, former Austrian Federal Chancellor, Viktor Klima, addressed the participants of the Stockholm International Forum on the Holocaust. He stressed that "The Holocaust is not only the worst crime of the twentieth century, it is one of the most monstrous crimes in the history of mankind. Anyone who does not say this clearly and unambiguously is unsuitable to be entrusted with any responsible public position, either national or international. Any person who denies or minimizes the Holocaust does not have the basic human qualities that are a precondition for any responsible activity in politics."

Ironically, during the same time that this speech was given, Jorg Haider, leader of the right-wing extremist Freedom Party, was forming a government coalition. Haider's political platform, which supports chauvinistic and xenophobic policies, echoes Nazi racist ideology and calls his commitment to democracy into question. The international community, and especially the State of Israel, has reacted strongly against the new government in Austria. The Israeli ambassador has been recalled from Vienna in diplomatic protest. On an educational level, staff members of the International School for Holocaust Studies at Yad Vashem have been working closely with Austrian educators to promote Holocaust education in that country.

Since the mid-1980s, Austria has been forced to confront its complex history due to the exposure of Kurt Waldheim's personal past. Over the last few years, contacts between high-level Austrian educators and Yad Vashem have brought about a continuing dialogue that is now translating into concrete results. In October 1996, Professor Franz Schimek, Head of the European Office of the Vienna Board of Education, was invited to attend the First International Conference on the Holocaust and Education at Yad Vashem.

As a result of this conference, Schimek decided to organize an international symposium for educators in Vienna in October 1998. Richelle Budd Caplan, Coordinator for Overseas Programming, was invited to take an active role in these proceedings. In 1999, Austria and Israel signed a cultural agreement, specifically mentioning teacher-training seminars at Yad Vashem for Austrian educators.

A couple of weeks after the elections in Austria in October 1999, in which Haider's party won twenty-seven percent of the national vote, Margot Greiner, Georg Mayer and Gabriele Waag, participated in the Second International Conference on the Holocaust and Education at Yad Vashem. Greiner, Mayer and Waag, who staunchly oppose Haider and his ideas, gained a lot of media attention during their stay in Israel. Overall, they also felt slightly uneasy.

On the one hand, they were representing their country with whose present and past they have a tenuous, albeit conflicted connection. On the other hand, they were interested in voicing their opposition to the Freedom Party and its leader. Clearly, their difficult dialogue with Austrian history and current events provides us with a small window into the complex situation for many Austrian educators and students who wish to seriously teach and study about the Holocaust.

Throughout 1999, Yariv Lapid, Head of the Department of German Speaking Countries, began working with Martina Maschke of the Austrian Ministry of Education in an effort to plan teacher-training seminars for Austrian educators. As a result of these discussions, the Austrian Ministry of Education decided to support the organization of three seminars for their educators on an annual basis, beginning in 2000.

Yariv Lapid was recently invited by the Austrian government to present the educational philosophy and programming of Yad Vashem to high level officials and teachers in all nine Austrian provinces. During these meetings, Austrian educators and policy-makers, such as Dr. Johannes Riedl, expressed great interest in the educational approaches and materials of Yad Vashem. As a result of this two-week trip, several provinces intend to independently organize local teacher-training seminars, in conjunction with Yad Vashem, as well as seminars in Jerusalem.

During his trip, Lapid was also interviewed by the Austrian media, including *Der Standard* and Austrian National Radio ORF.

Reflecting on his recent experiences, Lapid believes that the pedagogical tools of Yad Vashem, placing importance on dilemmas and the fate of individuals, effectively help Austrian educators and their students confront their national past. The first seminar for Austrian educators at Yad Vashem is scheduled to take place in September 2000.

Richelle Budd Caplan is Coordinator for Overseas Programming and Yariv Lapid is Head of the Department of German Speaking Countries at the International School for Holocaust Studies

by Daniel J. Chalfen

“I n Germany recently, a teacher, who is also a priest, asked his pupils as a class project to gather the names of Jews killed during the Holocaust in their locality. This private initiative that greatly assists Yad Vashem’s Hall of Names collection process is incredible, yet not unique.

In January of this year, twelve-year-old Ben Wind from San Antonio, Texas, USA, wrote to Yad Vashem and asked for 200 blank Pages of Testimony. He explained that for his Bar Mitzvah project, he intends to collect survivor testimonies for Yad Vashem. “I plan to hand deliver all of the forms that are returned to me to Yad Vashem when I come to Jerusalem this June for my Bar Mitzvah,” he wrote.

Meanwhile, fifteen-year-old Ron Haber from New Zealand was so moved by his visit to Yad Vashem last May that he took back home



developing lists. Quite the contrary, besides commemorating the operation also aims to add a new aspect to Holocaust education and academia. This subject was addressed at the Recording the Names conference held at Yad Vashem in early March.

The expressed purpose of the conference was to show how the data collected by the Hall of Names can be used across the disciplines, and how it represents a dynamic resource. Participating in the conference were demographers, genealogists, etymologists, economists, sociologists, and historians.

What's in a Name

The Campaign Goes on

with him Pages of Testimony for his grandfather, a Hungarian-born Holocaust survivor, to fill in. Ron’s grandfather passed away the following September and in his honor, Ron, some classmates, and a teacher from their Jewish school collected testimonies from all the Holocaust survivors in New Zealand and then forwarded them to Yad Vashem.

Yet another private initiative to collect testimonies from Holocaust survivors came from the Centro Recordatorio del Holocausto in Montevideo, Uruguay. The results of this project, some 1,200 Pages of Testimony, were handed to Yad Vashem upon completion.

The Hall of Names also recently received a manuscript, forty years in the making, which chronicles the names of Jews who resided in small numbers in 54 tiny villages in Hungary. The author, serving as a soldier in Ukraine during World War Two, saw many Jews working in the forced labor units of the Hungarian army and witnessed their maltreatment. After the war, he realized that no Jews returned to his home region, and he felt an impulse to do something to honor their memory. The result is this monumental piece of work that adds so much to Yad Vashem’s persistent struggle to gather the names of victims in order to commemorate their lives.

In this way, Yad Vashem continues to collect names, an immense campaign that was first

launched in 1954-55 and is sporadically revitalized, most markedly on the annual Holocaust Remembrance Day. As a result of this past year’s renewed collection campaign, 350,000 more names have been added to the Hall of Names where more than three million names have been gathered and computerized.

Alexander Avraham, Director of the Hall of Names, hopes that eventually almost five million names will be recorded. Yad Vashem will relaunch the effort this Holocaust Remembrance Day. “With each name added,” he believes “the memory of a whole life is revived. Every new name recorded in the Hall of Names is yet another small victory against oblivion.”

“A name represents the identity of a person,” explains Alexander. “A name is not chosen randomly; each has a specific etymology, a certain meaning. Sometimes, a name even represents the personality of the person.”

“We are attempting to reconstruct the identity of people. To talk about names, is to talk about real people, not just anonymous victims. As soon as a person is referred to by name, one can begin to connect to a personality, to family background, beliefs, geographical and often socio-religious origins.”

Although the primary task of Alexander and his staff is to gather names in order to memorialize all the victims, the purpose of the effort is certainly not solely in the interest of

Each participant sought to discover how the archived names are not just symbolic gravestones, but represent a dimension of individuality and persona regarding those who perished. Names alone can impart information pertaining to social status, profession, level of religiosity, geographical origins of the family and much more.

A practical workshop, which took place on the second day of the conference, was dedicated to the future development of the computerized databank of Holocaust victims’ names. Representatives of twelve different institutions in Europe and the USA among them Terezinska Iniciativa, the Auschwitz Museum, and the US Holocaust Memorial Museum, convened for the second time in three years in Jerusalem to discuss the progress of their respective names computerization projects and the ways to integrate them with Yad Vashem’s central databank.

Now that Yad Vashem has succeeded in computerizing the files of the Hall of Names and has almost perfected the retrieval system that allows easier access to archived information, this resource is available to a wider audience. The campaign for the collection of Holocaust victims’ names continues vigorously, and now, especially, with the development of this additional aspect of the project, the importance of the efforts of the staff at the Hall of Names has been justly recognized.

Zippora-Nehama-Safira:

By Yvette Nahmia-Messinas

A Family Odyssey

“Several years ago, one Friday morning, Safira, the oldest daughter of Nehama and Avraham Kaufmann, entered her parents’ apartment in Jerusalem, took a seat in their kitchen, and started recording her mother’s Holocaust odyssey. Beginning that Friday morning, Nehama’s story unfolded little by little in her Jerusalem kitchen in the midst of chicken soup, Lithuanian style gefilte fish, and other Shabbat delicacies that she prepared especially to please her permanent guests of honor — Elad, the soldier, and Ariel, the boy-scout leader, her two grandsons.

Nehama was born in Lithuania, the center of Jewish scholarship and learning, to Rabbi Yizhaq Barouhson, who was the 13th generation of a family of rabbis, and Zippora Hayat, the daughter of a wealthy family that owned a cotton factory in Panevezys. Nehama’s father was the spiritual leader of Or Israel Yeshiva, while her mother was the homemaker for their children, Leah, Shlomo, and Nehama. (Rachel, their youngest



From left to right: Ariel, Safira, Elad and Nehama

sister, died in early childhood from an illness.)

The Barouhson family lived in a wooden house on 9 Paneriu Street in Slobodka, Kovno, in a neighborhood that was solely inhabited by Jewish families and where Yiddish was spoken in its streets. At Yavne, the Jewish gymnasium for girls, Nehama learned Hebrew and was a member of *Batia*, the Jewish youth movement. Nehama recalls the day when she and a friend skipped school to get to the airport and greet Jabotinsky upon his visit to Lithuania.

In June 1940, when Nehama’s father was in the US fundraising for the Yeshiva, the Red Army occupied Lithuania, and within a couple of weeks Lithuania was officially annexed to the Soviet Union. A year later — her father still in the US — the German army invaded the Soviet Union and occupied Lithuania. From that time on, the Holocaust odyssey of Zippora and her children began.

The family managed to arrive on foot to

Dvinsk, the eastern border with the Soviet Union, but, like other Jewish families, was refused entry. Having nowhere else to go, they returned home to Slobodka, where terror and violence reigned. “I remember that two or three nights after we had returned home, Lithuanian ‘partisans’ went from house to house and simply shot the inhabitants,” relates Nehama. “We hid in the attic of the neighboring family on Paneriu 15. We were lucky that the mother of one of these ‘partisans’ had been working for the family for a long time, and prevented him and his friends from killing us.” These pogroms, initiated and conducted by Lithuanians, during which Jews were murdered and raped, marked the beginning of what was to follow.

From August 1941 the family lived in the Kovno Ghetto. Their house in Paneriu Street was situated in the area of the small ghetto and another two Jewish families moved in with them. Nehama, Leah and Shlomo worked from sunrise to sunset. Nehama performed very demanding, manual work at the airport in Aleksotas, paving the runway for the The fear, hunger, and exhaustion of these days are engraved in Nehama’s memory. However, Nehama also vividly recalls her clandestine participation in *Irgun Brith Zion*, the underground Zionist organization that sharpened her mind

taken, along with others from the ghetto, to Sancai where they lived in concentration camp conditions. Zippora, their mother, took care of small children while their mothers were away at work. When Nehama returned to the camp 27 March 1944, the children and Zippora were no longer there. A woman hidden in the camp told Nehama that the Nazis had come at eight in the freezing morning to take the children. Zippora was not commanded to go along, but she insisted that she could not let the children go all by themselves. She was last seen in her pink robe and slippers, getting on the truck. All that night Nehama cried with the crying and screaming mothers in the ghetto.

Zippora’s legacy and love of children is affirmed every day by her granddaughter Safira. Safira Rapoport, Director of the Pedagogic and Resource Center in Yad Vashem works with children and youth helping them find material for their school projects. Safira also accompanies groups to Poland, in their search of family history. Safira has traced her family’s past locating all the places they were taken, from the family house in Paneriu Street in Slobodka where Zippora grew up, to Stutthof, Rehberg, Stobey, Brosen, Niederwoben, Hoheneck, Hecht and Strasburg, the camps where her mother was incarcerated



From left to right: Nehama with her mother, Zippora Feige Hayat-Barouhson. Kovno

and gave her hope. “We spoke Hebrew and held study sessions and lectures focusing on Zionism, Jewish thought, poetry and geography, with the hope that one day we would settle in Eretz Israel,” says Nehama. In the Kovno Ghetto, Nehama secretly read the writings of Herzl for the first time and lectured on Jewish history in her capacity as commander of a *Maapilim* battalion.

In the fall of 1943, Nehama’s family was

after Sancai. But Safira still does not know where Zippora and the children are buried.

In Nehama’s eyes, her grandchildren Elad and Ariel represent her victory over Hitler. Although Safira often worries about her son Elad, who is in a combat unit and drives the Patton tank, she is overcome with joy when she imagines how proud and appreciative Zippora would feel about her two great grandsons.

Torchlighters

by Keren Gal

*Woe! My life became repugnant to me.
Woe! My life was given over to torture.
Fatherless, motherless—all mercilessly put to death,
I remained, forever despondent and lonely.*

Ze'ev Portnoy

Thus Ze'ev (Vlodemerz) Portnoy, born in Tuchin, Volhynia (Ukraine), concludes his poem that describes the hardships he endured during the Holocaust. Portnoy, born in 1932 to a traditional family in which he had three sisters, was only nine years old when the Nazis entered his hometown in 1941. Ze'ev's father found him a job tending cattle with a Ukrainian peasant near Tuchin; for this reason, Ze'ev avoided the ghetto where the rest of his family was interned in 1942. Later, Ze'ev was informed that his grandfather and two of his sisters had been killed in an uprising that erupted in the ghetto in September 1942. His parents and his third sister managed to escape from the blazing ghetto to the village of Woskodawy, but they were captured and murdered there. Ze'ev, the only surviving member of his family, migrated aimlessly from the vicinity of his hometown and wandered among peasants' farms and forests, depicting himself as a Ukrainian or Polish refugee, depending on the circumstances. He concealed his Jewishness for so long that he almost forgot his parents' home and childhood. After the liberation, he recalled that he had a maternal uncle in Novograd Volynskiy and, after considerable efforts, traced him down in 1945. After living with his uncle until 1952, Ze'ev went to Leningrad to work and study. In



1957, he migrated via Poland to Israel where he married Shulamit and had two daughters, Batya and Tova. Today he has two grandchildren, Yaniv-Pinhas and Yishai.

Nata Osmo Gattegno

Nata Osmo Gattegno was born in 1923 on the island of Corfu, Greece. Her older brother Leone was born there, as were her three younger sisters, Yehudit, Irene, and Sarah Rahel.

The Italians occupied the island in 1941, and Nata, still in high school, joined the Red Cross. When the Germans occupied the island on 13 September 1943, Nata joined an underground organization. At first, she raised funds; afterwards, she surreptitiously monitored radio broadcasts as a member of a five-person team that operated in a cellar under a German officers' club.

In this capacity, Nata was a news analyst. The organization members disseminated hand-



printed leaflets in the street. In 1944 the underground informed them that the Germans had rounded up the Jews of Salonika, Athens, and Ioannina; Nata was ordered to inform the head of the community and the rabbi to take appropriate measures. They treated the reports with disbelief, convinced that the *goyim* merely wished to frighten them.

The order to deport the Jews of Corfu was received on 13 April, 1944. At this time, Nata, assisted by the EPON underground group, smuggled out her two sisters, who survived. By this time, her brother had died in Corfu.

She and the rest of her family, along with the others, were deported by sea to Patras and thence to Athens and, by train, to Auschwitz-Birkenau. Although partisans had come to rescue Nata in Corfu, at the fort, and at every stop in Greece, she refused to abandon her parents. Her parents and the other members of her family who were deported to Auschwitz were killed there. Today, Nata lives with her husband Israel in Tel Aviv.

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Yehuda Szternfeld

Yehuda Szternfeld, the youngest of five children in his family, was born in Lodz in 1930. The Germans occupied his hometown on 8 September, 1939, and immediately began to subject the Jews to brutal persecution. In early 1940, the Jews of Lodz, including the Szternfelds, were sent to the Lodz ghetto. Two of Yehuda's brothers escaped, one to Warsaw and the other to Bialystok, but both perished. Yehuda's father died in the ghetto; his mother and sister were sent to Chelmno and murdered in 1942. Yehuda remained in the ghetto until August 1944, when he was deported to Auschwitz. After about two weeks there, he was sent to the Kaufering camp in Germany for labor. He worked in various camps until April 1945, when he was evacuated in a train that was liberated by American forces on April 29. After the war, in November 1945, Yehuda, the only surviving member of his family, immigrated to Palestine.

About two years ago, Yehuda launched an initiative to commemorate some of the Holocaust survivors who fell in Israel's War of Independence. These 433 survivors, each the only surviving member of his family, had settled in Israel before statehood, enlisted in the Israel Defence Forces or the underground organizations that preceded it, and fell in the

the War of Independence with neither descendants nor acquaintances. Thanks to Yehuda's initiative, the Jewish National Fund is erecting



in a mass deportation to Treblinka. Felix and his maternal uncle, Sender, were separated from the rest of the family because they were performing forced labor outside the ghetto at this time. They fled to the home of Janowa and Jan Puchalski, the caretakers of the family's summer house. The fugitives spent the next year and a half in a pit that had been excavated under their rescuers' bedroom. Three additional people were hiding there, and the group created strict rules of behavior to facilitate life in such overcrowded conditions. In the pit, in total darkness, Felix learned mathematics by heart from his uncle. Felix and his uncle were the only survivors in their family. Felix is married to Ruta and has three children and eight grandchildren.

Kopel Kolpanitsky

Kopel Kolpanitsky was born in Lakhva, Belarus, in 1926, the youngest of four children. In 1940, the Soviets arrested his father Izhaq for being a member of the bourgeoisie and an activist in the Zionist movement. He was sent to Kazakhstan, where he was liberated in 1941; however, he remained in the Ural Mountains area until the end of the war.



When the Germans occupied Lakhva in the early 1940s, Kopel and his family were ghettoized there. Kopel's brother Moshe was active in the resistance in this ghetto. On 3 September 1942, as the ghetto was being liquidated, an uprising broke out at the initiative of the underground. Moshe killed a German soldier but was killed himself. Another brother of Kopel's, Elhanan, fled from the ghetto but was murdered by Russian partisans. Kopel's mother Pessia and sister Ida were killed in the ghetto. Kopel himself managed to escape to the forests, where after several months of wandering he joined a partisan unit and saw action against the Germans. When his unit was liquidated, Kopel volunteered for service in the Red Army and fought against the retreating *Wehrmacht*. After the war, Kopel deserted from the Red Army and attempted to reach Palestine. His tortuous route led him through Poland, Austria, and Germany. He joined a training farm of the Dror movement and, subsequently, Betar. He boarded the clandestine immigrants' vessel *Lanegev* but, along with the other passengers,

was taken to Cyprus. It took him until 1948 to reach Israel; once there, he immediately enlisted in the Israel Defence Forces and was discharged as a major. Kopel Kolpanitsky has three children and eight grandchildren.

Sylvia Shertzer Aharon

Sylvia Shertzer Aharon, the youngest of three children, was born in Czernowitz (Bukovina) in 1936, late in her parents' life. In 1941, her mother died of a severe pulmonary infection. A year later, the rest of the family, along with the other Jews of Czernowitz, were ghettoized. From the ghetto, they were removed by train and afterwards on foot to Transnistria. During the journey, the family members held each other's hands to stay together, but Sylvia's grandmother weakened en route and her father was forced to abandon her along the way, as a rifle butt was pressed into his back. After many days of wandering and grim nights under the stars, the family reached the Ivashkovtsy camp. Sylvia and her family, following advice given them by partisans, fled from the camp and went into hiding in an abandoned peasant house. Sylvia's father, brother, and sister ventured into nearby villages to obtain food. Sylvia's eleven-year-old sister, Etka (Beathe) took care of the six-year-old like a mother. The family members returned to the camp, where they endured cold, thirst, hunger, and lice until the spring of 1943. All of them died other than Sylvia, her sister, and her eleven-year-old cousin Didi, who at that point were transferred by members of the Jewish community committee to an orphanage in Shargorod. In mid-February 1944, when authorization to repatriate 3,000 orphans from Transnistria was given, Sylvia and her sister were taken back to Romania and spent time in various institutions and among foster families. At one point they were sent to Russia, but they managed to return to Romania, applied to immigrate to



Israel, and were refused. Sylvia and her sister struggled desperately to move to their homeland, and in 1950 they did immigrate and were taken in by Youth Aliyah. Sylvia married Mordechai Aharon, and the couple has two daughters and a son, and four grandchildren.

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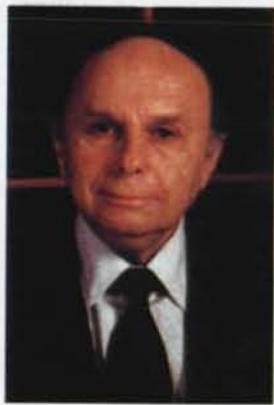
a monument in their memory. The monument, engraved with the names of the fallen, will be dedicated in the Meginim Forest on 8 May, 2000.

At Yehuda's initiative, dozens of schools have undertaken to commemorate the fallen and high-school yeshiva students recite *Kaddish* in their memory. In fact, Yehuda has "adopted" these casualties as his family.

Yehuda Sztternfeld lives in Petah Tikva, is married, and has four daughters and nine grandchildren.

Felix Zandman

Felix Zandman was born in 1927 in Grodno, Poland, to a family of merchants on his mother's side and a family of rabbinical scholars descended from the Maggid of Kelm on his father's. In 1941, at the age of fourteen, he was deported



along with his entire family—grandparents on both sides, his parents Aharon and Genia, and his seven-year-old sister Mira—to the Grodno ghetto. In November 1942, the ghetto was

sealed and deportations began. Felix, his mother, and his sister fled from the ghetto; they begged Felix's father to escape with them, but he refused to part with his parents. After several days in hiding, the escapees returned to the ghetto because Felix's mother could not endure the separation from her husband. At that point, Felix was mobilized for forced labor outside the ghetto. He and his family lived in the ghetto until February 1942, when the family, which until then had struggled to stay together, was included

In letters he wrote during his forced exile in Scandinavia, the German playwright Bertholt Brecht complained about the sobriquet applied to people like him, who had decided to leave Germany upon the Nazi accession to power. “The name they coined us—*emigrants*—is fundamentally erroneous, since this was not a voluntary migration for the purpose of finding an alternative place to settle. The emigrants found themselves not a new homeland but a place of refuge in exile until the storm passes—Deportees that’s what we are, outcasts.”

The fate of artist Felix Nussbaum’s family, from Osnabrueck, Germany, substantiates the desperate efforts to find shelter and refuge on foreign soil. It is the history of one family among many that found itself in the maelstrom of hopeless flight.

Philip Nussbaum, Felix’s father, was a proud German patriot who belonged to the organization of World War I veterans. When the new regime came to power, he had to surrender his membership. In his parting remarks, he said, “... for the last time, dear comrades in arms, I salute you as a loyal soldier... And if again I am called to the flag, I am ready and willing.”

At that time, his son, the artist Felix, was in Rome with a small group of German students at an extension of the Berlin Academy of the Arts, after winning a prestigious scholarship. In April 1933, Goebbels, Hitler’s Minister of

Propaganda, visited the artistic elite and lectured them on the Fuhrer’s artistic doctrine. “The Aryan race and heroism are the main themes that the Nazi artist is to develop.” Felix understood that there was no place for him, as an artist and a Jew, within the confines of this doctrine. He left Rome by early May and his scholarship was revoked a short time later. In his work, *The Great Disaster*, 1939, he expressed his intuition concerning the dramatic change that Hitler’s accession had wrought—the destruction of Europe and of Western civilization.

Felix’s parents, Philip and Rachel, left Osnabrueck, as did many Jewish inhabitants of this town. His older brother, Justus, and his family remained to run the family’s thriving metal business. After a brief stay in Switzerland, Felix’s parents traveled south to meet with their beloved son in Rapallo, a fishing town on the Italian Riviera. The sunshine and the ambiance of the place eclipsed the clouds of war, and the Nussbaums spent the summer of 1934 together, in what would be Felix’s last encounter with his parents. His uplifted mood is expressed in the joyous, carefree colors of his works during this time, e.g., *The Beach at Rapallo*, 1934.

In 1935, his parents succumbed to their nostalgia for Germany and expressed their wish to return to their homeland, despite the fierce objections of their son, Felix, who rewrote the last line in his father’s parting poem: “... and if again I am called to the flag, I will desert to a far away place for sure.” It was the only time he objected to the views of his father, his source of spiritual and economic support.

The family members parted ways. Felix and his life partner, Felka Platek decided not to return to Germany. They first went to Paris in January 1935 and then to the Belgian resort town of Ostende. Several months later, they moved in with friends in Brussels. There, in October 1937, they married. Felix’s brother Justus, was forced to emigrate in 1937 when all Jewish businesses in Osnabrueck were Aryanized. Justus, his wife, and their two-year-old daughter, Marianne, fled to the Netherlands on 2 July of that year. There, together with several additional forced migrants, he managed to establish a scrap-metal company.

In the meantime, the situation in Germany was deteriorating. On Kristallnacht, the

synagogue in Osnabrueck was torched, Jewish homes were looted, and all Jewish men were taken to Dachau. In May 1939, Felix’s parents decided to leave Germany. They fled to Amsterdam to reunite with Justus, their elder son.

When Belgium and the Netherlands were occupied in May 1940, Felix was arrested in his apartment and, like all other aliens, taken to the Saint Cyprien camp in southern France. His interment there was a personal watershed; then Felix comprehended the true extent of mortal peril as a Jew under Nazi rule. He expressed this epiphany in his important work, *The Camp Synagogue at St. Cyprien*, 1941—a unique work that symbolizes Felix’s realization that he belongs to the Jewish people and is so perceived by others. It was his first painting on a Jewish theme in many years.

In August 1940, in despair after three months of suffering under humiliating conditions in Saint Cyprien, Felix applied to return to Germany. When he reached the checkpoint at Bordeaux, he decided to escape by boarding a passenger train to Brussels, where he would be reunited with his beloved wife. From 1940 on, Felix Nussbaum lived in hiding with no source of livelihood. His Belgian friends met his needs and even provided him with a studio and art supplies. Lacking residency papers and in continual danger of being discovered, Felix moved from his hideout apartment to his studio and back, pursuing his artistic endeavors without respite. The themes of concern to him were fear, persecution, and the curse that loomed over the family’s members.

The fate of the expanded Nussbaum family was sealed. In August 1943, the protection given to employees of Justus Nussbaum’s scrap-



The Great Disaster. Brush and ink on paper, 1939. Gift of Roger Katz, Brussels



The Beach at Rapallo. Gouache on paper, 1934

“D e p

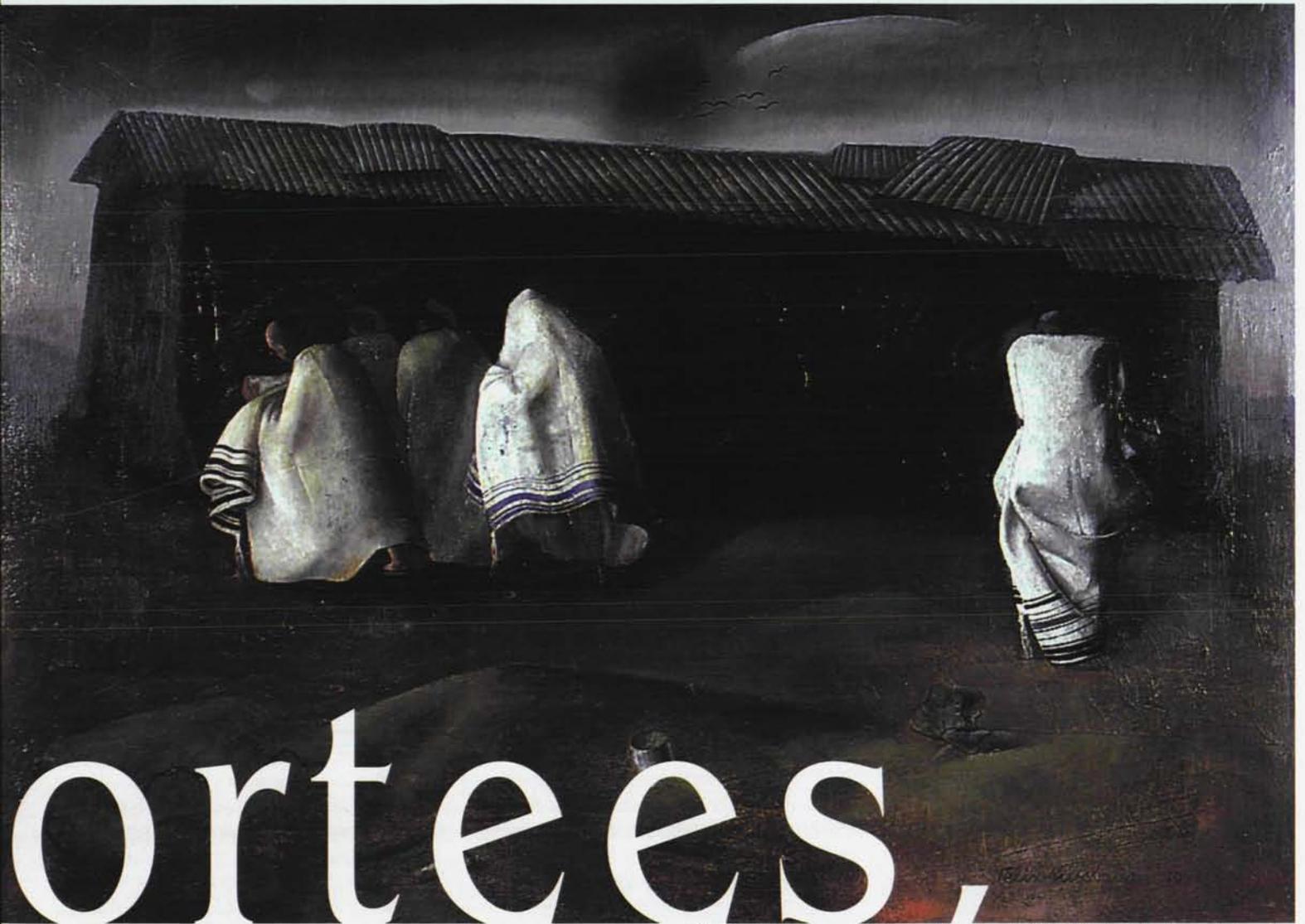
metal business was revoked. Justus, his wife, their daughter Marianne, and the Nussbaum parents were arrested in their hideout apartments and sent to Westerbork. Half a year later, on February 8, 1944, Philip and Rachel Nussbaum, the artist’s parents, were deported from Westerbork to Auschwitz.

On 20 July 1944, Felix and Felka were arrested in their hideout and sent to Mechelen camp. Later that month they were deported to Auschwitz, where Felix Nussbaum was murdered on 9 August. His older brother, Justus Nussbaum, was transported from Westerbork to Auschwitz on September 3. Three days later, Herta, Felix's sister-in-law, and Marianne, his niece, were murdered in Auschwitz. In late October 1944, Justus was sent to the Stutthof camp, where he died of exhaustion some two months later.

This chronology manifests the extirpation of one family that, despite years of flight, could not escape the long talons of the Nazi beast. Europe had become enemy territory. Nussbaum expressed the motif of dead end in an early work, *European Vision—The Refugee*, 1939. The Jewish refugee, holding his head in his hands, finds no shelter on the threatening globe, which stands on the table. The entrance to the room, wide open, provides no source of hope either. Symbols of extinction—a tree shedding its leaves and hovering ravens over a corpse —

lurk outside. Seemingly, the artist already knew the final outcome, that no member of his family would survive the inferno. Felix endured for almost a full decade, against all odds, but he, too, was murdered a month before the liberation of Brussels. However, his works continue to tell his story, that of his family, and that of the fate of the Jewish people.

The author is Senior Curator of the Yad Vashem Art Museum



The Camp Synagogue at St. Cyprien. Oil on wood, 1941. Gift of Dr. Paul Freund, Jerusalem

That's What We Are,
Outcasts" (B. Brecht)

Felix Nussbaum-The Artist and His Family In Hopeless Flight

Pope

John Paul II- A Portrait

by Professor Israel Gutman

Karol Wojtyła—Pope John Paul II since 1978—was born in 1920 in Wadowice, a small city in southwestern Poland between Krakow and Auschwitz. As a young man, he had a penchant for writing and authored poetry and plays. He completed his studies with a doctoral degree in philosophy and theology and served as a professor at the universities of Lublin and Krakow. He was ordained into the priesthood in 1946 and was named to the College of Cardinals in 1963. John Paul II is the first non-Italian pope in more than four centuries.

The choice of Karol Cardinal Wojtyła to head the Catholic Church marked a transition to the recognition of the candidate's personal qualities. It was also a deliberate, demonstrative step, on the part of the Church, to install at its head a man from a country that, although under the fetters of the Communist Bloc, adhered to its Christian-Catholic faith.

Since then, Pope John Paul II has earned the respect of the faithful and has become sweepingly popular. Although wounded by a would-be assassin at the beginning of his papacy, he has been continually active. Apart from his routine duties in Rome, he has traveled extensively around the globe, delivering sermons and conducting masses for enormous congregations in numerous languages. He regularly expresses his views on basic political and social problems, orally and in writing, and often meets and exchanges words with ordinary people—groups and individuals—along with statespeople and luminaries.

John Paul II is considered a conservative cleric who is not eager to reform the existing dogmatic structure of the Church and rarely swerves from the conventional political attitudes of the Vatican State. The Holy See's relations with Israel and the Palestinians, as reflected in the political dialogue with Israel in 1993 and with the Palestinians in 1996, and its recent agreement with Yasser Arafat concerning Jerusalem, should be viewed in this context.

In several respects, however, John Paul II has left his personal imprint by hastening processes and making innovations. Examples are his trailblazing initiatives in understanding and outreach between various Christian churches and the monotheistic faiths and, especially, his calls for dialogue with Jews.

John Paul II considers religion-based ethics and humanism a solution to the conflicts and disasters embodied in extreme ideologies, revolutions, totalitarian regimes, and wars that have beset Europe and the world in the twentieth century. In his opinion, the dangers that menace humankind may be averted by an intensification of faith and ecumenical outreach.

In his public appearances, in visits to Poland and in encounters with Jewish groups, he often refers to the Holocaust (he often uses the Hebrew term, *Shoah*) and antisemitism. In his 1998 letter, marking the publication of the document, "We Remember: A Reflection on the *Shoah*," produced by the Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews, he states, "On numerous occasions during my Pontificate, I have recalled with a sense of deep sorrow the sufferings of the Jewish people during the Second World War. The crime which has become known as the *Shoah* remains an indelible stain on the history of the century that is coming to a close. "Remembrance of the Holocaust," the Pope added, is "an essential component in fashioning the future."

The Church's attitude toward Judaism and Jews had already been improved considerably by Pope John XXIII (Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli), whose papacy began in 1958 and ended in 1963, and in the 1965 declaration *Nostra Aetate*, which inaugurated what has been termed an ongoing dialogue with Judaism and Jews. Pope John Paul II's remarks are sometimes couched in a strongly personal tone that indicates the impact of his experiences in, and recollections of, World War II on his attitude toward the Holocaust.

On several occasions, John Paul II has addressed himself to the destruction of the Jews

during his visits to Poland, which he regards as pilgrimages. All Poles unanimously admire the Pope, and his remarks on the Jews have certainly been distasteful to some Poles, including members of the clergy, who even today have not cleansed themselves of antisemitism.

In April 1986, John Paul II was the first Pope to visit the Great Synagogue in Rome, where he said, *inter alia*, "On June 7, 1979, as I visited the death camp at Auschwitz, during mass for the multitudinous victims of various peoples, I dwelled in particular on a plaque bearing an inscription in Hebrew. I expressed my feelings at that moment in the following way: "This inscription evokes the memory of the people whose offspring were doomed to utter annihilation. This people has its origins in Abraham, whom Paul of Tarsus termed the "father of our faith. "This people, which received from God the commandment "Thou shalt not murder, "itself experienced a singular ordeal in killing. No one may pass this plaque indifferently."

John Paul II defined antisemitism as a sin and termed "various forms of antisemitism and discrimination against Jews contrary to the spirit of Christianity." In 1984, he stated, "To the Jewish people who live in the State of Israel and sustain on its soil the great value embodied in its history and faith, we wish the longed-for peace and deserved tranquillity, the indisputable entitlements of any people and a condition for the life and advancement of any society."

During his visit to Poland in 1987, the Pope stated in an encounter with Jews: "... I think the Jewish people today, perhaps more than ever, is at the focal point of interest of the world's peoples. You have indeed become a resounding warning to all of humankind, all peoples, all regimes, and every individual." In 1983, marking the fortieth anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, he portrayed the Uprising as "a cry of despair on behalf of the right to life, liberty, and the salvation of human dignity."

Revealing his personal recollections in one of his public appearances, he said:

Rittner, Carol, Stephen Smith, Irena Steinfeldt, eds. *The Holocaust and the Christian World. Reflections of the Past, Challenges for the Future.* Kuperard, UK, 2000, 305 pp.

The book is a joint project of Yad Vashem's International School for Holocaust Studies and Beth Shalom, the Holocaust Memorial and Education Center in the United Kingdom. *The Holocaust and the Christian World* examines the role of the Christian Churches during the Holocaust and its consequences for Christian thought and practice in the contemporary world. The purpose is to present the reader with a balanced picture of this complex subject, to introduce the key issues, and enable an open and meaningful discussion on Christian responses to the Holocaust and on Christian-Jewish relations.

The book includes a wide selection of articles and resources. The bulk of the textual material is in the form of short essays by well-known scholars in the field from all over the world. The book provides the readers with an opportunity to confront the role of Christianity during the Nazi period and to deal with the challenges the Holocaust continues to pose in the present era. It presents an accessible and balanced picture of these very complex issues; the authors do not make value judgements, but the actions/reactions speak for themselves. A careful juxtaposition of varied responses demonstrates the wide range of reactions that existed. Much of the material is presented in the form of case studies, personal experiences, and documents.

Following an introduction and overview of the general questions, the first section deals with the meaning of the Holocaust for today's Christians and the present Christian world. Chapters about Christian antisemitism and indifference to the plight of the Jews during the Holocaust follow. The book then analyzes case studies describing the conduct of churches in Germany and in various countries in occupied Europe. The discussion includes the attitude and policy of the Vatican and the role played by Pius XII. The purpose is to demonstrate the complexity of the issue and to enable readers to evaluate the response and attitude of church organizations and personalities within the historical context. The book ends with a section about the post-Auschwitz era in which the authors explore the Church's response to the Holocaust and the continuing issues that still remain, as well as the canonization of Pius XII, the issue of Edith Stein, Christian-Jewish relations, etc.

THE HOLOCAUST AND THE CHRISTIAN WORLD



reflections on the past
challenges for the future

I remember, first of all, the elementary school in Wadowice, where at least one-fourth of my classmates were Jewish boys. It is appropriate here to mention my friendship with one of them, Jerzy Kluger. It has lasted from my student days to the present time. My eyes still behold, like a living picture, the Jews walking on the Sabbath to the synagogue near our high school. The two religious blocs, Catholic and Jewish, were linked, so I assume, by the knowledge that they worship the same God. Despite the difference in language, the prayers in church and synagogue were based on the same texts. Then came the Second World War, with the concentration camps and the planned extermination. Its primary victims were the sons and daughters of the Jewish people, solely because they were Jews. Everyone who lived in Poland at that time must have come into contact with it, at least indirectly. This was also my personal experience, which I carry inside to this day. Auschwitz, evidently the most salient symbol of the *Shoah* of the Jewish people, illustrates the level to which a system resting on foundations of racial hatred and aspiration to governmental supremacy of one people can descend. The warning of Auschwitz continues to resound. Auschwitz, meaning antisemitism, a massive sin against humankind, signifies that any manifestation of racial hatred that inescapably leads to the trampling of humankind is a great sin against humankind. ▶

Even if the Pope's idyllic description of Polish-Jewish relations and interfaith relations in Poland hardly reflects the reality in the interwar period, the fact that he so believes, or wishes to believe, is valuable. Jerzy Turowicz, a Polish thinker and pundit who was a close associate of the Pope's, wrote, "John Paul II is totally aware that the *khurban*, the Holocaust, or the *Shoah* ... the only attempt of its kind to physically exterminate an entire people, represents not only a crisis in Jewish history but also a singular challenge to Christians"

Remarks by a Polish Pope in these matters [Christian-Jewish relations] must have a vast impact on the outlooks and attitudes of his own people. The insistent urgings in the writings of John Paul II allow us to understand the distinction of his views on Christian-Jewish relations relative to views that are widely held even today. The Pope believes that the situation in this respect is improving. The reason for this, beyond doubt, is his personal example, activity, and teachings."

The author is the Chief Historian of
Yad Vashem



HITLER'S POPE
THE SECRET HISTORY OF
PIUS XII JOHN CORNWELL

Cornwell, John. *Hitler's Pope
The Secret History of Pius XII,*
Viking, 1999, 430 pp.

John Cornwell's *Hitler's Pope* relates the previously untold story of the man who was arguably the most controversial churchman in modern history: Eugenio Pacelli. Pius XII, was Pontiff from 1939 to 1958 and long known as the Pope who failed to speak out against Hitler's Final Solution. Drawing on research from secret Vatican and Jesuit archives made available only to the author, *Hitler's Pope* is an indictment of Pius XII's papacy and its consequences for the Catholic Church today.

F The Stockholm O r u on the Holocaust

by Professor Yehuda Bauer

The meeting of the "Stockholm Forum on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research" in Stockholm 26-28 January was distinguished by the fact that forty-seven countries sent their political representatives, including twenty-five who sent either their presidents or their prime ministers, including France, Germany, Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Argentina, and others. For the first time ever, the theme at a high ranking meeting of politicians was the Holocaust, and the ways to educate, commemorate, and advance the research about it.

The Forum took place at the initiative of Prime Minister Goran Persson of Sweden. His motivation was the result of opinion polls among Swedish youth that had indicated a dangerous weakening of support for democracy, and a widespread influence of Holocaust denial and Nazi ideas. In the summer of 1997, therefore, the Swedish government, with broad parliamentary support, initiated the "Living History Project," which has as its aim education about the Holocaust. Two young historians wrote an excellent short book called *Tell Ye Your Children* that tells the story of the Holocaust. Thousands of teachers have, in the meantime, completed training sessions, enabling them to teach the subject at various educational levels.

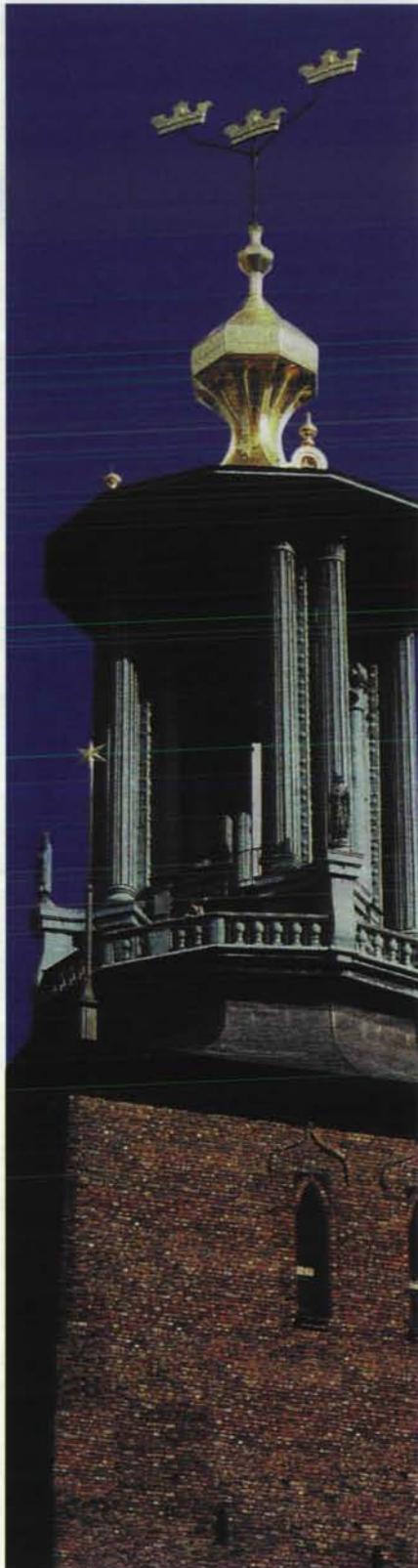
In May 1998, a further initiative by Prime Minister Persson led to the establishment of an International Task Force on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research, which is at the present composed of nine countries—Sweden, the US, the UK, the Netherlands, Germany, Israel, Poland, France and Italy. This is a political group, and the politicians are accompanied at the meetings by experts on the Holocaust in their respective countries. The basic idea is to provide a political umbrella for educational efforts. The first international conference under that umbrella was the major "International Conference on the

Holocaust and Education" at Yad Vashem in October 1999, at which Yad Vashem's International School for Holocaust Studies was inaugurated. A first educational effort with delegations from Task Force countries is now being initiated in the Czech Republic; hopefully, other countries will follow.

It was against this background that Prime Minister Persson proposed another step forward in the attempt to spread knowledge and education about the Holocaust in the world: a gathering, in Stockholm, of political representatives from the countries that were represented at the London and Washington conferences on Jewish assets. Internationally, the forum, however, restricted its discussion to the issues at the core of the Holocaust, rather than the problems of assets.

In terms of content, the Holocaust was generally understood, at the Forum, to include two major issues: the specificity of the Holocaust as an unprecedented Jewish tragedy; and its universal implications as the symbol of what enlightened humanity should oppose—genocide, mass murder, ethnic cleansing, antisemitism, racism. In this way, what was dealt with was understandable to the participants, and also had a practical dimension. Many delegates understood education about the Holocaust as one of the steps towards a more efficient international opposition to the evils humans can inflict upon each other.

There is no doubt that the Forum was an unprecedented step towards this objective. The major addresses were those of Goran Persson, Elie Wiesel, Yehuda Bauer, Gerhard Schroeder, Ehud Barak; major academic speakers were Eberhard Jaekel (the outstanding German academic), Hubert G. Locke (the Afro-American academic from Seattle, USA), and Israel Gutman (Yad Vashem), who was the closing academic speaker. Presidents and Prime Ministers, as well as other major diplomatic representatives also spoke, among them the British Foreign Minister, Robin Cook, and the US Deputy Treasury of Commerce Stuart



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Yad Vashem in the F o r u m

by Richelle Budd Caplan

Eizenstat, who, of course, is the major figure in the US Administration dealing with Holocaust issues. A video message by President Clinton was screened.

There were about fifty academics from all over the world, experts in various aspects of the subject, who participated in a large number of workshops dealing with Holocaust education, remembrance, and research. The forum's deliberations were put on the Internet and will be published by the Swedish government.

What were practical outcomes? Politicians make declarations, and that is what the Forum was designed to do. The final declarations, unanimously accepted, defined the Holocaust as the Jewish tragedy, and spelled out its universal meanings. It committed the signatories of the declaration to advance educational, research, and remembrance projects in their respective countries. Declarations are always a first step, and they do not constitute more than a move forward. The task of the Task Force, and perhaps of other bodies, will then be to spread knowledge and raise issues wherever possible, and point out the implications of the history of the Holocaust on contemporary international problems.

It will not be an easy task; but the Forum was a breakthrough. It focused international attention on the Holocaust, which has become a symbol for the epitome of evil. Israeli coverage of the event was most disappointing; all over Europe the press and the TV reported the Forum extensively, but in Israel, it was just barely mentioned. Hopefully, this attitude will change, and the Forum will be seen a first step on a long road. Yad Vashem was an important partner in the preparations and sent a large delegation to the Forum, which actively participated in the deliberations. The final declaration bears its imprint under the larger scope of Yad Vashem's objectives of research, commemoration and education. The Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Authority is also committed to furthering the goals for which the Forum assembled.

The author is Head of the International Institute for Holocaust Research

On 26-28 January 2000, ten Yad Vashem staff members, including Avner Shalev, Chairman of the Directorate, attended the Stockholm International Forum on the Holocaust. This unprecedented conference brought together many of the world's leading Holocaust researchers and educators with heads of government, politicians, diplomats, policy-makers and clergy. The primary goal of the conference was to highlight the significance of the *Shoah* in the history of modern western civilization, and to convince decision-makers of their respective countries of the need to promote Holocaust education, remembrance, and research. Over twenty heads of state, including Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak, attended the proceedings.

Yad Vashem staff members took an active role in the conference. Avner Shalev led a panel discussion about the role and experience of national institutions in the field of Holocaust education, remembrance, and research. Professor Yehuda Bauer, Senior Academic Advisor to the Forum and Head of the International Institute for Holocaust Research, gave a well-received speech at the ceremonial opening of the conference in the presence of the King and Queen of Sweden.

Professor Israel Gutman, Chief Historian of Yad Vashem, addressed delegates at the closing plenary session, and Yehudit Inbar, Director of Museums' Division moderated a workshop on "The Role of Museums: Achieving a Balance between Documentation and Remembrance?" Shulamit Imber, Pedagogical Director presented the educational philosophy of Yad Vashem at a workshop on "Pedagogy: Theories, Tools and Results," and Malka Tor, Testimonies Section Director, participated in a panel on the educational uses of survivor testimony. Dr. Motti Shalem, Director of the International School for Holocaust Studies was part of the Israeli delegation, headed by the Minister for Israeli Society and the World Jewish Community, Michael Melchior.

Richelle Budd Caplan, Coordinator for Overseas Programming, at the School, together with Talya Lador Fresher, of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, created a special exhibition of the State of Israel at the conference. The educational concept of the exhibition was to provide conference participants from around the world with a better understanding of how the Holocaust forces us to reflect on our most basic assumptions about the nature of humankind, society, and the modern state.

A wide variety of interdisciplinary pedagogical tools developed by the International School for Holocaust Studies, such as posters, videos, study units, and multimedia, were displayed along with Yad Vashem academic publications. Participants also had a hands-on opportunity to explore two new CD-ROMs, *Into That Dark Night* and *Eclipse of Humanity* as well as the Yad Vashem web site featuring sections of the "Auschwitz Album."

Visitors to the exhibition included Swedish Prime Minister, Goran Persson; Israeli Prime Minister, Ehud Barak; Elie Wiesel (Honorary Conference Chairman); Speaker of Knesset, Avraham Burg; Director-General of the Swedish Foreign Ministry, Ulf Hjertsonsson (currently Chairman of the Task Force on International Holocaust Education, Commemoration and Research); Prime Minister of Macedonia, Ljubco Georgievski, and others.

The author is Coordinator for Overseas Programming at the International School for Holocaust Studies



From left to right: Avner Shalev, Richelle Budd Caplan, Benjamin Meed, President of the American Gathering of Jewish Holocaust Survivors, and Samuel Pisar, noted author and Holocaust survivor. Courtesy of the Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Yad Vashem in Moscow

by Irit Abramski-Bligh

The Seventh International Conference on Jewish Studies in the former Soviet Union (FSU) was held in Moscow from 31 January to 2 February 2000, with the participation of some 300 people from the FSU and other countries, active in various disciplines of Jewish studies. The very fact of scholarly endeavor on Jewish themes, in countries that for three generations had been dissociated from Jewish heritage and roots, is exceedingly impressive.

Today, the FSU is experiencing a vast awakening of interest in Jewish culture and history, in which the Holocaust occupies a very important place. About fifty people took part in the Holocaust discussion group, which debated the resumption of research, as well as the dilemmas in teaching the Holocaust in the FSU.

At the conference, Dr. Pinhas Agmon, of the Ghetto Fighters' House, and Dr. Irit Abramski-Bligh, of Yad Vashem, presented the main outlines of the Jewish education program which is being specially produced for the FSU, called "The Holocaust and Jewish Identity." Many participants at the conference, particularly those in the Holocaust discussion group, took an avid interest in the program. What became evident from the conference is that there is still a shortage of teachers, textbooks, and curricula on the subject of Jewish studies in these particular countries.

Seminars for Educators from Abroad

by Kathryn Berman

Traveling to Jerusalem from Australia, Canada, and America, twenty-six dedicated educators chose to spend the dawn of the new millennium and the ensuing three weeks studying at the Yad Vashem Winter Seminar, 2000. In addition, the Latvian and Lithuanian Ministries of Education sent two English speaking teachers each to the Seminar, and the Foundation for Tolerance Education, Soweto, sent one representative from Soweto in South Africa.

The fourth seminar for Danish educators took place in February. Participants' tuition fees were covered by "Thanks to Scandinavia." The Speaker of the Danish Parliament, Mr. Ivar Hansen, together with the Danish Ambassador, His Excellency Kofoed-Hansen, and Professor Szewach Weiss, Chairman of the Yad Vashem Council, opened the seminar.

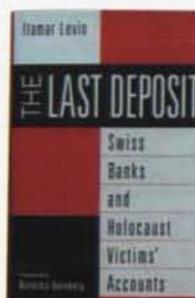
The third seminar for Hungarian educators, representing schools and universities from various parts of Hungary, including Budapest, Debrecen, and Szeged, also took place in February. A journalist from the group wrote daily reports about the seminar for Hungarian radio.

In March, Yad Vashem was the site for a seminar initiated by the Anti-Defamation Forum, Berlin. Participating were the Director of the Anti-Defamation Forum, and the Director, one teacher and ten students from the *Institut zur Foerderung Publizistischen Nachwuchses e.V.*, Berlin.

Many seminars are being planned for the rest of the year.

Itamar Levin. *The Last Deposit, Swiss Banks and Holocaust Victims' Accounts*, (translated by Natasha Dornberg), London: Praeger, 1999

Relying on archival and contemporary sources, Itamar Levin describes the Jewish people's decades-long effort to return death camp victims' assets to their rightful heirs. Levin also uncovers the truth about the behavior of Swiss banking institutions, their complicity with the Nazis and their formidable power over even their own "neutral" government. A lecturer on the subject, Levin has led the world's media in reporting and uncovering the fate of looted Jewish property in Europe.



Correction: *Yad Vashem Jerusalem* regrets the omission of Lya Benjamin's name from the article *Romania's Judaica Exodus* (Vol.17). Dr. Benjamin's assistance towards the research and selection of Romanian Judaica on behalf of Yad Vashem's Artifacts Division was invaluable.

Day Remembrance

The Eve of Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Day, Monday, 1 May 2000

20:00 The Official Opening Ceremony of Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Day in the presence of the President and Prime Minister of the State of Israel, Warsaw Ghetto Square

22:00 Symposium in the Yad Vashem, Auditorium

Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Day, Tuesday, 2 May 2000

10:00 Siren

10:02 Wreath-laying Ceremony with the Participation of the President, Prime Minister, Speaker of the Knesset, President of the Supreme Court, Chief of Staff, Police Commissioner, Public Figures, Survivors' Organizations, Students and Delegations Countrywide, Warsaw Ghetto Square

10:30 "Unto Every Person There is a Name"—Recitation of Names of Holocaust Victims by Members of the Public, Hall of Remembrance
Recitation of Names of Holocaust Victims in the Auspices of the Speaker of the Knesset Avraham Burg, the President, Prime Minister, Ministers, the Chief Rabbis, Members of Knesset, Chairman of the Jewish Agency, and Public Figures, Knesset

13:00 Main Memorial Ceremony, Hall of Remembrance

10:30-15:00 Continuous Screening of Films on the Holocaust, Auditorium

16:00 Memorial Service of the Jewish Underground Veterans Organization in France, Auditorium

16:30 Memorial Service for Hungarian Jewry, Valley of the Communities

17:30 Ceremony for Youth Movements with the Participation of the Chief of Staff, IDF Education Officer, Deputy Minister of Education Shaul Yahalom, Pupils, Youth Movement Members and Soldiers, Warsaw Ghetto Square

The Opening of the Archives and Library Building

by Lisa Davidson

The Archives and Library Building was officially inaugurated in March in the presence of the President of the State of Israel, Ezer Weizman; Chief Rabbi, Rabbi Israel Meir Lau; Finance Minister, Avraham (Beiga) Shohat; President of the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany, Rabbi Dr. Israel Miller; Chairman of the Yad Vashem Council, Szewach Weiss; and Chairman of the Yad Vashem Directorate, Avner Shalev.

The Archives and Library Building was built to house the largest collection of Holocaust material in the world—over 55 million pages of documentation, and 80,000 titles of books. Its collection includes personal testimonies, Nazi documentation, records of Nazi war criminal trials, diaries, and memoirs, in a fully climate-controlled building—a state-of-the-art 3,000m² facility designed to inspire a protective feeling. The Film and Photo Archives, which constitute an eyewitness to the Holocaust, store 130,000 photographs, thousands of videocassettes and reels of film.



Rabbi Dr. Israel Miller and President Ezer Weizman unveiling the plaque at the inauguration ceremony of the Archives and Library Building

The Archives and Library Building was established with the support and generous contributions of the main donor organization, the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany, under the leadership of its President, Rabbi Dr. Israel Miller who attended the ceremony together with wife, Ruth, Claims Conference representative in Israel, Avraham Pressler, and Claims Conference Treasurer Moshe Sanbar. The Claims Conference, a long-term partner which contributed to the establishment of Yad Vashem, has continued to fund the “Yad Vashem 2001” masterplan.

Participating in the ceremony were Danek Gertner and family (Austria), donors of the Conservation and Restoration Laboratory, Zisa Aizenman-Schwartz and family (Panama), who dedicated the Reading Hall, and Eugenia Sperber Halbreich, son Gustavo, companion Maria Tereza, and family (Brazil), donors of the Research Units. Also taking part were friends, Zygmunt Wilf, son of Joseph Wilf, Campaign Chairman of “Yad Vashem 2001” masterplan, Jacques Graubart and daughter (Belgium), Maxi Mordechai Librati (France), and Edgar Safdie, and his fiancée (Brazil). The library floor in the new Archives and Library Building was donated by Jack A. Belz, and family from Memphis, Tennessee who were not present at the ceremony.

At the inauguration ceremony, President Ezer Weizmann praised Yad Vashem’s educational and research activities, “You cannot teach without learning; therefore it is very important, not only that this exists, but that this exists in Jerusalem.” In his dedication of the new building, Rabbi Miller stated the importance of the location of the new Archives and Library Building at Yad Vashem: “I feel that the central place for Holocaust remembrance must be in Jerusalem, the eternal capital of the Jewish State of Israel.”

Yad Vashem’s special guests from Israel and abroad who participated in the ceremony, as well as Arnold and Zilla Schwartz, Sandford Schwartz, Betti and Jacob Benaim, Marion and Mrs. Gertner, Prof. Yaacov Ukeles, Prof. Haim Avni and Mrs. Avni, and Yad Vashem staff from the Library and International Relations Division, celebrated the official opening at a festive dinner at Jerusalem’s Crown Plaza Hotel.



Zygmunt Wilf (left) presenting a token of appreciation to Danek Gertner



Eugenia Sperber Halbreich and grandson



From left to right, Avner Shalev, Zisa Aisenman-Schwartz and Szewach Weiss

U.S.A.

The Belz Family from Memphis, Tennessee became a major contributor to Yad Vashem with the donation by the Belz Foundation of the library floor in the new Archives and Library Building. We thank Jack A. Belz, Chairman and CEO of Belz Enterprises for his generous support of Yad Vashem.

The "No Child's Play" exhibition ended its tour at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia. At the closing event, Ariel Groveman, Chair of the local Hillel Chapter, stated that "this exhibit allowed visitors to truly focus on the children of the wartime era, in a way never experienced before. I urge all those who have the opportunity to bring this exhibit to their communities to do so." It reopened in April at the Jewish Community Center in Memphis, Tennessee.

Marilyn and Jack H. (Shaya) Pechter—recipients of the 1999 Yad Vashem Remembrance Award—hosted a meeting in their Boca Raton, Florida home, led by Shulamit Imber, Pedagogical Director of the International School for Holocaust Studies, on Yad Vashem's Holocaust education programs. Jack Pechter spoke about his recent participation at the inauguration ceremony of the new International School for Holocaust Studies, of which he is the major private donor. Participating in the visit were, among others, Elinor and Norman Belfer, Cecile and Roman Kriegstein, Jean and Ben Schreiber, and Rena and Lewis Fagen.

A meeting was hosted by Caroline and Daniel J. Katz in Florida. Caroline is the daughter of survivors. Daniel J. Katz is the owner of Katz Properties in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Participants in the meeting included Marvin Zborowski, William Mandel, Jack Gora, Alex Gross and daughter Etta Zimmerman, Cantor Isaac Goodfriend, Chairman of the Georgia Holocaust Commission, Frances and Murray Chernick, and Lilly and Abe Malnick. Dr. Mordecai Paldiel, Director of the Department for the Righteous Among the Nations, was guest speaker.



At the meeting hosted by Caroline and Daniel Katz in Florida.

Florida events were organized by Shraga Meckel, Development Director of the American Society.

A delegation of six survivors from Tucson, Arizona paid an emotional visit to Yad Vashem, during which they took part in a ceremony to honor Righteous Among the Nations, the late Carl and Jane Gniirrep. Survivor Bertie Levkowitz, who was saved during the Holocaust by the couple, who have no surviving relatives, received the certificate, which she will deposit with the Holocaust Center in the Tucson Jewish Community Center where it will be displayed for the public.

Recent friends visiting Yad Vashem included Gerald Cohen, and family from the Atlanta Federation, led by Jack Balsler, Jean and Ben Schreiber; long time supporter of Yad Vashem, Rose Zarucki; and the Stiller Family from Baltimore.

The American Society's second Professional Development Conference on Holocaust Education "Holocaust Education Towards the Next Century,"—was held in March, and attended by educators from public, private, and

Jewish day schools in the five New York City boroughs. The seminar was organized by the Education Department of the American Society and the Young Leadership Associates of Yad Vashem led by Elie Singer and Caroline Arfa. Workshops were co-organized and led by staff of the International School for Holocaust Studies, Shulamit Imber, Pedagogical Director; Ephraim Kaye, Director, Seminars for Educators from Abroad; Arye Saposnik, Educator at the Department of Program Development and Dr. Marlene Warshawski Yahalom, Education Director of the American Society. Participants were given a presentation of the CD-ROM *Eclipse of Humanity*.

The Young Leadership Associates of the American Society for Yad



From left to right: Lorne Lieberman, Randi Halperin, Michelle Nadata, Elie Singer, Ron Agam, and Caroline Arfa

Vashem held a special event at the Artlife Gallery attended by 400 guests who viewed the work of world-renowned artist Yaacov Agam. Ron Agam, Photographer and Gallery Director, spoke of his father's artwork and his

connection to the Shoah.

The cornerstone laying ceremony for the new Museum complex will take place on May 3. It will be attended by Joseph Wilf, Campaign Chairman of "Yad Vashem 2001" masterplan, and his wife Elizabeth Wilf, Judith Wilf, the wife of the late Harry Wilf, Lenny Wilf, Mark Wilf, Zygmunt Wilf, and a delegation from the American Society, including Eli Zborowski, Chairman of the Society.

NORWAY

Nine Norwegians were honored as Righteous Among the Nations at a ceremony, attended by some 260 guests, held in early February at the Oslo Concert Hall, and organized by Herman Kahan, Chairman of the Norwegian Friends of Yad Vashem and Amos Nadai, Israel's Ambassador in Norway. Speakers included Herman Kahan; Robert Katz, President of the Oslo Jewish Community; Dr. Irene Levin, Associate Professor at the University of Oslo; Odd Einar Dorum, Norwegian Minister of Justice; and Shaya Ben Yehuda, Managing Director of Yad



The audience at the Righteous Among the Nations ceremony

Vashem's International Relations Division. Medals and certificates were presented by Amos Nadai. Hans Christen Mamen, a Righteous Among the Nations, was given the title of honorary citizen of the State of Israel.

GERMANY

Paul Spiegel, Chairman of the Central Council of Jews in Germany, was recently appointed to the leadership of the *Freundeskreis* of Yad Vashem in Germany. He succeeds Ignatz Bubis, who passed away in August 1999.

Shaya Ben Yehuda, Managing Director of the International Relations Division, visited Germany in late January to renew ties with Yad Vashem's friends.

Frank Kauwertz and the Hyman family will attend the ceremony for Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Day as guests of Yad Vashem. Kauwertz will participate in the "Unto Every Person There is a Name" ceremony at the Hall of Remembrance, where he will read out the names of Holocaust victims from his town.

Dezso Balogh, President, and Kristian Westergard, Executive Manager, Zemson Finance and Business Consulting, visited Yad Vashem for discussions with the Yad Vashem Directorate, and its Chairman, Avner Shalev, through the initiative of Reuven Malek, President, and Yaacov Rakah, Manager, Agricultural Division, IBC. During their visit they were most impressed with Yad Vashem's activities, and indicated their continued support.

FRANCE

Our close friend Maxi Mordechai Libratti announced his intention to support the "Janusz Korczak" Garden, in addition to his contribution to the "Children without a Childhood" Garden.

A commemorative concert for Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Day, at the Marc Chagall Biblical Museum, will be held by the Nice Branch of the French Society for Yad Vashem, under the leadership of Dr. Jacques Eloit, on 2 May. The concert titled "Tracing the Melody of the Vanished Jewish Community" will feature renowned violinist, Ivry Gitlis.

Eight french citizens will be honoured as Righteous Among the Nations at a prestigious ceremony at the Assemblée Nationale in Paris, to be arranged by the French Society for Yad Vashem.

HOLLAND

The Sajat family in Amsterdam hosted a warm reception in their home to support the project involving the conservation of documents received in the archives of Yad Vashem. Serge Klarsfeld, member of the Yad Vashem International Council, and honorary member of the Board of Yad Vashem's French Society, was guest speaker. Dr. Cynthia Haft of Yad Vashem Jerusalem, was also in attendance, together with many of Yad Vashem's old and new acquaintances in Holland.

ISRAEL

David and Stephanie Azrieli contributed a major donation for the Books & Resources Center to be located next to the Visitors Center (Mevoah) at the entrance to Yad Vashem.

The Yad Vashem Society in Israel is promoting anew the operation in which names of Holocaust victims will be gathered, *inter alia*, from tenants of old-age homes in Israel. As part of the operation, directors and representatives of the Mediterranean Towers old-age home system (which has facilities in Bat Yam and Kefar Sava) recently visited Yad Vashem.

Directors and representatives of the Pirhey Hagedel and Benot Batya youth movements visited Yad Vashem on 27 February. The visit was part of an inquiry into the possibility of involving haredi young people in these youth movements, in order to gather Holocaust victims names on Pages of Testimony and in other activities.



David Azrieli (left) and Avner Shalev

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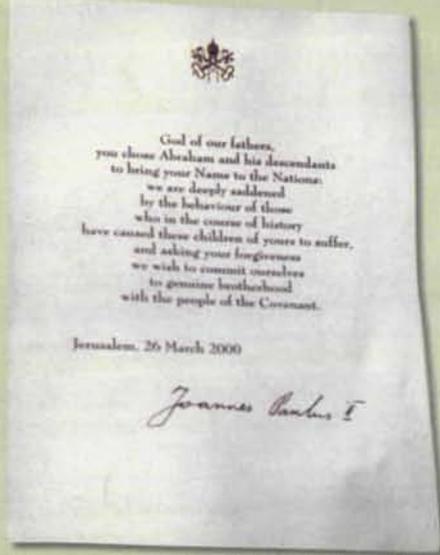
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The note placed by Pope John Paul II in the Western Wall to be kept for posterity at Yad Vashem



From left to right Szvach Weiss, Ehud Barak, Avner Shalev and Pope John Paul II



Pope John Paul II, flanked by Card. Roger Etchegaray (right) and Card. Edward Cassidy, paying his respects to the victims of the Holocaust after laying a wreath.

Pope

John Paul II Visits Yad Vashem

by Yvette Nahmia-Messinas

Pope John Paul II paid a historic visit to Yad Vashem on March 23, 2000. At a momentous memorial service in the Hall of Remembrance, Pope John Paul II rekindled the eternal flame and addressed a public of dignitaries, Holocaust survivors and clergy.

"I have come to Yad Vashem to pay homage to the millions of Jewish people who, stripped of everything, especially of their human dignity, were murdered in the Holocaust. More than half a century has passed, but the memories remain," he told the public and the world at large. "Men, women and children cry out to us from the depths of the horror that they knew. How can we fail to heed their cry? No one can forget or ignore what happened. No one can diminish its scale. We wish to remember. But we wish to remember for a purpose, namely to ensure that never again will evil prevail, as it did for the millions of innocent victims of Nazism," he told a moved public.

Prime Minister, Ehud Barak accompanied the Pope on his visit. In his speech, he said: "You have done more than anyone else to bring about the historic change in the attitude of the church towards the Jewish people, initiated by the good Pope John the XXIII, and to dress the gaping wounds that festered over many bitter centuries. And I think I can say, Your Holiness, that your coming here today, to the Tent of Remembrance at Yad Vashem, is a climax of this historic journey of healing."

The Pope greeted Holocaust survivors, Professor Shlomo Breznitz, Professor Israel Gutman, Yvonne Razon, Daniela Steinmatz, Edith Tzorer, and Eli Zborowski, and had the opportunity to meet with former residents of his hometown, Wadowice.

Avner Shalev, Chairman of the Yad Vashem Directorate, presented the Pope with illustrations of Biblical themes painted by artist Carol Deutsch, who was killed in Auschwitz.