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Confronting History

An International
Conference on the
Historical
Commissions of
Inquiry (pp. 10-11)

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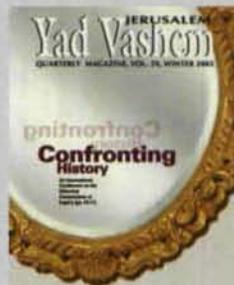


Editors' Remarks

While still in the midst of a national security crisis and faced with the possibilities of imminent war, we open 2003 with trepidation, and yet the utmost hope for reform and resolution.

Following nearly a decade of national inquiries into the question of Jewish moral and material restitution, we highlight the efforts of European historical commissions that—in some instances—have effected a genuine confrontation with Holocaust history in their nations. Representatives of these commissions recently attended Yad Vashem's international conference "Confronting History" in order to share their overall findings for the first time in Israel (see pp.10-11).

As our new Entrance Complex nears completion (see pp. 12-14), we underscore the importance of visitor servicing—optimistic that visitors will return by the millions to the city of Jerusalem and our memorial site.



Cover: "Confronting History"—an international conference (see pp. 10-11).

by Shachar Leven

“People ask me why Schindler saved us—he wasn't a saint, or holy. What can I reply?” asks Schindler survivor, Genia Wohlfeiler Manor. “He was a person—flesh and blood—with a good heart and divine compassion. That he was willing to save 1,200 Jews attests to the type of man he was.”

Genia Manor was born in Krakow, Poland to a traditional family. Her father, Kalman Leib ben Avraham Wohlfeiler, was the cantor and choir director at the High Synagogue and a sign painter, specializing in German Gothic lettering. Her mother, Chaja Wohlfeiler, ran the family's fruit and candy store along with Genia's aunt. Her older brother, Romek, was a famous soccer player for Maccabi Krakow.

With the onset of the war, Genia and her family were evicted from their apartment and store and fled to a small village nearby. Because the Germans specifically targeted Jewish male youth, 21-year-old Romek fled to Lvov in Russian occupied territories. In winter 1941, the rest of the family moved to the Krakow ghetto, after Genia's mother secured work

for her husband at a sign painting workshop.

In August 1942, Romek returned to Krakow following Germany's occupation of Lvov. Simultaneously, the Germans began reducing the size of the ghetto, sending those deemed “unproductive” to “labor camps.” Realizing the importance of finding work for Romek, a good friend from Maccabi Krakow found him a job in Oskar Schindler's enamelware factory. “It's impossible to conceive,” says Genia, “that Romek's return saved nearly the whole family.”

On 27 October 1942, there was another mass *aktion* in the ghetto. “It was a horrific massacre; blood ran like water, but somehow we managed to survive,” recounts Genia.

“Until that point Schindler had been quite a hedonist. He was a young man, only 35 years old, who had come to Poland from Germany to make money—a lifetime opportunity. Initially it was wealthy Jews, factory owners, who paid Schindler for his protection.

“Following the latest *aktion*, Schindler began to realize where the German operation was leading. He decided to woo the Germans by taking them out and throwing lavish parties. Whatever they lacked, he supplied. He built a sub-camp of Plaszow next to his factory in Zablocie and acquired his Jewish workers by paying off the SS.”

On 13 March 1943, the Krakow ghetto was totally liquidated and Genia and her parents were transferred to Plaszow. (Romek was already living in Schindler's camp at Zablocie.) There they suffered the cruelty of infamous Plaszow commandant, Amon Goeth.

To save his family from Plaszow, Romek asked Schindler to find them work in his factory. Schindler agreed and in May 1943, Kalman and Genia began working in his factory—Genia as a metal worker and her father as a sign painter. Genia's mother had no profession so remained in Plaszow.

“Schindler loved to see my father form the intricate Gothic letters and would stand transfixed watching him,” Genia reminisces. “My father spoke German well, so the two often conversed and Schindler always took a genuine interest in our lives and problems. During one conversation, my father asked him to help save my mother from Plaszow.”

Schindler agreed and a few months later Chaja arrived at his factory along with another 100 women aged 40-plus. The family was thrilled to be reunited, but soon after, Kalman became increasingly ill. As his father's condition worsened, Romek wrote to a Polish acquaintance requesting financial aid or medication. Unfortunately, the Germans captured the messenger, discovered the

Schindler's Parting

A Survivor's



Genia and Nachum Manor

letter, and immediately notified Goeth.

Goeth sent armed Ukrainian guards to bring Romek to Plaszow to be executed. “By some miracle of miracles,” recalls Genia “just as the Ukrainians were leaving the gates with Romek, Schindler pulled up in his limousine. ‘What brings you here? It's so good to see you!’ he said to them. ‘If you're already here, please have a drink with me. Why don't you go to my office and I'll call Goeth to ask him why he's taking away my best worker. Without him I won't be able to continue production.’”

The guards agreed and Schindler convinced Goeth to let him keep this “stupid worker” (“In all probability Schindler probably paid Goeth a large sum for Romek,” Genia notes.) Once the guards left, Schindler berated Romek for risking his life instead of seeking his assistance. Then, soon after, Schindler returned with food for Romek and his family.

In August 1944, a fire broke out at the camp

and two of Schindler's workers fled. Because of the escape, Goeth demanded that Schindler transfer all his workers to Plaszow a month later. On arriving at the camp, the guards noticed Kalman's poor medical condition and immediately took him to the camp "hospital." "We didn't know then, but in that 'hospital' they murdered the sick," says Genia. "On *Yom Kippur* 1944, they killed my father. They gave him a fatal injection of phenol (a byproduct of kerosene) into the heart."

The previous day, *Erev Yom Kippur*, Genia had snuck into the hospital to see her father. "My father knew he wouldn't leave that place alive. He told me to take care of my mother and myself and then he blessed me."

Genia and her mother remained in Plaszow for another few weeks. Earlier that summer, the Germans had begun retreating as the Russians advanced. As a result, all the German factories were instructed to retreat from the front. Schindler acquired an empty factory in Brünnlitz, Czechoslovakia, where he moved all his machinery. He promised his workers that they would join him. Some time in September or October 1944, "Schindler's List" was formed—a

was among those removed. I'm not sure who noticed—Romek or Schindler—but Schindler insisted that her name be returned saying, "The widow of my sign painter, Mr. Wohlfeiler, will be coming with me to Brünnlitz." Schindler saved my mother once again."

The 800 men left Plaszow first, arriving in Brünnlitz only after enduring several days of torture at Gross Rosen camp. The 300 women followed some time later, "completely elated," according to Genia. However, their elation soon turned to utter despair, upon realizing they had arrived in Auschwitz.

They remained in Auschwitz for nearly a month, during which time Schindler negotiated their release. "Part of our group—the older women—was in the 'death barracks' awaiting the gas chambers," says Genia.

"One morning we heard an

began nourishing the 100 prisoners back to life. Close to 20 Jews were already dead upon arrival, so Schindler purchased a plot of land at the local Christian cemetery and buried them there in a common grave according to Jewish tradition.

"There was no apparent reason for Schindler to do this. If people say he did it for money, he lost huge sums of money because of us," says Genia. "In Brünnlitz he paid the Germans for every last one of us. It cost him a fortune to keep us all those months: six marks per person per day. He even paid for the Jews from Golezow who never worked a single day and were with us for several months."

Schindler remained with his workers until the very end. On 9 May 1945 he set up loud speakers within the factory, so they could hear Germany's public



Duffel bag donated to Yad Vashem by Genia Manor

Act of Kindness

Personal Story and Gift to Yad Vashem



Genia Manor's parents, Chaja and Kalman Leib, at the Wohlfeiler store pre-war

281. Wohlfeiler Chaja

04.06.97 Ju. Po. 76484

282. Wohlfeiler Eugenia

18.05.26 Ju. Po. 76485

283. Wohlfeiler Halina

03.01.26 Ju. Po. 76486

announcement "All the women on Schindler's list assemble. You are leaving by train." One woman whose mother was in the 'death barracks' managed to sneak over and warn them to escape immediately. I don't know how they did it. They managed to squeeze through a slot in the barracks' window and bypass an electrified barbed wire fence to join us."

As they were about to leave the camp's gate, Genia's mother (who had been hidden by a Slovakian *Kapo* to escape the final *selektion*) was still nowhere in sight. "I was in the last row, hesitating... and then I saw her head peeking out the shower window. I started yelling 'mother, quick, jump out of the window. We're leaving!' She jumped and joined the final rows. I don't know how they didn't kill her—how they didn't see her!"

Reunited with her mother, Genia boarded the train and soon arrived at Schindler's factory at Brünnlitz where they met up with Romek and the men and remained until the end of the war.

In winter 1945, Schindler rescued a transport of prisoners from Golezow camp that was being carted from place to place by cattle car. Whether by bribe or other means, Schindler obtained permission from the Germans to release these half-frozen skeletons and bring them to his factory under the guise of workers. Together with his wife, Emilie, he slowly

surrender. He then told them to stand for a minute of silence in memory of all the victims who hadn't survived. "He gave us a speech about how we should begin new lives without reprisals or vengeance—our focus should be on rebuilding our lives. It was an extraordinary thing for a German to say," Genia recalls.

Before his workers departed, he furnished them with supplies, knowing they would have nothing. He gave them each two duffel bags—one small, one large—filled with things to help them start their lives anew. He filled the large one with material for suits, socks, blankets, shoes, vodka, etc. and the little one with scissors, thread, cigarettes, etc.

"Of all else, I kept the small duffel bag because to me this was Schindler—this was his gift of life. It represented a new start," says Genia. "I donated it to Yad Vashem because there it will speak to people—students, educators, all who are interested in learning about the *Shoah*. We are the last remaining witnesses and we must tell our story for future generations in any way we can."

Artist Genia Manor lives in Be'er Sheva with her husband, Nachum (formerly Henek Mondreer), who she met at Schindler's factory. Together, they speak to numerous groups at Yad Vashem and have participated in two of Yad Vashem's Holocaust survivor testimony courses.

registry of names, guaranteeing his workers and several hundred Plaszow interns safe passage to Czechoslovakia.

As news of the list spread, many underhanded dealings began: "There was a Jewish policeman who removed the names of Schindler's workers from the list, adding the names of wealthy Jews in return for large sums of money. My mother's name

by Ilan Bronstein

In January 2002, *Wall Street Journal* reporter, Daniel Pearl, was abducted in the Pakistani city of Karachi by a radical Islamic group and later murdered. The 38-year-old Jewish American reporter had been investigating extremist Muslim groups at the time of his abduction. Members of the group who kidnapped Pearl sent a videotape to US authorities documenting his murder. Before they decapitated him with a knife, they made him say: "I am an American Jew. My father was a Jew. My mother was a Jew. I am a Jew"

This incident is only one of many antisemitic, anti-Western acts sweeping the Muslim world today: "The antisemitism we are currently witnessing in Islamic countries is a completely different phenomenon and in some ways more perilous than anything we have seen in the past," states Professor Yehuda Bauer, an academic advisor at Yad Vashem's International Institute for Holocaust Research. "It is true that like two other movements of the past century—German National Socialism and Soviet Marxism-Leninism (Communism)—radical Islam seeks to control the world; abolish the 'state' as an independent, autonomous body with legal norms; and create a Utopian society. It is also based on historical foundations, contains traditional racist and antisemitic elements, and—like Nazism and Communism—targets Jews as the enemy.

"What sets radical Islam apart from the other movements though, is that there is no core to combat. It isn't a centralized movement; it has no leader, no charismatic figure. While the ideology is unified, the organization is very dispersed and cannot be pinned down. In this manner it presents an even greater potential threat."

The new radical Islam (not synonymous with Islam as such) emerged, according to Bauer, in the wake of the Muslim intelligentsia's disillusionment as they witnessed the socio-economic disparity between Muslim countries, the West, and the industrialized nations of the Far East. "The gap," he says, "results because modern development relies on the middle class to lead industrialization and modernization processes. For this middle class to exist, people need the freedom to act. In Muslim countries, this middle class could not develop because Islamic rigid cultural and religious traditions were not modified to permit such freedom (though there were Muslim reformers who tried to do just that—but failed). Thus the evolution of a modern society with democratic institutions and economic progress was prevented.

Targeting Jews as the Enemy



Caricature appearing in *al-Ufad* Egyptian daily on 29 April 2002 (MEMRI, Arab Antisemitism Documentation Project). Left: "Sharon!!" Right: "shalom.."

Radical Islam Revolutionizes Age-Old Antisemitism

"To justify this lag behind the West, the radical Muslim intelligentsia forged a religious response: They claim their predicament results from their people's non-adherence to the Koran. If the Muslim people start to act in accordance with the Koran, God will help them conquer the West."

While the Israeli-Palestinian conflict fans the flames of Jew-hatred among Arabs, it was never the main instigator. Islamic antisemitism is directed against Israel as a Jewish state and therefore even if a solution to the political conflict was reached, radical Islam would continue to promulgate anti-Jewish propaganda: "We have to look at what Hamas and the Islamic Jihad are advocating," says Bauer. "They don't

advocate for a national Palestinian Arab state, but an Islamic one—following the annihilation of Israel. According to radical Islam, world domination is the goal and Jews can only live as second- or third-class citizens under Muslim rule."

With world supremacy as its objective, how can radical Islam be opposed? Following September 11th, the Americans have tried to combat radical Islam with weapons and force. Yet according to Bauer, the battle must be waged through intellectual, political, and economic means, as well as public relations campaigns: "Why is the Internet used to serve the radical Islamic cause, but not as a means of counter-propaganda by the West? Furthermore, the Western nations need to openly and actively help Muslim nations build up their infrastructures, implement large-scale development projects, and attain economic stability in order to show the Muslim people that there are positive ways by which to alter the state of their despair.

"As for Israel and the Jews, they will only succeed in combating radical Islamic antisemitism with the help of a coalition that includes Christians and mainstream Muslims; Jews cannot fight antisemitism alone."

Yad Vashem's role in this campaign is to educate about the roots of antisemitism and combat it in its modern-day form. This is achieved through interviews with the international media, on-site seminars and tours, public forums worldwide, and the dissemination of information on the Yad Vashem website and in its publications. As well, Yad Vashem is part of the International Task Force for Holocaust Education—established to teach about the events of the Holocaust and their ramifications worldwide. Ultimately, education and publicity may be the most effective "antigens against antisemitism," according to Bauer.

“ Two days ago, two boys escaped so we were all lined up and every fifth person was shot. I was not the fifth person, but I know that I will not make it out of here alive. I leave you dear mother, dear father, and dear siblings and I cry...”

This extract from a letter, written by a 14-year-old Holocaust victim, appears on the back cover of Yad Vashem's latest Hebrew publication *“These are My Last Words...”*—*Last Letters From the Holocaust*, edited by Professor

just rational tools. Take the letter of the boy [mentioned previously]; you come upon a letter like this and you know it has to be included.”

Surprisingly, many of the letters were sent by regular mail. In 1936-1937, letters sent from cities including Berlin and Vienna reached their destinations safely. Later, letters sent from within ghettos such as Westerbork and Lodz, although censored, also arrived by regular post.

As the Holocaust progressed, the tone of the letters changed: The later the letters were

draw their own moral conclusions.”

The publication of the book was made possible through the generous donation of the Hamburger Stiftung zur Förderung von Wissenschaft und Kultur. Plans are underway for an English version as well as

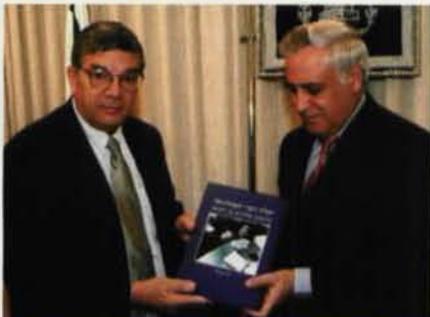


Professor Walter Zvi Bacharach

“These Are My Last Words...”

Voices from the Inferno

Walter Zvi Bacharach. This is the first time a book has been dedicated solely to personal correspondences of Holocaust victims—“the voices from the inferno” (as one father began his letter).



Chairman of the Yad Vashem Directorate, Avner Shalev (left), presents a copy of the book to Israel's President Moshe Katsav

A Holocaust survivor, Professor Bacharach tried to exclude his own personal story from the content of the book. “During the book's preparations, I felt very involved personally—especially when I read letters that reminded me of an exact situation I had experienced. It forced me to recall things I didn't want to remember. But later I was thankful to Yad Vashem for giving me the opportunity to edit this book,” says Bacharach.

In compiling the book, he viewed roughly 800-1,000 letters from the Yad Vashem Archives as well as other archives, selecting approximately 180 for publication. Of the total number of letters, 600-700 were from Poland, 80 from France, and the rest from other countries. He categorized the letters and likewise structured the publication according to various recurring themes: testimonies; feelings of desperation and hope; last wills and testaments; concern for children; revenge, indecision, making peace, belief, resistance, and suicide; the underground; and the use of code-language to bypass strict censors.

Regarding his choice of letters, Bacharach says, “I worked with feeling and intuition, not

dated, the more desperate their writers became. “If you read a letter from the camps in the earlier years,” explains Bacharach, “you don't get the same horrifying impression of despair that you do when you read later letters from Birkenau, for example.”

What makes the letters unique was their intent, which—with few exceptions—was personal. “They were written from me to you, as very personal texts. Therefore each writer's motive differed from that of the next. Some wrote of their concern for their children's welfare, others of their final wishes. The letters use straightforward, down-to-earth language of suffering people. This makes a deep impression on readers.

“There was one letter where I really had to stop,” Bacharach recalls. “It was composed by a Jewish man who had been sentenced to death. He wrote to his two children. There is one sentence that says, ‘So let me give you some advice for your lives: if you ever sweat, don't drink cold water.’ I put down my pencil and I almost cried. One would have expected him to give deep, philosophical advice. You see in a letter like this that a man, hours before his death, said something that could have been said by any father. He was not trying to be a hero, just to be a human being. It was very touching.”

Despite being a survivor, Bacharach does not feel entitled to dictate lessons he drew from the letters to readers. Hence, aside from a foreword and an introduction of the book's main themes, the book's content is confined to the letters themselves. “I think the importance of these letters is that the Holocaust is presented through the victims' eyes at the time they experienced it. They are authentic, untouched by historians, psychiatrists, or philosophers. I don't think that as teachers or researchers, we should lead people to draw conclusions by adding our own explanations. Modern-day readers can



Mail collection in the Lodz ghetto

a second Hebrew volume that will focus on different themes, including: physical suffering, underground activities, and activists who did not survive.

For Bacharach, editing this book was especially meaningful: “I can't think of a better way to commemorate the family and friends who I lost in the Holocaust than with this kind of human evidence. As my parents were killed in Auschwitz, I felt I was doing something really holy for them and that I was able to indirectly be a part of their commemoration. That was very important for me. I am a retired professor and this is an impressive and emotional finish to my academic career.”

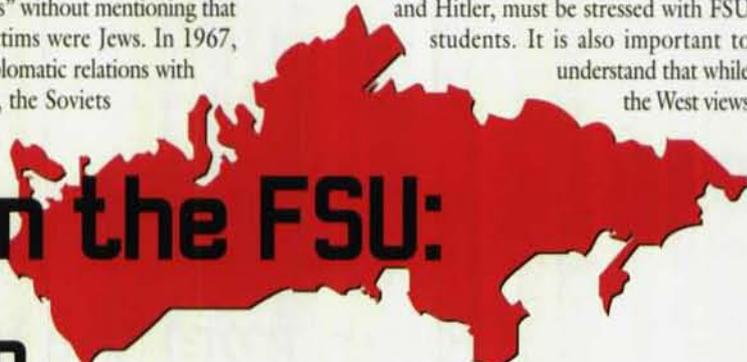
by Dr. Irit Abramsky

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Holocaust—a once-taboo and forbidden subject—has become the height of public interest and inquiry in Former Soviet Union (FSU) states. Following three generations of repression and silence, the opening of the Soviet archives has led to the discovery of previously unknown facts regarding WWII in general, and the Holocaust in particular.

especially the number of Jewish victims. Thus, the approximately 2.7 million Soviet Jews murdered in the Holocaust became a missing chapter in the war's history. During the 1940s and 1950s, the Soviet regime used sites where Jews had been killed to foster a sense of brotherhood among its citizens, without revealing the victims' identities. Memorials were built in the valleys of death bearing the words, "Here lie peaceful Soviet citizens" without mentioning that 99 percent of the victims were Jews. In 1967, the USSR severed diplomatic relations with Israel, and soon after, the Soviets began actively denying

encourage including Holocaust studies on formal school syllabuses. In the Ukraine's universities and colleges, the Holocaust has become a core component of the humanities curriculum.

Teaching the Holocaust in FSU states requires a different educational approach—content-wise—than does teaching the subject in Israel or other Western countries. Subjects that are not relevant in Western countries, such as the comparison between Stalin and Hitler, must be stressed with FSU students. It is also important to understand that while the West views



The Holocaust in the FSU: from Former Taboo to Open Confrontation

In an attempt to discover the truth about their countries' wartime actions and involvement, Jews and non-Jews alike have taken an obsession-like interest in the subject, beginning the quest for a truthful confrontation of the past. Today, the number of publications, curricula, and research papers on the Holocaust in FSU states is beginning to rival that in the West. Subsequently, leaders of FSU nations including Lithuania, the Ukraine, Latvia, and Estonia—whose citizens actively aided the Nazis to annihilate the Jews during the Holocaust—have gradually begun recognizing their past guilt, in a progressive show of political responsibility.

This newfound interest in the Holocaust originates chiefly because the tragic events of the Holocaust took place on FSU soil, with FSU citizens' Jewish and non-Jewish grandparents playing active roles as victims, perpetrators, collaborators, silent witnesses, and/or rescuers. The actual implementation of the Nazis' "Final Solution" characterized by mass-murder began with "Operation Barbarossa"—the German invasion of the Soviet Union on 22 June 1941. With the German invasion, mobile action-units or *Einsatzgruppen* that had been specially-trained to kill Jews, began moving from site to site leaving behind valleys of death and mass graves throughout former Soviet areas. Only in the last decade have the majority of them begun to be marked and chronicled.

FSU citizens also seek to counteract former Soviet attempts to suppress knowledge of the Holocaust and erase its memory from public consciousness. Attempting to highlight the victories of the Red Army, Stalin tried to conceal the huge losses suffered by the USSR in WWII,

the Holocaust. Propaganda linked Israel and the Zionist leadership to the Nazis and Nazism, and Soviet literature encouraged Holocaust deniers in the Arab world.

It is thus not surprising that the hundreds-of-thousands of Jews living in the FSU today view the Holocaust not only as a symbol of their quest towards the ultimate historical truth, but also as a tragedy they can finally mourn. As well, they see the *Shoah* as a central component of their Jewish history and Jewish identity, which the Soviet leadership strove to extinguish. Within this context, the Holocaust provides an important link between past and present: It is a terrible discovery about the unity of Jewish destiny, and a warning that without vigilance, similar events could recur.

Coming to terms with the past is also a significant charge for FSU non-Jewish intelligentsia and FSU governments, especially in light of the ugly wave of antisemitism presently sweeping through Western Europe. While such phenomena can be found in FSU states today (especially in the Ukraine and in Russia)—evidenced in antisemitic platforms of parliamentary parties, anti-Jewish graffiti, and violence by fringe groups—the official policy of FSU governments seeks to calm tensions and promote tolerance.

The governments of the new countries also see their interest in the Holocaust as a ticket into the prestigious club of Western democracies, especially the European Union. Many governments

Auschwitz as the overriding symbol of the Holocaust, in the FSU the most powerful symbol is Babi Yar (a valley near Kiev where 34,000 Jews were murdered in September 1941).



Yad Vashem seminar for educators in Belarus

Educators must adapt their lessons to compensate for the FSU citizens' tired attitude towards the subject of WWII as a whole, and their subsequent basic lack of knowledge concerning the uniqueness of the Holocaust. It is important to differentiate between areas that were under Nazi control (i.e. the valleys of death) and those where many Jews were sent during the war that were never under occupation. A distinction must also be made between the varying attitudes regarding the Holocaust held by education ministries of each of the FSU states (the Ukraine,

Russia, Belarus, and the Baltic states).

Recognizing the importance of introducing Holocaust education to FSU states, Yad Vashem was among the first Israeli institutions to establish a seminar for Jewish activists in the Soviet Union in 1989 (prior to the collapse of the Soviet regime). Since the creation of Yad Vashem's International School for Holocaust Studies in 1994, its activities in the FSU have expanded to include a Russian Division. For the past five years the International School has been conducting annual seminars for Jewish and non-Jewish educators from the FSU and strong ties have been forged with centers for Holocaust research in major cities throughout the FSU, particularly Moscow, Kiev, Dnepropetrovsk, and Kharkov.

Recently, with assistance from the Claims Conference, Yad Vashem, the Jewish Agency, and the Ghetto Fighters' House have begun a wide framework of activities aimed at increasing Holocaust awareness, strengthening Jewish identity, and improving ties to Israel within FSU Jewish communities. Entitled "The Holocaust and Jewish Identity," activities include teacher-training seminars for Jewish educators and educational coordinators, educational programs for FSU youth, and the distribution of educational materials in Russian.

education

The call for educational initiatives and the general newfound interest in the FSU is a result of the recognition that "the Holocaust was not only a national catastrophe but a tragedy common to all mankind—a tragedy that took more than six million Jewish lives



Russian educators' group at Yad Vashem's Valley of the Communities

in the world, three million of whom lived in the territory of the former Soviet Union," according to Valentina I. Matvienko, Vice-Chairman of the Government of the Russian Federation. "The farther we go from the Holocaust, the ever clearer it becomes that the Holocaust... is a most dangerous syndrome of dehumanization of all the population of the planet Earth... If mankind is to survive, [there must be a] state strategy of tolerance and understanding among various countries and ethnic, religious and political forces... And the process of understanding the Holocaust tragedy [must] occupy a prominent place in this tolerance program."

The author is the Director of the Russian Division, International School for Holocaust Studies

Recent Highlights at the International School for Holocaust Studies

- 3, 17, 20 October:** Assembly for young scholars' groups within the framework of Israel's Ministry of Education's Moreshet (Heritage) Project.
- 9 October:** Workshop for members of the Israel Defense Force's (IDF) delegation to Poland.
- 9-23 October:** Course for educators from Poland.
- 22 October-3 November:** Course for educators from Hungary.
- 27 October:** Workshop on the subject of leadership for IDF officers.
- October:** Opening of four teacher-training seminars at Beit Wolyn—Yad Vashem's Center for Holocaust Education in Givatayim: "Raisons and Almonds," "Yiddish Language and Culture" (beginner and advanced levels), and "The Face of the Uprising." Three hundred people attended the opening of "The Face of the Uprising" which was highlighted with a keynote address from Israeli author, Chaim Guri.
- October-November:** Launching of 34 teacher-training seminars for Israeli educators, including "Testimony and Creation: The Holocaust and Cinema" at the Jerusalem Cinematheque and "Accord of Pain and Hope"—a course conducted over the Internet.
- 4-17 November:** First-ever course for educators from Slovakia.
- 8 November:** Seminar on the "Construction of Memory" for students of Ben Gurion University's overseas program.
- 8-20 November:** Course for educators from Austria.
- 18 November:** Evening with author Uri Orlev—opening event in Beit Wolyn's "Meet the Author" series.
- 24-28 November:** Seminar for Holocaust survivors.
- 1-5 December:** Teacher-training seminars for over 500 Israeli educators.
- 4-5 December:** Preparatory course for instructors of the mobile teaching unit (*nayedet*)—an educational aid used to guide student delegations to Poland.
- 14, 15 December:** Conference for religious, Zionist youth groups and workshop for seminary students on "Resistance, Heroism, and Ghetto Uprisings" in commemoration of *Tom HaKaddish HaClali* memorial day.
- 15 December:** Workshop for high-school yeshiva students on "What Constitutes a Hero? —Spiritual Resistance, Physical Resistance" in commemoration of *Tom HaKaddish HaClali*, with the participation of Rabbi Israel Meir Lau, Chief Rabbi of Israel.
- 17 December:** Opening of Holocaust survivor, Yaakov Yakimovicz's art exhibition "Staying Alive Without Being a Hero," at Beit Wolyn, followed by commemorative events for *Tom HaKaddish HaClali* in conjunction with Shem Olam Institute.
- 25-26 December:** Seminar for members of B'nai Brith, France on "Israel and the Nations of the World in the Shadow of the Holocaust."
- 29 December:** Symposium on "Youth Movements and Jewish Leadership" for British students of the Maccabi Worldwide Movement.
- Throughout the winter months, numerous youth groups from Project Birthright visited Yad Vashem.

by Yehudit Shendar and Susan Nashman Fraiman

The most significant and intimate way to become acquainted with an individual work and its creator is to see the piece on exhibit. The ensuing dialogue between viewer and image affords a window into the private world of the artist. This is true with regard to art in general, but even more so with Holocaust-era art. The lack of visual materials documenting the Holocaust from the victims' point of view makes works of art from this period even more significant in exposing viewers to the personal experiences of the artist and providing knowledge of what transpired.

Yad Vashem possesses thousands of such works in its art collection, providing those who study the Holocaust today with a portal into this unknown world. The existence of this treasure-house is well known to those interested in Holocaust art: researchers and curators the world over. The Yad Vashem Art Museum receives many requests to borrow works from its collection for articles, books, exhibitions, etc. Because of the artworks' unique nature and delicate physical state—which requires maximal preservation—requests are carefully weighed. Still, Yad Vashem recognizes the importance of exposing these Holocaust-era works to those unable to visit the Jerusalem campus, so that they too can participate in the important dialogue between creation and viewer—an encounter that even the technology of today's computer-age cannot fully replicate.

The list of exhibitions that appears below attests to the distinctiveness of this art collection and to the fact that Yad Vashem is the largest and most important resource in the field. The works shown serve as ambassadors of the collection, but more than anything they illustrate the spirit of their creators, which was not defeated by their oppressors, and which asserts in defiance that the individual was not eradicated. The exhibitions are a means by which Yad Vashem expresses its recognition of the artists, the works, and the wonder of creativity they exemplify.

In spring 2001, *Legacies of Silence—The Visual Arts and Holocaust Memory* opened at the Imperial War Museum in London. The exhibit, which ran until August 2001, focused on European artists whose art and careers “were irreversibly affected by their experiences in the concentration camps.” Of the 138 works exhibited, 15 came from the Yad Vashem collection, including pieces by artists Jacob Barosin, Jo Spier, Leo Haas, Karel Fleischman, Charlotte Buresova, Esther Lurie, and Jacob Lifchitz.

In fall 2001, the Houston Holocaust Museum held a unique exhibition entitled *Private Writings, Public Records—Diaries of Young People in the Holocaust*. The exhibit sought to “highlight the little known contributions of young writers to the literary and historical record of the Holocaust” and deepen “young visitors’ understanding of the Holocaust” through artworks and writings by adolescents of the time. Along with the diary of an anonymous boy from Lodz from the Yad Vashem Archives collection, Yad Vashem lent a drawing by Petr Ginz (*Theresienstadt*, 1942-1944, ink on paper, gift of Otto Ginz). Ginz—whose diaries were also displayed at the Houston exhibit—was an extremely talented youth who not only drew, but also wrote poetry and edited a children’s newspaper in the Theresienstadt ghetto.



Karel Fleischmann (1897-1944), *Living Quarter, Sudeten Barracks, Terezin*, 1943, pen and ink wash—exhibited in London



Halina Olomoucki (b.1921-), *Where is Mother?*, Warsaw ghetto, 1940-1943, pencil on paper—exhibited in Chicago



Wladyslaw Strzeminski (1893-1952), *With the Ruins of Demolished Eye Sockets/Paved with Stones Like Heads*, 1945 collage, ink on paper—exhibited in Brussels

Artworks



The Last Expression, Exhibition Hall, Mary and Leigh Block Museum of Art, Northwestern University, Chicago

*Arrival of Felix Nussbaum's *The Refugee* at the Mary and Leigh Block Museum of Art, Northwestern University, Chicago*

as Ambassadors

Yad Vashem Holocaust Art on Loan Worldwide

From October 2001 to January 2002, an exhibit of avant-garde Polish artists was held at the Musée d'Ixelles, Brussels in conjunction with the Muzeum Sztuki of Lodz. The exhibition was part of a Polish culture festival, entitled *A.R. / Artistes Révolutionnaires de Lodz*. One of the featured artists, Wladislaw Strzeminski (1893-1952), created a striking series in the aftermath of the war entitled "To My Friends, the Jews," part of the Yad Vashem Art Museum's collection. Although not Jewish, Strzeminski was deeply affected by the war as a Pole, and felt the need to create a Holocaust-related series, not just for its Jewish import, but also for universal value. The series of nine works—drawings with photo collage—forms a significant part of the artist's post-war composition, since Strzeminski died soon after its creation.

In winter 2002, Yad Vashem participated in an exhibition at the Deutsches Historisches Museum, Berlin. The idea for

the exhibit—*Holocaust, Der National Sozialistische Volkmord und die Motive Seiner Erinnerung*—was tied to the 60th anniversary of the infamous Wannsee Conference on 20 January 2002. Opening on 16 January 2002—four days before the Wannsee Conference anniversary—the exhibit ran until 9 April 2002. Exhibition curators assembled objects and works of art from many institutions worldwide in order to recount the story of the Holocaust and discuss the "motifs of Holocaust remembrance since 1945."

Currently, Yad Vashem is participating in *The Last Expression—Art and Auschwitz*. The exhibition was organized by the Mary and Leigh Block Museum of Art, Northwestern University, Chicago where it premiered from 27 September through 8 December 2002. From 7 January until 16 February 2003 it will be on display at the Davis Museum and Cultural Center at Wellesley College, Wellesley, Massachusetts. From 7 March to 15 June 2003

it will be exhibited at the prestigious Brooklyn Museum of Art in New York City. The show contains 78 works from Yad Vashem's collection—many of which have never been displayed abroad before—including Felix Nussbaum's (1904-1944) *The Refugee* (pictured above).

All the artists represented in *The Last Expression* passed through or perished in Auschwitz. The art displayed presents the artists and their works in a context of an art historical discourse, encouraging visitors to examine the various artistic styles, compositions, and media foremost, and the historical context in which the works were produced secondarily. The Block Museum has designed a website, which has had over 7 million visitors to date and which also displays Yad Vashem's works (<http://lastexpression.northwestern.edu>).

Yehudit Shendar is the Senior Art Curator, Museums Division and Susan Nashman Fraiman is the Collection Manager of the Yad Vashem Art Museum

More than five decades after the *Shoah*, collective memory is being refreshed and revised as the picture becomes complete: Not only was the Holocaust the greatest act of genocide in recorded history, it was also the most sinister case of mass theft. Among the collaborators were money launderers and thieves who participated and benefited from the confiscation of Jewish wealth, without whom the Holocaust would never have been possible.

More than 50 historical commissions have been established in the past decade, with the main aim of probing the question of Jewish plundered property. In addition to investigating the true scope of Jewish material restitution (with varying degrees of transparency), the commissions have laid the groundwork for the more significant process of moral restitution. The international campaign for Jewish material restitution as well as the negotiations leading towards the formation of many of the historical committees are due in great part to the efforts of Dr. Israel Singer, Chairman of the WJC and co-Chair of the WJRO.

According to Professor David Bankier, Head of Yad Vashem's International Institute for Holocaust Research, "The common belief was that historical commissions were founded solely to investigate and gain restitution for the plundered and exploited property and slave labor. Although these topics are all highly important, the historical commissions also deal with other topics of equal importance that pertain to 'moral settlement,' including questions like: to what extent were local populations and institutions complicit in the persecution, lack of protest, or silence in the face of the persecution of the Jews? And how were Jews who returned to their homes post-war received by the various governments and local populations?"

In essence, the historical commissions have adopted the role of truth commissions—re-evaluating history, re-examining national myths, and filling in the missing chapters in Holocaust history. With their formation, many nations were compelled to acknowledge for the first time that much of what they had accepted as true was false, and that their forbearers' wartime behavior was far from honorable. Consequently, entire chapters of history have been revised and re-written, revealing at times dark and shameful sides of the past.

In several countries progress is painfully slow and a genuine confrontation with history has yet to occur. In others, remarkable advances have taken place. Highlights of several historical commissions' progress, processes, achievements, and obstacles are outlined below.



Swedish PM Goran Persson speaks at the Stockholm International Conference on the Holocaust, January 2000 (Reuters)



Polish President Aleksander Kwasniewski lays a wreath at the Jedwabne memorial ceremony, July 2000 (Reuters)

National Soul Searching and

France

The Mattéoli Commission

In February 1997, French Prime Minister Alain Juppé appointed Jean Mattéoli as head of this French commission. Its main task was to ascertain the fate of missing valuables, reveal the identity of the beneficiaries, and determine whether any public authorities still possessed property seized during the war (either by the occupying authorities or the Vichy regime). Certain prominent members of France's Jewish community were appointed to the commission, along with 21 historians and archivists and two additional outside committees.

The commission investigated the status of approximately 2,000 works of art that remained in the custody of French museums more than 50 years after the war. It also examined French banks, attempting to uncover the fate of cash and valuables seized from Jews.

In April 2000, the commission published a 3,000-page report, estimating that at least \$1.3 billion in Jewish assets had been plundered—a far greater figure than previously assumed. The report stated that the Vichy regime, the German

authorities, and many individuals—in addition to the civil servants—participated in the looting of Jewish property.

The Foundation for the Memory of the Shoah

The foundation, chaired by Simone Veil, was established by French government decree following a recommendation by the Mattéoli Commission in December 2000. It seeks to support projects expressing solidarity with Holocaust victims, their families, and the Righteous Among the Nations. As well, the foundation strives to strengthen and transmit the memory of the Holocaust, fight against the resurgence of antisemitism, and study and transmit the legacy of Judaism and Jewish culture.

Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia

The International Research Commission of Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia

These commissions were created to research crimes against humanity perpetrated in the Baltic states by the Nazi and Soviet occupation authorities from 1939-1941. The fact that the commissions are investigating Nazi and Soviet crimes suggests a symmetry between the fate of

Jews under the Nazi regime and that of ethnic Estonians, Lithuanians, and Letts under the Soviet regime. The Lithuanian and Latvian governments have consistently maintained this approach.

Multi-National Corporations Corporate Commissions of Historians

Facing a mounting wave of Holocaust-related lawsuits, several large corporations including: Ford Motors, General Motors, Deutsche Bank, the German publishing house Bertelsmann, and the German smelting company Degussa, hired historians and specialists to examine their wartime records.

Norway

The Skarpsness Commission

The Ministry of Justice appointed a Commission of Inquiry on the Confiscation of Jewish property in Norway in WWII in March 1996. County Governor Olaf Skarpsness chaired the commission; two of its seven members were appointed by the Jewish community. The commission was mandated to establish the value and fate of Jewish property seized by the Quisling regime and the process by which it was stolen. As well, it was charged with determining the extent to which these assets were

restituted after the war.

Unable to reach a consensus, commission members submitted two separate reports in June 1997. The majority report was devoted to settling estate and accounts for assets, while the minority report placed the issue in an "historical perspective and in a moral framework."

The government accepted the minority report and in June 1998 submitted a White Paper to parliament granting \$60 million in financial compensation to Holocaust survivors in Norway, the Jewish community, and projects promoting racial tolerance and Jewish heritage. In 1999, the process of compensating Holocaust survivors was completed. Between 2000 and 2001, a center for tolerance and Holocaust education in Oslo and a fund to support Jewish heritage projects outside Norway were established.

Sweden

The Commission on Jewish Assets in Sweden at the Time of the Second World War

In March 1997, the government-appointed commission chaired by Rolf Wirteb—a former county governor—began investigating the status of Jewish deposits, Nazi gold, art, and other assets. Its members included representatives from the foreign and finance ministries, state archives, and the Jewish community.

The final report, submitted in March 1999, deplores the actions of the Swedish government and various private banks that dealt with Nazi Germany, condemning their lack of moral scruples in conducting such transactions. Decisions regarding compensation were left to the Swedish government's discretion.

The International Task Force on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research

By initiative of Swedish Prime Minister Goran Persson, an International Task Force was established in May 1998 aimed at providing a political umbrella for educational, research, and commemorative activities on the Holocaust. The task force is comprised of politicians and Holocaust authorities from nine countries: Sweden, the US, the UK, the Netherlands, Germany, Israel, Poland, France, and Italy.

Official Statement

In January 2000, Persson declared: "Historical research and various commissions have contributed pieces of the puzzle. Today we know that Swedish authorities failed in the performance of their duty during WWII... The moral and political responsibility for what Swedish society did—or failed to do—during the war will always be with us."

Switzerland

The Historic and Legal Research Commission

Appointed in December 1996 and chaired by Professor Jean Francois Bergier, this commission was established "to study the part played by Switzerland and its financial role in the context of WWII." Its mandate covers all types of looted property: bank deposits, objets d'art, and trade and currency transactions during the war and their later dispossession, as well as Switzerland's treatment of refugees fleeing racial persecution.

The commission has produced many interim reports. In a report on refugees issued in December 1999 the commission declared: "Swiss officials became involved in the crimes of the Nazi regime by abandoning the refugees to their persecutors... Antisemitism represents a particularly significant reason [for this]... Switzerland declined to help people in mortal danger."

The Swiss Fund

In July 2000, Judge Edward Korman of the US District Court approved the \$1.25 billion settlement offered by the Swiss banks to compensate Holocaust survivors.

Poland

The Institute of National Remembrance

Headed by Professor Leon Kieres, the Institute of National Remembrance (NPI) was charged with investigating the involvement of Poles in the 1941 massacre of Jews in Jedwabne. The investigation was prompted by the publication of Polish historian, Professor Jan Tomasz Gross's *Neighbors*. The book alleged that the 1,600 Jewish inhabitants of the town were murdered by their Polish neighbors (and not, as previously thought, by the Nazis).

Since beginning its investigation, the NPI has collaborated with Yad Vashem—making use of its Archives and over 277 Pages of Testimony from the Hall of Names—to trace further witnesses to the atrocity. In July 2002, the NPI released the results of its two-year probe, confirming Gross' prior findings and accusing 40 Poles of killing hundreds of Jews under German "inspiration."

In November 2002, the NPI published further evidence implicating Poles in at least 30 anti-Jewish pogroms in Nazi occupied territories in 1941.

Official Statement

On 10 July 2001, Polish President Aleksander Kwasniewski made a public apology at a ceremony marking 60 years since the massacre: "For this crime we should beg the souls of the dead and their families for forgiveness... I beg pardon in my own name, and in the name of those Poles whose conscience is shattered by that crime."

The author is Secretary General of the World Jewish Congress

Moral Restitution

"Confronting History": An International Conference

by Elliot Nidam-Orvieto

From 29 December 2002 to 1 January 2003, Yad Vashem's International Institute for Holocaust Research in conjunction with the World Jewish Congress (WJC), the World Jewish Restitution Organization (WJRO), and the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Germany, Inc. held a major international conference. The conference, entitled "Confronting History: The Historical Commissions of Inquiry," was attended by high-ranking historians, researchers, representatives of government-appointed historical commissions and representatives of countries where commissions were not established.

Throughout the four-day conference, delegates from Germany, Switzerland, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Hungary, Latvia, and Lithuania addressed diverse issues including: "The Bergier Commission," "The Federal Republic of Germany and the Restitution of Robbed Property," and "The Investigation on the Murders of the Jews in Jedwabne."

Discussions also ensued about the commissions in the United States and Israel, as well as the role of the press in the recovery of Jewish victims' stolen property.

The conference was made possible by the generous support of the Gertner Center for International Holocaust Conferences.

The author is an Academic Assistant at the International Institute for Holocaust Research

The New Entrance

by Ishai Amrami

In spring 2003, Yad Vashem will open its new Visitors' Center (*Mevoah*), an integral component of Yad Vashem's Entrance Complex and its multi-year "Yad Vashem 2001" masterplan development project. The Visitors' Center will provide resources, site guides, and utilities including a cafeteria under the management of Yotvata Inc. (see accompanying article).

The Entrance Complex (currently in advanced stages of construction) was designed to provide Yad Vashem's visitors (over two million annually before the current *Intifada*) with modern amenities and services, and was built in line with Yad Vashem's broadened approach to visitor relations and servicing.

The complex will include a Books and Resources Center managed by Steimatzy Group Ltd. which will supply a wealth of Holocaust literature and resource materials for purchase (see article on page 14). The complex will also include a Wall in Tribute to the Survivors donated by Ira Drukier, an Entrance Plaza, and parking facilities for up to 140 private vehicles and 40 buses.

The Entrance Complex was designed by internationally renowned architect Moshe Safdie, and was established with the assistance of Israel's Ministry of Tourism. The complex is under the responsibility of Vivian Uria, Director of the Visitor Relations Department, in coordination with the Commemoration and Public Relations Division.

The author is the Director General of Yad Vashem



Parking facilities for buses



View from the Entrance Plaza to the Wall in Tribute to the Survivors (currently under construction)



The Visitors' Center—southern side, lower level balcony

Complex

The Visitors' Center and Donors David and Fela Shapell



The Visitors' Center—upper level



David and Fela Shapell—Holocaust survivors and longtime supporters of the State of Israel and Yad Vashem—contributed towards the construction of Yad Vashem's new Visitors' Center (*Mevoah*).

On one of their many visits to the site, they told Avner Shalev, Chairman of the Directorate, of their desire to help update the institution. When Shalev showed them the proposal for the Visitors' Center, the Shapells immediately offered to help make the plan a reality. Since the scope

of the Yad Vashem campus is so vast, the Shapells felt the new center would be an important starting-point for visitor tours.

Along with a reception area where visitors can adjust to Yad Vashem's unique, somber atmosphere, the center will act as a resource station. At the entrance level, visitors will be supplied with resources and instructional guides about the many memorial sites on the campus and will be assisted in planning their itineraries.

The center was designed to prepare visitors for their highly unique tour of the Yad Vashem campus, while simultaneously preserving the balance between nature and structure so strictly adhered to by Yad Vashem. Its square-shaped, concrete outer façade comprises six oblong columns on each side. The split-level interior is enclosed by glass and aluminum-curtain walls and a glass-paned ceiling. From within the building, a view of the Children's Memorial and the new Holocaust History Museum (the latter of which is currently under construction and scheduled to open in 2004) can be seen to the north, northwest. The lower level's southern side features a cafeteria with a large balcony overlooking the surrounding Jerusalem forest.

According to the Shapells, "Yad Vashem is a powerful and emotional place for visitors worldwide, where future generations will be able to go to remember. The site is also important to us because it is located in our beloved city of Jerusalem."

David and Fela Shapell met in Germany after the war and were married there. Soon after, they left Germany for America, settling in Detroit, where their first child was born. They then moved to California where their second and third children were born. The Shapells also have 10 loving grandchildren.



The Visitors' Center—glass and aluminum-curtained walls enclosed by concrete outer facade

The Books and Resources Center and Donor David J. Azrieli

David J. Azrieli—Israeli architect and friend of Yad Vashem—has recently aided in the creation of Yad Vashem's Books and Resources Center.

Managed by Steimatzky Group Ltd., the center (which is 300-



The Books and Resources Center (architectural illustration by Shalom Kweller)



David Azrieli (center) and daughter, Dana (left) during their recent visit to Yad Vashem accompanied by Avner Shalev (right)

square-meters in size) will provide a wide-range of current reference books, multi-media, memoirs, and literature on the Holocaust for visitor purchase. As well, the center will act as a resource center and will fill book orders and visitor requests.

A sponsor of the publication of Yad Vashem's survivors' memoirs and author of a recently published Holocaust memoir himself, Azrieli immediately recognized the importance of such a center.

Azrieli was born in 1922 in Makow, Poland. Before the war, his parents begged him to flee Poland, which he reluctantly did only to return and then leave once again. He journeyed across many countries and several continents, escaping eastward across Poland to Romania, Uzbekistan, Iran, and Iraq. Ultimately, he reached Kibbutz Maoz Haim in Palestine where he initially resided.

In 1946, Azrieli learned that his mother and younger sister had perished in Birkenau and his father had been murdered several months later in Auschwitz. However, the knowledge that his brother, Ephraim, survived gave him the will to persevere.

Azrieli fought for Israel's independence in the Battle of Latrun and in the 1950s traveled through South Africa, Western Europe, and North America, settling in Montreal, Canada. There he met his wife, Stephanie, and they raised four children: Raffi, Sharon, Naomi, and Dana.

Over the years, he honed his skills in design and architecture, implementing original conceptions and constructing many shopping centers and office buildings. In Israel, he built the country's first shopping center, the Ayalon Mall, and thereafter a chain of shopping malls countrywide. Through countless acts of philanthropy and education, Azrieli has become a leading international figure.

The New Janusz Korczak Square and Donor Maxi Librati

Maxi Librati—a French Holocaust survivor, businessman, and benefactor of Yad Vashem—is dedicated to imparting the legacy of the Holocaust to the younger generation. Driven by this goal, he arrived at Yad Vashem on 11 November 2002 with his sister to participate in the inaugural ceremony of the Janusz Korczak Square—his latest commemorative act at Yad Vashem.

The Korczak Square recalls the bravery of Jewish/Polish educator Janusz Korczak. During the Holocaust, Korczak refused to abandon the children of his Warsaw orphanage, perishing alongside them in the Treblinka death camp. Located in the square is the statue "Janusz Korczak and the Children" by sculptor Boris Skitzer which was donated to Yad Vashem by Mila Brenner and Yakov Meridor. The square was designed by architect Shlomo Ahronson.

The inaugural ceremony was attended by a 350-person delegation from France headed by Chairman of the Conseil Représentatif des Institutions Juives de France (CRIF), Roger Cukierman. Chairman of the Keren Hayesod Mondial, Ambassador Avi Pazner; Associate Chairman of the French United Israel Appeal (AUJF), Pierre Haas; and member of the Unified Jewish Social Fund (FSJU), Bernard Korn-Broza were also part of the delegation. President of Israel, Moshe



Inaugural ceremony for the new Janusz Korczak Square



Maxi Librati at the new Janusz Korczak Square

Katsav, and Chairman of the Yad Vashem Directorate, Avner Shalev, delivered remarks.

Maxi Librati was detained in 1943 in Lyon, France and was sent to Drancy camp. He was then deported to Auschwitz and following the *selection* process, was sent to the Warsaw ghetto. In the ghetto he was forced to collect remaining valuables and assets of former Jewish residents. Following his time in the ghetto, he survived a death march from Warsaw, ending up in Dachau. From there he was sent to Kaufering IV, and Allach camp where he was liberated by the US army.

After the war, Librati returned to France and settled in Paris. He built a successful career in the clothing manufacturing industry, consistently maintaining his dedication to Holocaust remembrance. Over the years, he has been instrumental in organizing and participating in youth trips to Poland and has actively sponsored many commemorative events in Israel and in France. Along with Yad Vashem's new Janusz Korczak Square, Librati donated Yad Vashem's Garden for Children Without a Childhood in recognition of the great gift that he believes he was granted many years back—his life.

The Fourth Annual Workshop with Young Researchers from Abroad

From 27 September – 1 October, a group of Israeli researchers from Yad Vashem's International Institute for Holocaust Research attended the fourth annual workshop with young researchers from France and Germany at the Institut d'histoire du temps présent in Cachan, France.

Spanning three-and-a-half-days and divided into two sessions, the workshop was devoted to the exchange of new research initiatives on the Holocaust. The first session, "Towards a New Geography of Nazi Europe: Occupied France in a Comparative Perspective," focused on comparative research studies. Organized by Dr. Pieter Lagrou, Dr. Florent Brayard, and Christian Ingrao, the session included comparative analyses of the Netherlands and France by Professor Gerhard Hirschfeld (University of Stuttgart) and Slovakia and France by Dr. Tatjana Tönsmeier (Humboldt University, Berlin).

The second session, "Current Research on Nazi Europe and the Holocaust," included presentations by Israeli researchers: Professor David Bankier, Head of Yad Vashem's International Institute for Holocaust Research; David Silberklang, Editor of *Yad Vashem Studies*; Dr. Daniel Uziel, Director of Yad Vashem's Photo and Film Archives; Iael Nidam-Orvieto, lecturer at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem; Manuela Consonni, lecturer at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem; and Dr. Raya Cohen, lecturer at Tel Aviv University. Scholarly presentations were also given by researchers and staff members from the Institut d'histoire du temps présent: Professor Henry Rousso, Head of the Institute in Cachan; Dr. Florent Brayard; Christian Ingrao; Muriel Favre; Professor Annette Wieviorka; Liora Israël; and Professor Annette Becker.

Throughout the workshop, several new topics were broached, including: "The Jews in the Lublin District and the Deportations," "The Impact of Racial Legislation on the Daily Lives of Italian Jews," and "The Judiciary Resistance in France During WWII." All lectures were followed by intensive discussion and an exchange of views between the young scholars. The workshop was funded in part by the Fritz Thyssen Stiftung of Germany.

The fourth annual workshop with young researchers from abroad is one of the many academic programs of international cooperation between the International Institute for Holocaust Research and foreign institutions occurring since the Institute's inception in 1993.

The author is an Academic Assistant at the International Institute for Holocaust Research

The Buchman Memorial Prize 2002

Yad Vashem's annual Buchman Memorial Prize was awarded in December 2002 to Professor Arieh Kochavi for his book *Post-Holocaust Politics: Britain, The United States, and Jewish Refugees, 1945-1948* and Professor Hanna Yablonka for *The State of Israel vs. Adolf Eichmann*. Established by the Jacob Buchman Foundation in memory of Buchman's wife, Esther, and daughter, Hanaleh, who perished in the Holocaust, the prize is presented to authors, artists, and researchers for exemplary work in the field of the Holocaust.

Post-Holocaust Politics tells the story of the displaced persons, the international superpowers' post-war diplomacy, and the creation of the State of Israel. Kochavi examines how post-war British foreign policy was designed and implemented to prevent Jewish Holocaust survivors from emigrating from Europe to Palestine.

In *The State of Israel vs. Adolf Eichmann*, Yablonka examines how the Eichmann trial (1961) acted as a catalyst for Israeli society's confrontation with the Holocaust and the half a million survivors living in its midst. Through an analysis of archival materials discovered since the trial, the book recounts the preparations for the trial; selection of the "participants;" exposure of the Holocaust story during the trial; and the public debate invoked by Eichmann's death sentence.

Roman Polanski Uncovers His Father's Documents at Yad Vashem

by Orit Amedi-Guttel

During a short trip to Israel for the premiere of his film *The Pianist*, renowned director Roman Polanski visited Yad Vashem.

While touring the Hall of Remembrance, Polanski noticed the name "Mauthausen" carved in the floor. He mentioned to Avner Shalev, Chairman of the Yad Vashem Directorate, that his father had been an inmate of that camp for three-and-a-half years.

In light of that new information, Polanski's itinerary was immediately revised and he and his entourage were taken to the Yad Vashem Archives. There, Polanski was shown the original card-file that the Germans kept to record information about the camp's prisoners. After a rapid search and to the group's great surprise, the card for Polanski's father, Maurycy Liebling, was found. An emotional Polanski said that for the first time, he was encountering the past not through



Roman Polanski (right) examines father's information card from Mauthausen. Pictured on left: Esther Aran, Head of the Processing Methods Department, Archives Division



stories but personal information recorded from his father when he arrived at Mauthausen.

Polanski's tour of Yad Vashem took place on 1 October, accompanied by *The Pianist*'s leading actor Adrien Brody, actress Jessica Kate Meyer, and producer Robert Benmussa.

From left to right: Roman Polanski and Adrien Brody accompanied by Avner Shalev on their tour of Yad Vashem

Hungary Shares Archival Documents

Honoring a 2001 agreement between the State of Israel and the Republic of Hungary, Ambassador of Hungary in Israel, Dr. János Hóvári, presented Yad Vashem Chairman of the Directorate, Avner Shalev, with 150,000 pages of

documentation from Hungarian archives this past October.

Replicated on microfilm reels, the documents include information pertaining to the roundup of the Jews, the aryanization of Jewish property, and the deportation of the Jews. They are extremely important for research into the Holocaust period in Hungary.

The 150,000 archival documents received by Yad Vashem mark the first of more than one million pages of documentation slated to arrive from Hungary in the coming years.



From left to right: Dr. János Hóvári and Avner Shalev

Nobel Prize Winner at Yad Vashem

Hungarian author, Imre Kertész, a recent speaker at Yad Vashem's "The Legacy of Holocaust Survivors" conference, won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 2002. The 72-year-old survivor of Auschwitz and Buchenwald was cited by the Swedish Academy "for writing that upholds the fragile experience of the individual against the barbaric arbitrariness of history." At Yad Vashem, Kertész spoke about "The Freedom of Self-Identification" during a session entitled "The Literature of Survivors: A Seminal Contribution to Humanity."

The text from Kertész's lecture is available on the Yad Vashem website: www.yadvashem.org (Our Living Legacy).



Cooperation and "Input" Volunteers Computerize Pages of Testimony by Zvi Bernhardt

Since 1992, Yad Vashem's Hall of Names has undertaken the important task of inputting names of Holocaust victims from Pages of Testimony and various other lists to a unified, computerized database. To date, the database contains over 3.2 million names; still, countless names of victims listed in books and archival materials have yet to be computerized.

The desire to enter these remaining names led Yad Vashem and JewishGen (a Jewish genealogical organization based in the US with volunteers worldwide) to embark on a joint project two years ago. By gathering lists from the Yad Vashem Archives, JewishGen volunteers produced a computerized record of thousands of names which was then transferred to Yad Vashem and the JewishGen website.

In summer 2002, Yad Vashem's Hall of Names went one step further. In addition to its work with JewishGen, a network of over 50 Israeli volunteers was assembled to further advance this task.

Volunteers vary in age, background, and motivational reasons for participating in the project. One volunteer, upon receiving her first project, was overcome with emotion when she realized she had coincidentally received a list of victims from her parents' home town. Another volunteer spent much of his high school summer vacation computerizing names.

Currently, project volunteers are computerizing lists from *Yizkor* (memorial) books. These books—published by Holocaust survivor organizations representing former Jewish communities—include histories of the communities, the events that transpired there during the Holocaust, and in many instances, lists of the names of those who perished.

To date—just months after the project's inception—over 75,000 names have been computerized out of dozens of *Yizkor* book lists. All these names will be entered into Yad Vashem's main databank, so anyone searching the computerized system at Yad Vashem will be able to receive the important information he seeks.

To volunteer for the project in Israel, please contact Katya Licht, Hall of Names, at 02-644-3727.

The author is Head of Data Processing in the Hall of Names and the Deputy Director of Reference and Information Services

Meeting of the Yad Vashem Council

On 30 October 2002, Professor Szewach Weiss chaired a Yad Vashem Council meeting, which dozens of council-members attended. Weiss began by stating the objectives: to present an exchange of ideas on fundamental historical questions and issues regarding the continued support of the legacy of the Holocaust.

Chairman of the Yad Vashem Directorate, Avner Shalev, posed questions concerning the memory of the Holocaust in light of recent political events and the current wave of antisemitism. He asked, for example, how Europe—showing an increased interest in the Holocaust, Holocaust studies, and the application of its moral lessons—is simultaneously tolerating, and perhaps even participating in antisemitic attacks and expressions of extremist ideologies seeking to dehumanize and delegitimize the Jewish people and Israel.

Shalev then introduced the discussion topic for the four Yad Vashem historians: "The Holocaust Through the Generations." In their remarks, Professor David Bankier, Head of Yad Vashem's International Institute for Holocaust Research; Professor Dan Michman, Yad Vashem Chief Historian; Professor Israel Gutman and Professor Yehuda Bauer, academic advisors at Yad Vashem, referred to processes that have characterized Holocaust remembrance in countries worldwide, at both the research and public levels. They also addressed the different influences the Holocaust legacy has had on the individual and collective levels.

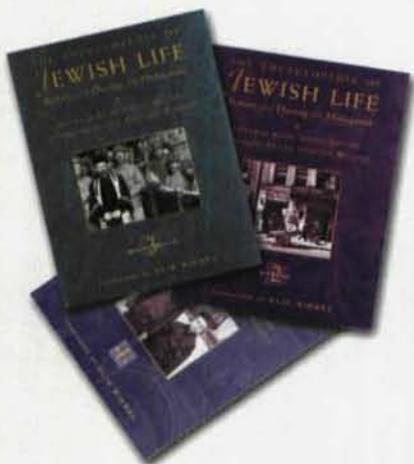
Weiss concluded the forum, noting that Holocaust-related issues have not been removed from the State of Israel or the Jewish people's agenda: "Throughout the world, Holocaust awareness has become a key component of spiritual and cultural life, forming part of major discussions of essential moral questions. The research is developing, our knowledge expanding, but here and there one can find the desire to assign the Holocaust a universal quality, while minimizing the Jewish aspect. Therefore, it is important not only to monitor these processes, but also to influence them. Throughout the Jewish world there is a growing trend of establishing memorial and research institutions that are chiefly concerned with the heritage of Holocaust remembrance. For all of these it is important to reinforce the spiritual, ethical, scientific, and educational centrality of Yad Vashem in Jerusalem."

The meeting concluded with an open discussion.

Three-Time Prize Winner: The Encyclopedia of Jewish Life

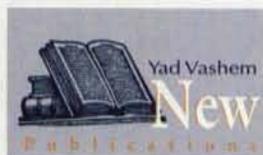
The *Encyclopedia of Jewish Life Before and During the Holocaust*, received a third prestigious award in recent months. Based on 30 volumes of Yad Vashem's *Pinkasei Hakehillot* Hebrew series, the 1,850-page, three-volume publication was named Jewish Book Council's "2001-2002 National Jewish Book Award" recipient in the reference category.

The encyclopedia traces the economic, social, religious, political, and cultural histories of more than 6,500 Jewish communities in Europe and North Africa, providing a wealth of information about these lost vibrant communities. The publication was edited by Dr. Shmuel Spector with Dr. Geoffrey Wigdor



(z"l) as consulting editor. It was co-published by Yad Vashem and New York University Press with the support of the Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture. It was prepared and edited and by the Jerusalem Publishing House under the auspices of Shlomo Gafni, Director General and Rachel Gilon, Managing Editor.

In 2002, *The Encyclopedia of Jewish Life* was awarded Library Journal's "Best Reference Award, 2001" and the Association of Jewish Libraries' "2001 Reference Award."



Frederick Raymes and Menachem Mayer, Are the Trees in Bloom Over There? Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2002, 235 pages.



Are the Trees in Bloom Over There? is one of the most touching Holocaust memoirs to emerge in recent years. Through an unusual narrative style, the book traces the conversations between two brothers—Frederick and Menachem—who reunite as adults, attempting to tell their common story and bridge the many years of separation they endured after the Holocaust.

Along with their childhood, the book recalls the brothers' wartime experiences: from their family's deportation to a French detention camp, to their parents' transfer to Auschwitz. The story of the brothers' rescue from the French detention camp by members of the OSE (a Jewish organization) and the Quakers is recounted as is their ensuing moves between orphanages in France and Switzerland and their ultimate separation. (Frederick immigrated to the United States and Menachem went to Israel following the war. For many years they had minimal contact.)

New Release: Map of the Ghettos

The International School for Holocaust Studies recently released a comprehensive map in English detailing the approximately 400 main ghettos established by Nazi decree between 1939-1944. Produced as a teachers' aid, the 100 x 70 cm map marks the ghettos by size and year of establishment. The map also depicts ghettos that were in existence for only a few months, established by the Nazis to concentrate and deport Jews to Auschwitz (such as in Hungary and areas under Nazi rule). The ghettos are listed alphabetically and their location on the map is clearly indicated for easy identification. The map is printed in color and is also available in Hebrew.



Claims Conference Chairman, Julius Berman (second from right), and his wife, Dorothy (center), visited Yad Vashem on 29 October 2002. They were hosted by Chairman of the Yad Vashem Directorate, Avner Shalev (left), and Assistant Managing Director of the International Relations Division, Miry Gross.

During their visit, they viewed the building site of the new Museum Complex and the nearly-completed Visitors' Center, and toured the "No Child's Play" exhibit, the Archives, and the artifacts storeroom. They were moved by Yad Vashem's artifacts collection, including a portrait of a Nazi officer painted on the backside of a Torah as well as Sabbath candlesticks constructed from within a labor camp. In the Art Museum they saw many pieces from Yad Vashem's Shoah collection and in the Archives they found Pages of Testimony memorializing members of the Berman family and a *Yizkor* book mentioning the name of Julius Berman's father.

Previous to this visit, Julius Berman arrived at Yad Vashem on 27 October along with Greg Schneider, Claims Conference Chief Operating Officer; Avraham Pressler, Claims Conference Representative in Israel; Zvi Inbar, Claims Conference Allocations Consultant in Israel; and Noach Flug, Chairman of the Centre of Organizations of Holocaust Survivors in Israel/ Member of the Claims Conference Executive Committee.

W Friends WORLDW

U.S.A.



More than 1,100 guests—including diplomats from over 25 countries—attended the 21st Anniversary Tribute Dinner of the American Society for Yad Vashem. The Dinner was held at the New York Hilton on 3 November and its outstanding success was due largely to the devotion of American Society Chairman, Eli Zborowski (right), and the American Society staff. Arie (left) and Eva Halpern (second from left) and Zygmunt (second from right) and Audrey Wilf (center) were this year's honorees. Chief Rabbi of Israel, Rabbi Israel Meir Lau, delivered an exceptional keynote address. Yehuda Lancry, Israel's Ambassador to the United Nations represented the State of Israel.



More than 300 people gathered in Houston, Texas in October 2002 for the inaugural dinner of the American Society's Texas Chapter. The dinner honored Holocaust survivors and their adult children active in remembrance. Jerusalem Mayor Ehud Olmert (fourth from left) gave an address and Mayor of Houston, Lee P. Brown greeted guests. Shara Fryer of WTRK Houston television emceed the event, along with Dr. David Bell, Chairman of the Holocaust Museum Houston, and Arthur Schechter, former US Ambassador to the Bahamas.

Honorees were (from left to right): Steven Finkelman, Helen Fein Cohn, Celina Fein, David Mitzner, Ira Mitzner, Bill Morgan, Ronnie Morgan, and Wolf Finkelman (not pictured). Guests included: Bernard Aptaker, Naomi Warren and son, Benjamin Warren, Gary and Esther Polland, Irving Pozmantier, Harvey and Mirielle Katz, Israel's Consul General Yael Ravia Zadok, Rep. Debbie Riddle, Dr. Richard and Peggy Booker and the families of the honorees.



Sixty guests attended the inaugural event of the American Society for Yad Vashem in Illinois on 9 October at the Mary and Leigh Block Museum of Art, Chicago. The event included an exhibition entitled *The Last Expression: Art and Auschwitz*, featuring 78 artworks on loan from Yad Vashem.

The event's co-Chairmen were Lester Crown; Mark Palmer, American Society Vice Chairman; and Rudolph Tessler. Speakers included Yehudit Shendar, Senior Art Curator, Yad Vashem Museums Division (second from left); Moshe Ram, Israel's Consul General; David Robertson, Director of the Block Museum of Art (left); and Shraga Mekel, American Society Development Director (right). Among the guests were sponsors of the event: Jennifer and Judd Malkin, Frieda (center) and Judd Weinberg (second from right), Myrna Palmer, Edith Tessler, Lois Zoller, Rene and Charles Lipschitz, Mayer Rubenstein, Tunia Kogan, and Michael Zolno.



Rachel (center) and Haron Dahan (left) hosted a reception in Baltimore for the Maryland Chapter of the American Society for Yad Vashem on 20 October. Speakers at the reception included Jean Schreiber, Chairperson of the American Society's Maryland Chapter (second from right); Ambassador Arye Mekel, incoming Deputy Head of Israel's Permanent Delegation to the United Nations (second from left); Jack Pechter, American Society Vice Chairman, East Coast; Dr. Emanuel Goldman; and Shirley Blumenfeld.

Among the guests were Marilyn Pechter, Ben Schreiber (right), Howard Friedman, Julius Mandel and daughter, Brenda, Estelle and Jacob Apelberg, Joshua Mauer, Howard Blumenfeld, Henry Reitberger, and Amy and Mordechai Gur.

IDE

GERMANY



At the initiative of President of the **Freundeskreis of Yad Vashem in Germany**, **Professor Rita Süßmuth**, Yad Vashem will participate in the events of Auschwitz liberation day in the Bundestag scheduled for 27 January 2003. Yad Vashem received an official invitation from Bundestag President, **Wolfgang Thierse**. Pictured here: **Rita Süßmuth** (center) receiving the Yad Vashem candelabra on the occasion of the opening of the **Freundeskreis** office, together with members of the **Freundeskreis** board.

CANADA



The **Asper International Holocaust Studies Program**, supported by the **Asper Foundation of Winnipeg**, has been officially instituted at the **International School of Holocaust Studies**. Among other activities, the program supports: a biennial international conference, international outreach ventures, seminars for educators from English-speaking countries, and a task force for international cooperation on the Holocaust. Pictured on left: **Dr. Israel H. Asper**, Founder and President of the **Asper Foundation**, and his wife, **Babs**, lay a wreath during Holocaust Remembrance Day 2002.

AUSTRALIA



The **Gandel Charitable Trust** in Australia and the **Gandel** family recently contributed a generous gift to Yad Vashem's immigration project, **Project Chai**. This project helps Yad Vashem enlist new immigrants from the former Soviet Union for translation and cataloging work in its library and Archives. Pictured on left: **John Gandel**.

FRANCE



A 120-strong solidarity mission of the **Association for the Welfare of the Israeli Soldier (ABSJ)** visited Yad Vashem and committed to support Yad Vashem's activities. Pictured at a ceremony in the Hall of Remembrance (from left to right): **Moïse Cohen**, President of the **Paris Consistoire**; **Michel Dluto**, President of the **La Varenne** community; **Thierry Marek**, member of the of the **La Varenne** community administration; and **Gil Taieb**, President of the **ABSJ-Karen Or**.

Yad Vashem

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Head of the International Institute for Holocaust Research: Professor David Bankier

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