



Yad Vashem **JERUSALEM**

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JEWISH RESISTANCE

DURING THE HOLOCAUST

Sixty Years Since the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising

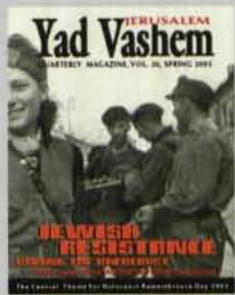
The Central Theme for Holocaust Remembrance Day 2003

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Yad Vashem
Editors' Remarks

Just prior to publication, *Yad Vashem Jerusalem* was made aware of Yad Vashem's receipt of the prestigious "Israel Prize for Lifetime Achievement—A Unique Contribution to Society and to the State." On the eve of its 50th year, Yad Vashem was cited as "represent[ing] a symbol and a model of the unity of the Jewish people... that attracts all sections of the population and serves as a source of identification for individuals in Israel and worldwide."

This issue of the magazine provides an introduction to Yad Vashem's planned program of events and activities for its Jubilee year (2003-2004), while simultaneously focusing on the multifaceted central topic of Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Day 2003: "Jewish Resistance During the Holocaust: Sixty Years Since the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising."



Cover: Jewish partisan, Rachel Rudnitski, with a group of armed partisans who operated in the Rodnicksi forest—Lithuania

by Professor Israel Gutman

Generation after generation, Jews and non-Jews alike confront the greatest crime ever perpetrated against humanity—the Holocaust. Individuals and nations try to comprehend how the largest and most vibrant Jewish settlement that thrived in Europe for a millennium was eradicated in a matter of years.

Just as Jewish fate differed from that of other nations under Nazi rule, so too did the nature of Jewish opposition to the Nazis. Driven by the sheer will to survive, millions of persecuted Jews in Nazi Third Reich territory and the occupied countries resisted the oppressor. On the eastern and western fronts, hundreds of thousands of Jews fought and died in Allied armies.

"Operation Barbarossa"—the German



Underground fighter preparing a bomb on train tracks—France



Jewish partisans in the street—Vilna, Lithuania

JEWISH

invasion of the Soviet Union on 22 June 1941—marked the beginning of the mass murder of Jews in eastern occupied areas. Upon hearing of the mass shooting of Jews in Ponary and other sites, Zionist youth movement activists in Vilna were first to comprehend the Nazi intent: to completely annihilate the Jews.

The warning cry issued from Vilna spurred initial thoughts of ghetto revolts for thousands of young Jews, particularly members of the clandestine Zionist-pioneer youth movements. In ghettos such as Bialystok, Krakow, Bendin, Czestochowa, and Tarnow, rebellions and confrontations broke out during the final deportations. These desperate acts of resistance testified to the triumph of the Jewish and human spirit and constituted both a cry for life and a banner of hope for future generations.

On the eve of Passover 1943, the Warsaw ghetto uprising was launched—one of the most

symbolic battles of WWII and the first popular uprising in a Nazi-occupied city (see article on page 4). Through active resistance, Jewish fighters managed to delay the Nazis' final liquidation of the ghetto for nearly a month.

In addition to opposition inside the ghettos, underground movements were established for the purpose of rescue in Western European countries such as France and Holland, as well as Hungary. In occupied countries including Belarus, the Ukraine, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, France, Yugoslavia, and Greece, tens of thousands of Jews fled to the forests and mountains to join partisan ranks. Jews formed their own units, or—when permitted entry—joined existing non-Jewish corps in order to engage in guerrilla warfare against the Nazis. They attacked small enemy factions and sabotaged their means of communication and transportation. Pursuits and sieges by the German



Two members of the underground in the Kovno ghetto—Lithuania

RESISTANCE DURING THE HOLOCAUST

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army were quelled by the partisans' dynamic and evasive guerilla tactics, which undermined the enemy's confidence on the home front. The partisans' fight was also a fight for survival. In Eastern Europe, thousands of Jews banded together in family camps or groups that hid in the forests and defended themselves with weapons in the face of enemy persecution.

Jews also rebelled from within the labor, concentration, and extermination camps surrounded by electrified fences and heavily guarded by the SS and their collaborators. In August and October 1943 respectively, prisoners in the Treblinka and Sobibor

extermination camps rebelled. Their intent after eradicating the camps' military force was to escape to the forests. Their missions, however, were only partially successful: While Nazi guards suffered a number of casualties, hundreds of Jews perished and only dozens survived. In October 1944, Jews of the *Sonderkommando* staged an organized rebellion in the extermination area of the Birkenau camp, killing several SS men and destroying one gas chamber. All the rebels died, however they left behind diaries providing authentic documentation of the atrocities committed at Auschwitz.

In the final analysis, the call to arms and acts of

Jewish resistance could not save the Jewish masses since their annihilation was one of the predominant aims of the Nazi war machine. The scope and success of the resistance movements required support, assistance, arms provisions, and training from the outside. These factors were almost always absent in the occupied countries, and local underground forces rarely answered the Jewish cry for help. Throughout the dark years of the Holocaust, Jewish defiance and survival became a struggle of tortured souls left to their fate.

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

Self-Defense and Struggle Revolt in the Warsaw Ghetto

by Shachar Leven

Today, 60 years after its occurrence, the Warsaw ghetto uprising has become deeply ingrained in public consciousness as one of the ultimate symbols of Jewish resistance in the Holocaust.

Following the German occupation of Warsaw in September 1939, the city's 375,000 Jews were subjected to forced labor, brutal attacks, strict anti-Jewish legislation, and the confiscation of their property. In October 1940, a ghetto was planned in the Jewish quarter in northern Warsaw, and on 16 November it was sealed off. Along with Warsaw's Jews, Jews from smaller outlying communities were moved to the ghetto, which swelled to 445,000 residents. Conditions within were dire, and malnutrition, overcrowding, and disease were rampant; one out of five inhabitants perished within the ghetto walls. Nonetheless, residents participated in educational and cultural activities.

Following months of night raids and random killings in early 1942, the first wave of deportations began in July 1942. By 12 September, about 300,000 Jews had been deported from the ghetto—some 254,000 to the Treblinka extermination camp.

Initial attempts to create a comprehensive Jewish underground in the ghetto had faltered. However, after the end of the mass deportation, the Jewish Fighting Organization (ZOB) was formed: a conglomerate of all the political youth organizations in the ghetto, with the exception of the Revisionists (Beitar movement), who created their own fighting organization called the Jewish Military Union (ZZW).

Deportations from the Warsaw ghetto recommenced on 18 January 1943. Under the leadership of Mordecai Anielewicz, the ZOB launched its first display of hand-to-hand armed combat against the Germans in the ghetto streets. After four days the deportations stopped, which the Jews construed as a sign of German weakness inflicted by use of armed force.

Following the German "retreat," the ZOB began to prepare for the final, full-scale uprising against the Germans. Twenty-two units were formed, each one representing a different youth movement. The ZOB comprised 500 fighters, while the ZZW had 200-250 fighters.

On 19 April 1943, the final liquidation of the Warsaw ghetto began. As the general population hid in underground bunkers, the fighters attacked, launching the Warsaw ghetto uprising—the first large-scale uprising of an urban population in occupied Europe.

Days of guerilla-type warfare ensued, catching the Germans off guard and ill-prepared. After three days, the

Germans changed tactics, torching the ghetto, building by building. They forced the

fighters out of hiding by hurling

grenades into the bunkers or pumping in tear gas.

Several of those who emerged from their

hideouts were murdered on the spot.

By 8 May, most of the ZOB fighters had retreated to their headquarters at 18 Mila Street. That same day, the headquarters fell to the Germans and many of the fighters perished. On 16 May, SS and police leader Juergen Stroop reported that the fighting had ended. However, even after that date, hundreds of Jews managed to remain hidden in the ghetto's underground bunkers or cross over to the Aryan side of the city.

"When you read our letter you will think that our spirits are broken and we have reached utter despair. We look logically at our terrible fate. We know that you have done all you can to save us. We also recognize that you are powerless. It is easier to die with the knowledge that there will be a free world and that *Eretz Yisrael* will be a homeland for the Jewish nation."

Letter sent to Israel by He-Halutz youth movement member who participated in the Warsaw ghetto uprising

"It is impossible to put into words what we have been through. One thing is clear, what happened exceeded our boldest dreams... I feel that great things are happening and what we dared do is of great, enormous importance... The dream of my life has risen to become fact. Self-defense in the ghetto will have been a reality. Jewish armed resistance and revenge are facts. I have been a witness to the magnificent, heroic fighting of Jewish men in battle."

Mordecai Anielewicz,
Warsaw ghetto, 23 April 1943

On 20 May 1943, just before 10:00 p.m., the doorbell of the Très-Saint-Sauveur convent in Brussels, Belgium rang. Two armed men forced their way in, shouting “Hands up!” They were followed by several other armed men and one woman who stormed the convent, cut the phone lines, and ordered all the nuns to assemble in the Mother Superior’s office. The nuns were forced to prepare 15 of their wards—Jewish girls who had been hidden under the guise of Catholic children in need—for a journey. In under an hour, the abductors had taken the children, locked up the nuns in the office, and Sister Marie Amélie (Leloup Eugénie)—the Mother Superior—

a Jewish activist with the CDJ) for help. She also appealed to Cardinal Van Roey who contacted Elisabeth, the Queen Mother of Belgium, through one of his aides. Elisabeth intervened but failed to persuade the German authorities to alter their plans. Throughout that day, Sister Marie Amélie and her nuns prayed for divine intervention, while simultaneously preparing the children’s

the nuns managed to reach the window and alert a passer-by who called the Belgian police. The nuns told the police of the kidnapping and the police carried out their investigation until the next morning, before alerting the Gestapo (giving the kidnappers time to escape with the children).

When the Gestapo appeared at the convent the next morning at 11:00 a.m. the children were long gone. From the convent, some had been handed over to their parents, four were brought to Halter’s home, and others were taken to Cymberknopf’s house. That morning, they had all been transferred to safe locations with help from the CDJ. The Gestapo interrogated the Mother Superior, who said she was certain the men had been sent by the Gestapo.

“Did they have a Jewish appearance?”

“No, not at all.”

“Were they all armed?”

“Yes.”

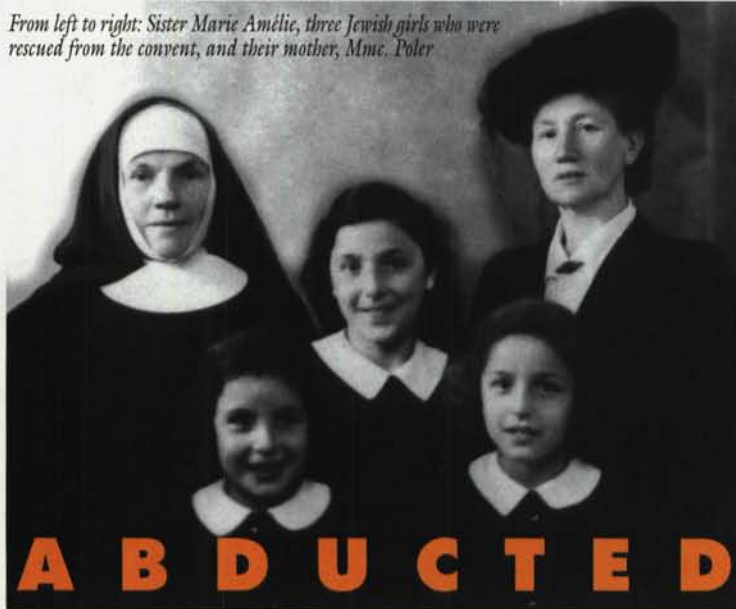
“Why didn’t you scream?”

“Scream? We didn’t dare; they said they would shoot if we shouted.”

Unable to disprove the nuns’ story, the Gestapo left and the children were saved.

Halter was later arrested and in September 1943 was deported to Auschwitz. Only after the war did he discover that all 15 girls had survived. Years later in 1991, as a participant in the first

From left to right: Sister Marie Amélie, three Jewish girls who were rescued from the convent, and their mother, Mme. Poler



from the Hands of the Aggressor

The Rescue of Jewish Children in Belgium

in an upstairs room. On the way out, to reassure the children, one of the men whispered a few words in Yiddish.

Who were these unusual abductors?

In September 1942, Cardinal Van Roey, head of the Belgian Catholic church in Malines/Mechelen, and the Comité de Défense des Juifs (CDJ), a Jewish clandestine rescue organization, encouraged the Mother Superior of the Très-Saint-Sauveur convent to take 15 Jewish girls into hiding. For nine months, the girls lived comfortably in the convent, adapting to their new surroundings and attending Christian religious lessons.

On 20 May 1943, having received information of the Jewish children, the Gestapo raided the premises. Discovering that three girls were absent, they decided to return the next morning to collect all the children at once. “It is not to kill them,” the head Gestapo agent told the Mother Superior sarcastically, “but to unite them with their families.”

Frantic, Sister Marie Amélie contacted Miss Jeanne (the wartime pseudonym of Ida Sterno,

belongings for the following day’s “departure.” That night just before 10:00 p.m. their prayers were answered in the form of an unusual abduction.

The leader of the raiding party was 23-year-old Paul Halter, a Jewish commander in the Belgian armed resistance. Earlier that day, he had visited his friend, Toby Cymberknopf. “I found him very upset,” Halter recalls. “He informed me that our friend, Bernard Fenerberg, had learned about the Gestapo’s visit to the convent and their intent to return to collect the children. We realized that we only had a few hours at our disposal... and thus decided to take it upon ourselves to rescue the children.”

Halter, Cymberknopf, and Fenerberg, were joined by fellow-Jew, Jankiel Parancevitch, as well as Andrée Ermel and Floris Desmedt from the Belgian resistance. The six waited for dark, knowing the operation had to take place before the 10:00 p.m. curfew. “We then forced our way in at gunpoint. We locked up the Mother Superior, ripped out the phone line, and tied the nuns to chairs in the convent’s office,” says Halter.

Half an hour after the “kidnapping” one of



Jewish rescuers (from left to right): Toby Cymberknopf, Bernard Fenerberg, and Paul Halter

Hidden Children reunion in New York, he was reunited with several of the girls he saved.

Sister Marie Amélie, Mother Superior of Très-Saint-Sauveur, was honored by Yad Vashem as a Righteous Among the Nations in 2001, as were Andrée Ermel and her parents, Marcel and Céline Ermel (with whom one of the children, Myriam Frydland, was placed). Yad Vashem equally pays tribute to the CDJ, and the four Jews who participated in this rescue operation—a unique episode in the annals of the Holocaust in Belgium.

The author is Director of the Righteous Among the Nations Department

by Doron Avraham

During the Holocaust, Jews in the ghettos, prisoners in the concentration and extermination camps, and partisans in the forests continuously wrestled with the question of how to resist Nazi oppression and destruction. Since the end of the war, the topic of Jewish resistance has evolved into a

victims were given a special place within Jewish collective memory, the main emphasis was placed on commemorating Jewish fighters. Armed resistance against the Nazis was linked to the new national ethos: power and pride over passivity and surrender.

During Israel's early decades, the Holocaust

Mordecai Museum (named after Mordecai Anielewicz), the Massuah memorial to members of the Zionist youth movements, Nathan Rappaport's sculpture of the Warsaw ghetto uprising, etc.

As awareness of the survivors' personal experiences increased, the concept of Jewish

The Changing Face of Jewish Resistance

An Adaptive Educational Approach

defining component of Holocaust remembrance in Israeli society and institutions.

Following Israeli statehood, Holocaust remembrance was rooted in the common ideologies of the time, as reflected by the ideal of the fierce Sabra warrior. While Holocaust

did not feature in the national curriculum and only on rare occasions did Holocaust survivors give their testimonies at Israeli schools. Holocaust memorials and institutions were based on Jewish fighters and Jewish armed struggle: Beit Lochamei Hageta'ot (the Ghetto Fighters' House), Yad

resistance became more inclusive. Alongside Jews bearing arms were those who worked to preserve human dignity, promote mutual aid, basic educational infrastructures, and religious and cultural life during the Holocaust.

These changes were also evident in how the

Our Living Legacy: A New Publication

Some 300 well-known Holocaust survivors, scholars, and leading educators from 28 countries gathered at

Yad Vashem in April 2002 to examine the legacy of Holocaust survivors and ensure its transmission to future generations.

Our Living Legacy is the International School for Holocaust Studies' recent publication of excerpts from the speakers at this unique and historic conference, including among others: Professor Elie Wiesel, Imre Kertesz, Professor Aharon Barak, Aharon Appelfeld, Simone Weil, Per Ahlmark, Dr. Samuel Pizar, Dr. Israel Singer, and Rabbi Israel Meir Lau. The texts in this book are arranged according to four themes: legacy, memory, faith, and antisemitism. The publication was supported by the Asper International Holocaust Studies Program at Yad Vashem.



Yesterdays and then Tomorrows: A Holocaust Anthology

Yesterdays and then Tomorrows is a collection of Holocaust literature designed to aid educators enrich lesson plans and prepare meaningful ceremonies both in the classroom and during youth trips to Poland. Through testimonies, readings, poetry, prayers, and letter excerpts, the anthology provides an important supplementary resource to the factual, historical accounts of the Holocaust most commonly taught in schools.

The anthology includes a glossary and a chronology and is divided into six sections: The Jewish *Shtetl*, Dehumanization and Degradation, Ghettos, Concentration and Extermination Camps, Mass Graves, and Poetry and Prayers. Black and white photographs accompany the literature, providing readers with visual images of highlighted events, places, and personalities.

The anthology was compiled and edited by Safira Rapoport, Director of the Pedagogic and Resource Center, and is available in English and Hebrew. The publication was supported by the Friends of Yad Vashem—the Netherlands.



Recent Highlights at the International School for Holocaust Studies

subject of Jewish resistance was approached in Israeli schools. Although educators continued to teach about Jewish armed struggle, they also focused on other expressions of resistance, e.g. Jewish public aid institutions and the preservation of the Jewish family. These and similar topics were mandated in the formal and informal education systems' curriculum in the early 1980s.

Since its establishment in 1994, the International School for Holocaust Studies at Yad Vashem has employed this comprehensive educational approach to Jewish resistance during the Holocaust. Several teacher training seminars and courses encompass this philosophy including "The Jewish Stance During the Holocaust," "The Uprising," and "Resistance and Rebellion." Workshops and symposia are held for soldiers, pupils, and university students on topics such as "Physical Resistance, Spiritual Resistance," and a special tour of the site is available focusing on Jewish resistance monuments.

The International School has published a wide range of curricula and educational study units focusing—in part or fully—on the wide spectrum of Jewish resistance. Among these are: *The Many Faces of Heroism* (Hebrew), *And the Walls Surrounded Us* (Hebrew), and *Holocaust and Memory* (Hebrew).

Currently, the International School is preparing a curriculum for grade 7-12 students entitled, *Until the Last Breath*, which highlights armed resistance and spiritual resistance. Created in honor of 60 years since the Warsaw ghetto uprising, the unit presents the various responses of Jews who faced oppression and the constant threat of death. Photographs from the ghettos, forests, and family camps, as well as works of art, have been included to illustrate the different expressions of Jewish resistance. The unit will be published in summer 2003 and was made possible through the generosity of the National Yad Vashem Charitable Trust in England and the late Gerda Buchalter.

In approaching the complex and multi-faceted subject of the *Shoah*, Israeli society at large, and Yad Vashem more specifically, continue to challenge and expand the definition of Jewish resistance during the Holocaust.

The author is a staff member in the Programs and Curricula Development Department, International School for Holocaust Studies

- 6-22 January: Seminar for educators from Australia and Eastern Europe.
- 12-16 January: "The Holocaust and I"—Training seminar for cadets of the pre-military preparatory school at Nachshon. Following the seminar, cadets will conduct Holocaust workshops in development towns.
- 20 January: "A City That Reads"—Evening with author Savyon Liebrecht at Beit Wolyn, Yad Vashem's Center for Holocaust Education, Givatayim.
- 21-22 January: Preparatory seminar for trip to Poland for students from Israel's Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs' institutions.
- 26 January – June: First of six sessions on the fundamental history of the Holocaust for 200 students from Israel's Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs' institutions.
- 9-23 February: Seminar for educators from Denmark.
- 12-13 February: "Green Branch from a Fallen Tree" project—first of six sessions to prepare children from Israel's Rural Education Administration's residential facilities for trip to Poland.
- 13 February: Symposium for staff members of the German Embassy in Israel and volunteers from *Ot Kaparah* (Sign of Repentance) at Beit Wolyn.
- 18 February: Workshop for members of Israel's Writers' Union.
- 10 March: "A City that Reads"—Evening with author Aharon Appelfeld at Beit Wolyn.
- 11 March: Tribute to the Jewish fighters and partisans at Beit Wolyn, as part of the teacher-training seminar "The Face of the Uprising."
- 28 March – 9 April: Seminar for educators from Austria.
- 2 April: Workshop for members of the Israel Defense Force's (IDF) delegation to Poland.
- 7 April: "Accord of Pain and Hope"—Opening of Internet course for educators, focusing on the Stanislavov Jewish community during the Holocaust.
- 18-30 April: Seminar for educators from Switzerland.
- 30 April: Workshop on "Jewish Heroism During the Holocaust" for Israel's Minister of Internal Security, the Commander-General of Israel's Police Force, and 300 senior officers.

Throughout 2003-2004, Yad Vashem, the Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Authority, will mark 50 years since its establishment—years that have shaped the nature of Holocaust remembrance and education in Israel and worldwide. At the threshold of a new era and in accordance with the Israeli Knesset's Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance (Yad Vashem) Law of 1953, Yad Vashem will continue to preserve and instill the memory of the Holocaust with content and meaning for generations to come.

In honor of Yad Vashem's Jubilee, a series of major events will be held throughout the year in Israel and abroad under the patronage of the President of Israel, Moshe Katsav, and in cooperation with Israel's Ministry of Tourism, the Jerusalem Municipality, and other organizations.

On the evening of 16 September 2003, the 50th anniversary opening event will take place at Yad Vashem's Warsaw Ghetto Square in the presence of the President of Israel, the Prime Minister, and the Minister of Education. The following day at the President's Residence, the Jubilee Award will be presented to individuals and organizations that have made significant contributions to the memory

of the Holocaust. That evening, a meeting and reception will be held for members of Yad Vashem's forum of donors and supporters. During the reception, the establishment of an Eternal Fund for the Future of Yad Vashem will be announced, ensuring Yad Vashem's continued existence and ability to carry out commemorative, research, and educational initiatives.

Throughout the year, Yad Vashem Societies worldwide will mark the Jubilee with local events. In September 2003, the Israel Philatelic Service will issue two stamps in honor of Yad Vashem's 50th

At the Threshold of a New Era Yad Vashem Marks 50 Years



Preparing the next generation to bear the torch of remembrance



Laying the foundation stone of Yad Vashem, 27 July 1954

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commemorative, research, and educational initiatives.

In October 2003, the Israeli Knesset will hold several events in recognition of Yad Vashem's Jubilee: a visit by MK's to Yad Vashem, the opening of an exhibit at the Knesset, and a special parliamentary session of the Knesset.

At the forefront of the many events honoring Yad Vashem's 50th year, will be an evening in recognition of the Holocaust survivors and their families. This distinctive program will take place on 15 June 2004 at the Sultan's Pool, Jerusalem, in the presence of Israel's Prime Minister. The evening will pay tribute to the survivors' achievements and contributions, while preparing the next generation to bear the torch of remembrance.

To enable worldwide Internet access to Yad Vashem's database of Holocaust victims' names and

aid in the completion of the International Campaign for the Collection and Commemoration of Holocaust Victims' Names, Yad Vashem will upload its computerized names database onto the Internet in April 2004. This remarkable achievement will grant people worldwide access to the current 3.2 million names of Holocaust victims available on Yad Vashem's computerized database—the sole memorial to many who perished. More names will be uploaded as the computerization project advances.

Throughout the year, Yad Vashem Societies worldwide will mark the Jubilee with local events. In September 2003, the Israel Philatelic Service will issue two stamps in honor of Yad Vashem's 50th year. And an international research conference will be held at Yad Vashem in 2004.

The International school for Holocaust studies will hold unique educational activities for educators, students, and soldiers throughout the year, as well as an international educational conference in winter 2004. The culmination of Yad Vashem's 50th year will be the opening of the new Museum Complex reflecting Yad Vashem's progressive approach to commemoration and education. By September 2004, visitors to Yad Vashem will encounter a new, state-of-the-art Holocaust History Museum depicting the events of the *Shoah* from the Jewish perspective, utilizing advanced museological methods, and incorporating original artifacts and personal effects. The new Museum Complex—including a Museum of Holocaust Art, an Exhibitions Pavilion, a Visual Center, a Learning Center, and the Hall of Names—will be dedicated on 7 September, along with a new synagogue.

On 8 September, a meeting and reception will be held in Jerusalem for members of Yad Vashem's forum of donors and supporters. The event will be marked by a special tribute to the Righteous Among the Nations and will be attended by Israel's Diplomatic Corps.

Throughout Yad Vashem's Jubilee year, there will be special programs, tours, and activities available for groups and individuals. Yad Vashem invites people worldwide to visit its campus and take part in these activities. With your active participation, Yad Vashem will continue its essential role in paying tribute to Holocaust victims and survivors, embarking on educational and research initiatives, and bequeathing the torch of remembrance to future generations.

More information on Yad Vashem's Jubilee year activities is available on Yad Vashem's website: www.yadvashem.org

Soon after WWII, two views about the fundamental nature of Jewish resistance emerged. The first glorified armed resistance, pegging it as the only legitimate response to Nazi persecution. The second regarded armed resistance more critically, focusing on additional forms of Jewish response.

As Roni Stauber demonstrates in his groundbreaking book *Lekach Ledor* (Hebrew), for many early Holocaust writers, Jewish heroism was bound to the notion of Jewish resistance. Those who participated in

Arendt—extensively illustrated how Jews engaged in armed resistance and were neither passive victims nor collaborators. In most instances, they extolled armed resistance as the highest form of Jewish response to Nazi persecution.

While many sought to glorify armed resistance, a few early writers maintained that it was only one of many legitimate Jewish responses. Well-known figures such as Berl Katzenelson, Benzion Dinur, Nathan Eck, Zorach Warhaftig, and Mark

form of resistance became another subject for scholarly research. Asher Cohen and I wrote about mass rescue in Hungary and Slovakia in the 1980s. Lucien Lazare followed in the 1990s, with a book about Jewish rescue activities in France entitled *Rescue as Resistance*. Such studies

make two central points: large-scale rescue activity by Jews was a form of resistance (*Amidah*) and such resistance required outside help to succeed, and thus cannot be studied solely from the



Evolving with the Times

armed resistance against the Nazis were likened to the new tough

breed of Zionist Jews, and their heroism was attributed to a shedding of their “passive” Diaspora-like behavior. This in turn frequently led to the glorification of Jewish armed resistance. Such veneration is evident in a speech by Arieh Tartakower at Yad Vashem’s first international scholarly conference on Jewish resistance (1968): “Among the numerous facets which merit our attention there is one which has such overpowering significance that it casts all others in the shade... I refer to the Jewish resistance to the Nazi oppressor and his collaborators, which reached its supreme expression in the ghetto revolts and the warfare of the partisans, though it flourished in many other forms as well... At the very height of the Hitler period the principal victim rose up against it armed only with his bare hands... and accomplished what no other nation under similar circumstances ever did.”

If Jewish resistance was glorified, the six million Holocaust victims were often anything but. Those who did not resist with arms (or at least flee the Nazi onslaught) were often portrayed in the literature as having gone to their deaths “like sheep to the slaughter.” Around the time of the Adolf Eichmann trial in Jerusalem (1961), three books surfaced that openly attacked Jews for their “shameful” behavior during the Holocaust: Raul Hilberg’s seminal volume, *The Destruction of the European Jews*, Bruno Bettelheim’s *The Informed Heart*, and Hannah Arendt’s report on the Eichmann Trial, *Eichmann in Jerusalem*.

In the 1950s, a new genre—anthologies of resistance—emerged in Hebrew, developed in English during the 1960s, and continued to be published well into the 1980s. These anthologies—produced in many instances in direct response to Hilberg, Bettelheim, and

Jewish Resistance in Historical Writing

Dworzecki focused on “spiritual resistance” and the Jews’ daily struggle to survive the Holocaust. This more encompassing treatment of resistance (which includes armed resistance), engendered the Hebrew term *Amidah*, explained by Dworzecki as “a comprehensive name for all expressions of Jewish ‘non-conformism’ and for all the forms of resistance and all acts by Jews aimed at thwarting the evil design of the Nazis.”

In the 1970s and 1980s, Jewish armed resistance began to be represented in a more academic manner. Many scholars, like Professor Dov Levin and Dr. Shmuel Krakowski, avoided glorification and instead examined the phenomena on a local or regional level. This trend extended into the 1990s, with researchers examining specific instances of Jewish armed resistance within the greater contexts of regions, ghettos, and camps. By refraining from belittling other forms of resistance, these publications generally sought to present a balanced and less judgmental view.

Sarah Bender’s study on Bialystok is a prime example. She portrays the interaction between the ghetto underground and the official ghetto leadership, and how their interpretations of resistance led to different survival strategies. While both agreed armed resistance should begin only when the liquidation of the ghetto was imminent, when the end approached, Ephraim Barasz, Jewish Council leader, could not engage in armed resistance along with the underground. Neither berating him, nor judging him, Bender explains: “It is plausible that when he realized he had failed [in his rescue approach], he could not bring himself to believe in armed struggle or in any good that could come of it.”

By the late 1970s, large-scale rescue as a

perspective of Jewish activity.

In the 1990s, research shifted largely from investigations by subject matter towards examinations of the totality of the Jewish experience in a given place during the Holocaust. Although not directed at Jewish resistance alone, monographs such as Renee Poznanski’s *Entre juif en France pendant la Seconde Guerre mondiale*, and Marion Kaplan’s *Between Dignity and Despair: Jewish Life in Nazi Germany* present aspects of *Amidah* as integral to the daily Jewish experience.

In the 1990s this inclusive approach was reinforced by Michael Marrus, who presented an invaluable paper at the Yad Vashem 1993 conference, “Major Changes Within the Jewish People in the Wake of the Holocaust.” Employing a system for classifying resistance first presented by Swiss historian Walter Rings, Marrus elucidated the different types of Jewish resistance, without judging them or creating a hierarchy of merit: “Symbolic Resistance, or I remain what I was; Polemic Resistance, or I tell the truth; Defensive Resistance, or I aid and protect; Offensive Resistance, or I fight to the death; (and) Resistance Enchained, or freedom fighters in camp and ghetto.”

Over the years, historical understanding of Jewish resistance during the Holocaust has undergone many adaptations. Acts of physical resistance can be valued without glorification. Jews who were murdered can be mourned free of blame for being passive. And Jewish resistance can be an inclusive term denoting all of the diverse forms of Jewish non-conformity and rescue. Each instance, in its own context, deserves thoughtful examination under the light of historical scrutiny.

The author is Director of the Library

by Shachar Leven

After infiltrating the Vilna ghetto on a precarious rescue mission only days before its final liquidation, Alexander Bogen—Jewish artist and partisan—was plagued by a reverberating question: “What motivates someone at the precipice of death to engage in artistic creation?”

An artist and a native of Vilna, Bogen neither forsook his artistry nor ceased sketching the people, places, and events he encountered

to his condition having captured the elusive smile of his model on canvas; the all-around genius who wandered the streets past curfew heedless of his personal fate having solved an elaborate mathematics equation; the young orphan abandoned on a street corner who Bogen—an armed partisan—could not save, so sketched “out of helplessness, passivity, and the inability to offer up salvation.”

Aside from reinforcing his personal devotion

“From the beginning, Kovner’s intention had been to launch a full-scale armed revolt in the ghetto to sanctify God’s name and foster pride in the Jews even in their moment of defeat,” recalls Bogen. “It was a noble conception, but not practical in my opinion. We couldn’t fight the Nazis in the narrow alleyways of the ghetto with our few, primitive weapons. We would have zero chance.”

With the end in sight, Kovner did not

The Pen and the Sword

Jewish Artist and Partisan, Alexander Bogen



Alexander Bogen (b. 1916), *A Jewish Partisan in the Voroshilov Brigade*, 1943, Pencil on paper. Donated by the artist

following the Nazi occupation of Lithuania. However, it was only after infiltrating the ghetto in September 1943 that he began considering the wartime function of innovation: to transform pen into sword, transcend the finite parameters of time and space, and retain a spark of humanity in the face of despair. These artistic objectives crystallized in his mind through encounters with ghetto residents, former friends, and colleagues: the fellow-artist who stood by his ease!—half-naked and starving—yet oblivious



Alexander Bogen (b. 1916), *A Partisan on Alert*, 1943, charcoal on paper

to art, Bogen’s mission in the ghetto helped facilitate the successful rescue of members of the United Partisan Organization (FPÖ)—a Jewish underground movement active in the ghetto. After breaching the ghetto walls armed with a pistol and two hand grenades, Bogen—along with two fellow partisans—reached FPÖ head, Abba Kovner’s headquarters. Bogen presented him with a letter from Fyodor Markov, commander of the partisan division in Belarussia’s Narocz Forest.



The artist Alexander Bogen as a partisan—Vilna, Lithuania

abandon his plans for revolt, however acceded to the partisans’ request to smuggle ghetto residents (including members of the FPÖ) to the forests.

One hundred and fifty Jewish underground members were assembled and divided into five units which Bogen helped train: “I distributed primitive weapons and copies of my map of the forest. I taught them how to prepare for and fight the enemy, find food, read a compass, where to hide, and where and when to walk—all



Alexander Bogen (b. 1916), *A Fighters' Meal*, 1943, pencil on paper

the tactical information one needs to become a partisan," says Bogen. He assumed command of one of the units, which included his wife, Rachel, and his mother-in-law. In the late night hours he helped secure the groups' escape from the ghetto; a few days later, all five units arrived safely in the forests where they joined the non-Jewish partisan ranks.

With Markov's permission, Bogen retained command of his 30-person unit, which became the only all-Jewish partisan brigade—*Nekama* (Vengeance). The unit achieved many successes and was responsible for missions such as: mining railroad tracks and derailing trains, sabotaging German weapons banks and food rations that were being sent to the front, and disseminating information about the mass extermination and active resistance in the nearby ghettos, villages, and towns.

Partisan life was stark and grueling. Aside from risky reconnaissance missions and clashes with the enemy, fighters suffered from exposure to the elements, insufficient food, and illness. For Jewish partisans the conditions were even more dire: They had to face the residual

"tragedy, mental torment, longing, and worry about the fate of loved ones left behind in the ghetto," notes Bogen, as well as antisemitic treatment from non-Jewish partisans. "Jewish partisans—especially those who served in mixed units with Russians, Letts, and Belarussians—always had to prove they were willing to volunteer first for missions and risk the most," says Bogen. "They were often sent poorly armed on 'hopeless' operations that had little chance of success."

Even the *Nekama* Unit became problematic to the Soviet partisan leadership due to its all-Jewish character, despite its many achievements. The unit was disbanded after several months and Bogen (after a few other appointments in mixed units) was commissioned, alongside another partisan, to document partisan activities.

Bogen captured his brothers-in-arms through the medium of art, sketching scenes of partisan battle, rest, ambush, dress, and diversion on random scraps of paper using charcoal made from burnt branches. "I would try to record the typical situations that we would encounter—a unit returning from its

operation... its members sitting around a bonfire, playing cards, drinking Vodka, recounting the tales of what befell them..." says Bogen. "In battle, at partisan headquarters... I would pull out my paper and sketch these things as they were happening, as a reaction to the events taking place."

"Ultimately, when I asked myself why I was drawing, when I was fighting day and night... [I realized that it was] something similar to biological continuity. Every man, every people wishes to leave this one thing... To be creative during the Holocaust was also a protest. Each man when standing face to face with cruel danger, with death, reacts in his own way. The artist reacts in an artistic way. This is his weapon... This is what shows that the Germans could not break his spirit."

Alexander Bogen has recently donated 37 of his works created during his days as a partisan to Yad Vashem's Art Museum. Several of these pieces will be exhibited in Yad Vashem's new Holocaust History Museum in the section dedicated to Jewish fighting.

TORCHLIGHTERS

DENISE SIEKIERSKI

Denise Sikierski *née* Caraco was born in 1924 in Marseilles, France—an only child raised by her grandparents. At age 11, she joined the Jewish Scouts' youth movement and in August 1942, as a Scout troop leader, she received her first assignment with the Jewish underground: caring for four young female refugees and placing them in prearranged hiding places. From then on, Denise and other Scout leaders became active in locating



hideouts for Jews, facilitating illegal border crossings to Switzerland, distributing forged documents, smuggling weapons, money, food, and ration coupons.

In November 1942, following the German occupation of Vichy France, the activities of the Scouts and other Jewish organizations went underground. Denise begged her family to leave Marseilles for a safe haven and gave them false documents. Yet their escape was delayed; the

Germans carried out a mass *aktion* in Marseilles at the end of January 1943, closing off the old city near the port and conducting a door-to-door search for illegal aliens. More than 1,000 Jews were sent to Drancy detention camp and then to death camps, and the old city was heavily bombarded. Denise's family survived and escaped soon after with the help of a wealthy French friend. Denise remained in Marseilles and continued with her underground activities.

One day, a German Jew informed the Gestapo of the clandestine activities of Denise and Pastor Lemaire—a Protestant minister who collaborated with and aided the Jews. Consequently, two innocent bystanders were arrested. After receiving a tip about the informant, Josef Bass (A.K.A. "Monsieur André")—a fellow member of the Jewish resistance—warned Denise, who escaped to Grenoble. She begged Lemaire to follow, but his conscience forbade him to have others punished in his stead, so he turned himself in. Lemaire was arrested, jailed, sent to Mauthausen, and later Birkenau, but he survived. In 1976, he was recognized by Yad Vashem as a Righteous Among the Nations.



Denise (right), Monsieur André, and friend—Marseilles, 1941

Following her escape, Denise served as a contact between Grenoble, Nice, and Marseilles. In early June 1943, she returned to Marseilles and came into contact with Monsieur André. He told her he had established an underground rescue network, and asked her to join him. Following an unsuccessful rescue operation in Nice, Denise and Monsieur André set out for Le Chambon—a village whose residents hid thousands of Jews and were later recognized as Righteous Among the Nations. There they helped further a Jewish partisan branch of the Maquis movement (the French armed underground) and Denise helped smuggle in weapons and aided underground operations until the war's end.

Denise's mother and aunt survived the war. After moving to Paris, Denise met Zeilig Sikierski whom she married in 1946. The following year they made *aliyah*. Denise has two children, three grandchildren, and one great-granddaughter.

REUVEN DAFNI



Reuven Dafni was born in 1913 in Zagreb, Yugoslavia to a family of three children. When he was 14 years old, the family moved to Vienna, Austria. In Austria, Dafni first experienced antisemitism, which reinforced his commitment to Zionism. He began attending a Jewish school and studied Hebrew in preparation to make *aliyah*.

In 1936, Reuven moved to Palestine on his own and was among the founders of Kibbutz Ein-Gev. In January 1940, he was drafted into the British Army and was entrusted with establishing a Yugoslavian Brigade,

which was to handle contact with the partisans in occupied Europe.

Around the same time, Reuven met the "Israeli" group that was supposed to parachute behind enemy lines to rescue Jews and bring them to Palestine. He was accepted to their unit and like Hannah Szenes and her comrades,

he was sent to the British Army and was entrusted with establishing a Yugoslavian Brigade, which was to handle contact with the partisans in occupied Europe. Around the same time, Reuven met the "Israeli" group that was supposed to parachute behind enemy lines to rescue Jews and bring them to Palestine. He was accepted to their unit and like Hannah Szenes and her comrades, he was sent to the



Reuven (right) on a horse-drawn cart behind enemy lines paratroopers' school in Ramat David. After a short training period, Dafni was sent to Cairo, and then to Bari, Italy.

On 13 March 1944, at midnight, Hannah Szenes, Yona Rosen, Abba Berdiszew, and Reuven parachuted into Yugoslavia: Hannah and Yona with the purpose of reaching Hungary, Abba with the aim of reaching Romania, and Reuven who was to remain in Yugoslavia. Once in Yugoslavia, Reuven was to help rescue Jews and send them to Italy.

Upon landing, the partisans who awaited them led them to a village. After marching for several days they reached the headquarters of the partisans, and Reuven and Hannah Szenes met General Roseman, who sent them to the Croatian partisans. They walked for 12 days under close accompaniment to the Croatian area, and remained there for about three months. During that time two other Jews from Ha-Shomer ha-Tsa'ir movement joined them—a French soldier and a young Christian woman who switched identities with Hannah Szenes.

On 9 June 1944, Hannah Szenes and three young men crossed the border into Hungary. Hannah had arranged with Reuven that he would wait for her for three weeks at the exit point, and if she had not arrived by then, he was to assume she had been captured. Reuven waited for six weeks, during which time he remained in Yugoslavia helping dozens of Jews escape with aid from the partisans. He then received word from headquarters in Palestine that Hannah Szenes had been captured. She was tortured, sentenced, and executed on 7 November 1944.

Following her murder, Dafni returned to Cairo to join the Jewish Brigade. Thanks to a fortuitous meeting in Bari, Italy with one of his brothers (who was serving in the American army) he learned about the fate of his family: his father and older brother had survived. After staying at a refugee camp in Italy they came to Palestine. Reuven followed them soon after, discovering upon his return that his mother had been killed in 1941.

Reuven returned to Kibbutz Ein-Gev and later worked in the diplomatic service with Israel's Foreign Ministry. Between 1982-1995 he served as Deputy Chairman of the Yad Vashem Directorate. Reuven has two children and two grandchildren, and presently lives with his partner, Na'avah, in Jerusalem.

David Plonski (A.K.A. "Yorek") was born in Warsaw, Poland in 1926 to a family of three children. In his early childhood, his family moved to Otwock, a suburb of Warsaw.



With the outbreak of the war, Yorek and his sister—who both looked "Aryan" and spoke fluent Polish—assumed financial responsibility for the family, trading food and goods in the Warsaw markets. In 1940, with the establishment of the Warsaw ghetto, 14-year-old Yorek became the family's sole supporter, smuggling kosher meat into the ghetto, at great peril and with much abuse from Polish youths.

In 1942, the ghetto's size was reduced; the frequency of *aktions* increased, and life became progressively more unbearable. Smuggling became increasingly difficult and dangerous (possible only through the ghetto walls), but Yorek continued to smuggle in goods.

On 18 August 1942, Yorek returned to Otwock from "work" to find his parents packing. They told him that they were being sent on one of the transports. His mother began screaming hysterically that he must leave, and pushed him out of the window. Yorek fled his family's house and never returned. The following day the Jews of Otwock were killed and Yorek never saw his family again.

Yorek escaped to Warsaw and slept in the cemetery. There he met Dr. Levy Wilwesky, who organized a group of underground fighters. Yorek was recruited as a gofer, responsible for purchasing and smuggling weapons and ammunition, and transmitting information.

In April 1943, on the eve of the Passover, a member of the Polish underground notified Wilwesky's group that German troops were approaching the Warsaw ghetto for the purpose of final liquidation. Upon entering the ghetto, the German forces were attacked by Jewish underground fighters. The fighting continued for several days; the ghetto was razed and many Jews killed. The remaining members of Wilwesky's group hid in a bunker.

On 11 May 1943, the Soviet army bombed Warsaw causing Yorek and the remaining members of Wilwesky's group to escape to the sewers. Awhile later, Yorek was sent to seek shelter on the Aryan side of the city with one of his friends. During a raid, Yorek's friend was captured and killed; Yorek escaped, leading his few remaining comrades through the sewers to the Aryan side of the city, aided by the Polish underground.

Soon after, Yorek learned of children who sold cigarettes and newspapers in Three Crosses Square in Warsaw and joined them as a cigarette merchant.

With the outbreak of the Polish revolt in August 1944, Yorek fled to Lublin with forged Aryan papers. After the war he moved to Lodz. He joined Ha-Shomer ha-Tsa'ir movement and helped search for Jewish orphans. In 1948, Yorek made *aliyah*, and fought in the War of Independence. He joined the founders of Kibbutz Megiddo and met Alexandra, also a Holocaust survivor. They married and had three children. Their son, Eitan, was killed during the *Yom Kippur* War.

EDITH DRORI

Edith Drori *née* Ernst was born in 1920 in Dunaharaszti, Hungary, one of four children. When she was four years old, the family moved to Slovakia and a year later her father died. Before the war, two of Edith's siblings moved to Israel through a *hachshara* program with Ha-Shomer ha-Tsa'ir youth movement and in 1941, when Germany invaded the Soviet Union, Edith's oldest brother was sent to a labor camp.



Following rumors that women would also be sent for forced labor, Edith's "leftist" friends convinced her to join the anti-Nazi underground. Soon after, she left her mother and fled to a nearby village. There, she worked for a farmer while posing as a Christian. After awhile, she considered applying for a housekeeping vacancy so her mother could join her in shared accommodations. To her horror however, she found her mother had been sent to her death.

Despairing, she resolved to turn herself in to the Slovakian police, but a chance meeting with a former acquaintance altered her plans. Instead, she set off to a village in the Sitno Mountains, where she joined a small underground cell of five people. The group's main pursuit was to print an underground newsletter—calling for an end to the persecution of Jews—and distribute it to villages and schools. Over time, the group expanded to about 30 members, but disbanded due to internal conflicts.

Edith's faction left the bunker, and on 9 September 1944, joined the Slovakian revolt. Edith moved to the Brigade to Free the Slavs, and served as a liaison between the Slovakian popular front and the underground. She handled supplies and provisions, volunteered for special assignments, and was the only female among 200 fighters.

After about two months, the Germans suppressed the revolt. The rebels suffered many losses, and those who survived retreated to the forests to fight as partisans. Edith reunited with her first underground group, and escaped from the Germans by crossing a frozen river. They hid in the forest, suffering from cold and mosquitoes, and Edith became

increasingly ill. By the time the Russians arrived to liberate the region, Edith had contracted severe malaria. She spent a month in a military hospital in Romania and was then sent to Transylvania to recuperate, returning to Slovakia once she had recovered.

At the end of the war, Edith was awarded the Red Star Medal of High Merit and a medal as a heroine of the Slovakian people.

In July 1948, Edith arrived in Israel and in 1952 married Shlomo Drori. They moved to Moshav Magshimim and adopted a daughter, Nili. In 1979, they settled in Haifa.



Edith (second from left) in a DP camp—Cyprus, 1947

TORCHLIGHTERS 2003

HELA SCHÜPPER-RUFEISEN



Hela Schüpper-Rufeisen was born in 1921 in Krakow, Poland, to a religious family of five children. When Hela was 10 years old, her mother died. Consequently the family split up and Hela moved in with her grandmother.

In 1939, Hela finished school and became active in the Akiva youth movement, with the intention of making *aliyah*. Shortly thereafter, Shimshon Draenger—one of the movement's leaders—was arrested, causing Akiva activities to go underground. In 1940, Draenger was released and the movement's activities resumed with the purpose of training members to set up an Akiva underground cell in the Warsaw ghetto.

Hela traveled to Warsaw in March 1941, and along with other activists, helped re-establish the Akiva branch, which ultimately numbered some 300 members. Following the beginning of the deportations from the Warsaw ghetto, the He-Halutz core and Akiva members met to discuss the issue of resistance. It was understood that in order to revolt, they would need arms, and would have to test public opinion in the ghetto. As a first stage, they resolved to make the ghetto residents aware of the truth about Treblinka. In the evening, notices were posted throughout the ghetto urging the residents: "Don't go like sheep to the slaughter. Treblinka is death."

As the situation grew more severe, another meeting of He-Halutz and Akiva was held, at which it was decided to establish the Jewish Fighting Organization (ZOB).

As part of her preparations for armed struggle in the Warsaw ghetto, Hela traveled to Krakow to receive instructions. Upon returning to Warsaw, she prepared forged Polish identity cards for fighters in the forests, obtained weapons and documents, relayed messages, and coordinated between fighting factions.

One night while Hela resided with neighbors in the Warsaw ghetto, they were woken by gunfire, causing them to retreat to the attic. The ghetto had been surrounded by the Germans and within days, was set ablaze. Hela was smuggled over to the ZOB headquarters on 18 Mila Street where, to her surprise, she discovered hundreds of people hiding. At Mordecai Anielewicz's decision, 10 people, including Hela, were sent to the Aryan side of the city on 7 May 1943, through the sewer system in order to reach Yitzhak Zuckerman who would arrange for help. A rescue operation was arranged, but before it could be executed Hela and the others received the terrible news: the ZOB bunker had fallen the next day to the Germans and many of the underground members had been murdered.

Hela moved between various hideouts, but eventually was deported to Bergen-Belsen, where she spent 22 months under conditions of hunger, cold, humiliation, and murder, until the camp's liberation on 15 April 1945.

After the war, she arrived at Hillersleben, Germany where a group was forming to make *aliyah*. In Palestine she met Arie Rufeisen whom she married. Together they joined the founding members of Bustan Hagalil. Presently, Hela has three children and ten grandchildren.

EPHRAIM AGMON

Ephraim Agmon was born in 1922 in Kisvárd, Hungary, the eldest child to a religious family of eight children. He studied in a *yeshiva* until 1937, and then in 1938 joined Ha-Shomer ha-Tsa'ir youth movement.

In October 1943, Ephraim left his parents' home and moved to Budapest. There he joined the local Ha-Shomer ha-Tsa'ir branch, where he participated—among other activities—in preparations to operate in underground conditions.

In 1942, Jewish refugees began arriving from Poland and Slovakia, bringing news of the fate of the Jews in their native countries. The Hungarian Jews refused to believe that the same fate could befall them, and so had reservations as to the refugees' claims. The members of the Zionist youth movements believed differently, and aided the refugees: They provided them with false papers, taught them the local language and culture, and helped them find housing and employment.

In the beginning of March 1944, Ephraim was sent to Munkacs to help the local youth operate an organized underground to oppose the Nazis. At the same time, his family was deported to Auschwitz—only two of his brothers survived. A month later, the Germans assembled the Jews of Munkacs, but Ephraim managed to escape to Budapest, where he joined the Ha-Shomer ha-Tsa'ir leadership.

The first objective of the leadership was to transform Ha-Shomer ha-Tsa'ir into an underground movement and produce large numbers of forged documents. Disguised as a train officer and equipped with the proper documentation, Ephraim traveled throughout Hungary as a messenger for the underground. He made contact with Jewish communities and individuals, trying to convince them to organize themselves and resist the Germans.

Simultaneously, Ephraim was active in the "Tiyul" Organization, which facilitated the rescue of Jews to Slovakia and Romania. Ephraim provided the escapees with false papers and money, as well as information about contacts, hiding places, and assistance on the other side of the border.

In August 1944, Romania closed its borders and the "Tiyul" organization ceased operations. Ephraim began aiding the rescue of Jews from the army forced labor units and helped hide them in Budapest. As part of this objective, he disguised himself as Fascist Arrow Cross member, and was nearly caught more than once.

Ephraim continued with his rescue activities, joining the Hungarian Jewish Aid and Assistance Committee. Within the Committee's framework, thousands of Jewish children were saved and 50 orphanages were established (all cared for by members of the underground). Following liberation, the children were moved to outlying communities in preparation for their *aliyah* to Israel.

Ephraim made *aliyah* in 1946 with his wife, Tzippi (whom he met in the underground), and they adopted a daughter. Tzippi passed away in 1966. Ephraim remarried and moved to Jerusalem. He and his wife, Tamar, have a son and a daughter.



Hela (right) and Shoshana Langer as "Christians" on the Aryan side of Warsaw—26 June 1943

Yad Vashem Chairman Presents Lexicon to French President

On 26 February, Avner Shalev, Chairman of the Yad Vashem Directorate, presented Yad Vashem's new *Lexicon of the Righteous Among the Nations, France* to French President Jacques Chirac, at a meeting at the Elysée palace, Paris.

The *Lexicon*—co-published by Edition Fayard and released in mid-February—contains 1,200 rescue stories of the French Righteous Among the Nations. The volume also includes a comprehensive introduction, a summary of the series, maps, an index, glossary, and pictures.

Upon receiving the book, President Chirac affirmed that “this is an important publication. I plan to speak to the Minister of Education to make sure that this book and its important lessons are taught to our children.”

In attendance at the presentation were: Israeli Ambassador to France, Nissim Zvili; President of the French Society for Yad Vashem, Dr. Richard Prasquier; President of Consistoire Central, Jean Kahn; and Holocaust survivor and close friend of Yad Vashem, Maxi Librati. The previous day, a special event was held honoring the publication of the *Lexicon* at the residence of Israeli Ambassador to France, Nissim Zvili, and partner, Huguette Elhadad (see “Friends Worldwide,” page 19).

Other *Lexicons of the Righteous Among the Nations* to be published by Yad Vashem include Holland, Poland, Central and Western Europe, and the rest of the world. The lexicons cover nearly 10,000 rescue stories—the deeds of approximately 19,000 Righteous Among the Nations.



From left to right: Avner Shalev, Nissim Zvili, and French President Jacques Chirac

The New Partisans' Panorama and Donors: The Karten Family

This fall, Yad Vashem will dedicate the Partisans' Panorama, made possible by Julia and Isidore Karten's generous legacy and a major contribution from their children. The Panorama overlooks the Jerusalem forest as well as Yad Vashem's Valley of the Communities.

“The Panorama is a wonderful tribute to my parents,” says daughter, Bernice (Karten) Bookhamer. “Even more so, it honors all the Jewish partisans who resisted bravely and saved many from the Nazis.”

Son, Harry Karten agrees: “The setting—overlooking the Valley of the Communities—is not only beautiful, but symbolic. My parents looked out onto the surrounding communities from deep within the forest.”

Isidore Karten was 26 years old and working as a forester when the Nazis invaded and began moving east toward his town of Swierz in what is now the Ukraine. The youngest of 10 children, he knew the woods well and urged his family and neighbors to retreat there and resist.

Initially, only one brother agreed. But after they built one bunker and Nazi atrocities were perpetrated closer and closer, others joined. Soon they had bunkers and sub-bunkers.



The Partisans' Panorama (architectural illustration by Shalom Kweller)

Isidore would rise before dawn, enter nearby ghettos and towns to recruit others to join them, and seek food and—where possible—guns, knives, broomsticks, or any other possible weapon. He posted notes in Yiddish on trees to guide others to the bunkers, which were two miles into the thicket.

About 10 percent of nearby villagers helped the partisans, but most were Nazi sympathizers. At night, Isidore and the others often dragged tin cans on a long string and sounded noisemakers so the sympathizers would think there were many armed Jews in the forest and relay that misinformation to the Nazis. The Nazis would thus be reluctant to pursue them into the forest.

One of Isidore's recruits was Julia Grossberg, whom he later married in the bunker. Together they helped hundreds of Jews survive the war. In 1947, the Kartens arrived in the United States where Isidore went into the textile business and built I. Karten-Bermaha Textile Co., Inc. into one of the world's

leading suppliers of off-goods to the apparel fabric industry. Julia and Isidore raised three children, Harry, Marcia, and Bernice, and were blessed with eight grandchildren. Their life after the war was motivated by Holocaust remembrance and education and they were pioneering supporters of Yad Vashem. Isidore was a founder and longtime leader of the American Society for Yad Vashem and three of his children and grandchildren are also active members. Isidore died in 1999, Julia in 2002.



Isidore and Julia Karten (s'l)

“Our parents had a remarkable zest for life,” notes daughter, Marcia (Karten) Toledano. “They believed they could survive against the odds. They felt they were meant to survive. And they were. In their lives, they accomplished so much for others and for the cause of remembrance.”

Partnership with the Jewish Agency

The scope of teacher training programs at the International School for Holocaust Studies significantly increased in 2002 due primarily to Yad Vashem's partnership with the Jewish Agency. This collaboration helps support over 40 teacher training programs throughout Israel for teachers dedicated to the instruction of the Holocaust. Teacher training courses span the school year and are recognized by Bar Ilan University as a compulsory academic course of study. Additional supporters of Yad Vashem's teacher training programs include Israel's Teachers' Organization and Teachers' Union.

Professor Gutman Receives Landau Award

Professor Israel Gutman, an Academic Advisor at Yad Vashem's International Institute for Holocaust Research, received the prestigious Landau Award for Science and Research for 2002 for his work in the field of the Holocaust and Israeli History. The prize—awarded under the auspices of the Israel National Lottery fund in honor of Michael Landau—recognizes academic research and Israeli researchers who have made significant achievements in their respective fields. The prize was awarded on 9 February at a ceremony in Tel Aviv.

Highlights of Yad Vashem's Activity in 2002

Holocaust Education

- 73,000 students from Israel and abroad, 50,000 soldiers, and 4,000 college students participated in educational courses at the International School for Holocaust Studies.
- 20,000 Israeli students participated in the International School's *Nayedet* (Mobile Programming Unit) programs.
- 2,600 educators from abroad participated in 24 Yad Vashem educational courses and seminars.
- Approximately 32 teacher training seminars were held for Israeli educators.

Events, Ceremonies, and Public Relations

- 60 events (including Holocaust Remembrance Day) and 106 memorial services were conducted by the Commemoration and Public Relations Division.
- 383 official visitors received guided tours of the Yad Vashem site.
- Approximately 80,000 people per month accessed Yad Vashem's website.

Research and Publications

- 6 seminars, 13 academic gatherings, and 1 international conference were conducted and 18 prizes were awarded by the International Institute for Holocaust Research.
- 15,797 Yad Vashem publications were purchased by the public.

Documentation, Photographs, Testimonies, Names, and Library Books

- 1,867,081 pages of Holocaust-era documentation were received by Yad Vashem. To date, Yad Vashem has received over 60 million pages of documentation.
- 14,200 new Pages of Testimony were submitted to the Hall of Names.
- 4,867 new photographs were added to the Photo Archives. Yad Vashem currently houses over 263,000 photographs.
- 613 new Holocaust survivor testimonies were recorded by the Oral History Section, Archives Division.
- 3,500 books were acquired by the Yad Vashem Library. To date the Library holds 88,000 titles.
- 360,000 names of Holocaust victims were digitized.
- 14,075 on-site searches were conducted by members of the public for names of Holocaust victims.
- 4,843 written inquiries (email, fax, and post) concerning the Archives and Library were answered by Reference and Information Services.

Artwork and Artifacts

- 613 artifacts and 188 artworks were added to Yad Vashem's Museums Division collection. The artifacts collection now holds approximately 21,400 artifacts.

Righteous Among the Nations

- 565 individuals were recognized as Righteous Among the Nations. To date, 19,706 Righteous Among the Nations have been recognized by Yad Vashem.

Yad Vashem Chairman Speaks at the Bundestag

In recent years, various European nations including Sweden, the UK, Italy, and Germany began commemorating 27 January—the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau—as Holocaust Remembrance Day.

In 1997, this government legislation was passed in Germany, and since then it has been acknowledged through commemorative ceremonies countrywide, and an official state ceremony at the German parliament (Bundestag).

This year, at the invitation of Bundestag President, Professor Wolfgang Thierse, and the initiative of President of the Freundeskreis of Yad Vashem in Germany, Professor Rita Süßmuth, Chairman of the Yad Vashem Directorate, Avner Shalev, and Head of the International School's European Desk, Yariv Lapid, participated in the Auschwitz liberation day events in the Bundestag. In parliament, Shalev and Lapid addressed a 120-member youth delegation and sat on a panel of Holocaust experts during the official state ceremony.

Shalev spoke of Yad Vashem's traditional and future visions, while Lapid familiarized participants with Yad Vashem's campus and activities. Following a keynote address by Jorge Semprun—Holocaust survivor, author, and Spain's former Minister of Cultural Affairs—Shalev, Lapid, and other panel members answered questions from youth and parliamentarians on the relevance of the Holocaust for today.

In an effort to support Germany's efforts at Holocaust commemoration, Yad Vashem offered its experience, assisting in shaping the activities of Holocaust Remembrance Day 2003. Yad Vashem is currently making solid connections with the Bundestag president and heads of German commemorative sites and organizations in this same vein.

Israeli Arab Delegation Attends Yad Vashem Workshop

“May it be God's will that the visit to Auschwitz will make it better for both nations,” said an Israeli Arab member of the “From Memory to Peace” delegation while attending a workshop at Yad Vashem.

The 18 February visit of 35 Israeli

Arabs to Yad Vashem—highly atypical in recent years due to escalated tensions between Jews and Arabs—was held to prepare “From Memory to Peace” members for their scheduled May visit to Auschwitz. Delegation members include prominent Israeli Arab and Jewish intellectuals, religious figures, and businesspeople who hope to increase mutual understanding between the two peoples through their Auschwitz visit. Father Emil Shofani, head of the Nazareth Catholic community, conceived the idea to “touch the pain of the other and build a bridge for peace and reconciliation.”

During their preparatory day at Yad Vashem organized by the International School for Holocaust Studies, Avner Shalev, Chairman of the Yad Vashem Directorate delivered opening remarks. Inbal Kvity, Director of the Study Seminars Department, followed with an introduction to the journey to Poland. Participants then toured the Historical Museum and the Children's Memorial and listened to Holocaust survivor, Israel Aviram's testimony. The day closed with delegation members answering questions from local and international media and receiving educational units on the Holocaust in Arabic from Yad Vashem.

In the coming months, Yad Vashem's International School staff will continue to assist “From Memory to Peace” delegation heads in preparation for their visit to Auschwitz.



Members of “From Memory to Peace” delegation at Yad Vashem workshop. Pictured on left: delegation head, Father Emil Shofani

Israel Gutman and Bella Gutterman (Editors), *The Auschwitz Album*. Jerusalem: Yad Vashem in association with the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum, 2002, 278 pages. Israel: NIS 216, Abroad: US \$60.00 (airmail included).



Yad Vashem's new version of the *Auschwitz Album* is an original collection of 197 captioned photographs depicting the deportation of a Jewish transport from Hungary's Carpatho-Ruthenia region to Auschwitz-Birkenau. The photographs are arranged chronologically. They begin with the deportees' disembarkment from the cattle cars onto the Auschwitz-Birkenau platform, to separation according to gender, *selektion*—for slave-labor or death, final moments prior to extermination, and the sorting of the victims' belongings (by the "Canada" unit). This new version contains photographs that have not appeared in previous publications, and additional information on the deportees' identities and fates. The publication was sponsored by Caracas residents (see "Friends Worldwide," page 19).

David Silberklang (Editor), *Yad Vashem Studies—Volume 31*. Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2003, 420 pages. Israel: NIS 110, Abroad: US \$30.00 (airmail included).



Yad Vashem Studies, Volume 31 contains works from well-known researchers alongside that of up-and-coming scholars.

Nearly half the volume is devoted to Jewish life in Eastern European ghettos, examined from the Jews' perspective: Professor Nathan Cohen on the previously unknown diary of a youth in the Vilna ghetto; Professor Gershon Greenberg on the theological struggles and interpretations of Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Unsderfer in Bratislava; Professor Yehuda Bauer on the Jews of Baranowicze; and Havi Ben-Sasson on the (new)

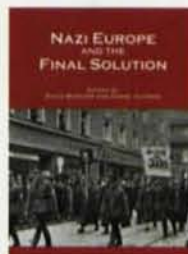
Christian community in the Warsaw ghetto.

Dr. Armin Nolzen and Dr. Milka Zalmon examine German anti-Jewish policies on a regional and grassroots level in the 1930s. Nolzen focuses on the widespread violence, and Zalmon on the first deportations of Jews in 1938 (from Burgenland, Austria). Dr. Simon Erlanger tells the story of Swiss labor camps for refugees and Avraham Milgram looks at Portugal's attitude toward

its Jewish nationals living under Nazi rule. Dr. Iris Milner analyzes Israeli second generation literature on the Holocaust.

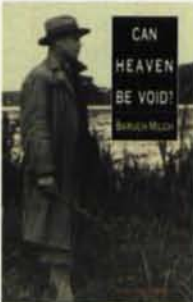
Review articles (by Professor Walter Zvi Bacharach, Professor George Browder, Dr. Yaacov Lozowick, and Professor David Cesarani) and a response to Professor Dov Levin's article on the Jewish police in the Kovno ghetto, Volume 29 (by Samuel Schalkowsky) complete this rich volume.

David Bankier and Israel Gutman (Editors), *Nazi Europe and the Final Solution*, Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2003, 580 pages. Israel: NIS 153, Abroad: US \$46.00 (airmail included).



Nazi Europe and the Final Solution is a collection of articles based on the academic papers delivered at an international conference that took place in August 1999, in Warsaw, Poland. Most articles included in this volume tackle the disturbing question: "How did people react when their neighbors were made outcasts, humiliated, deported and later vanished without a trace?" Featured in the volume are selected studies of both established scholars and young researchers who attempt to clarify and analyze the attitudes of clerical institutions, official institutions, and resistance organizations. The conference and publication were sponsored by the Gertner Center for International Holocaust Conferences and the Hamburger Institut für Sozialforschung.

Baruch Milch, *Can Heaven Be Void?* Edited by Shosh Milch-Avigail. Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2003, 282 pages. Israel: NIS 55, Abroad: US \$18.00 (airmail included).



"On Friday, 1 September 1939, my real life ended," Dr. Baruch Milch wrote in his diary as he sat in hiding after having lost his wife, young son, and his faith. Desperately lonely, he decided to record his story on thousands of scraps of paper—the compulsive writing of one who has lost everything.

Milch survived the Holocaust and moved to Israel with his second wife, Lusia. He spent years trying to reclaim the diary, which he had given to the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw for safekeeping, but he met with a wall of silence. Then, in the 1980s, he decided to rewrite the diary from memory, but died before completing his testament. Following his death, members of his family obtained a censored typescript of the original diary, which they found fully congruent with the reconstruction.

Can Heaven Be Void? is the account of Milch's ordeals, composed from a combination of his original diary and the reconstruction. The account is accompanied by an introduction by the author's daughter, Shosh Avigail.

For orders and additional information please contact: Yad Vashem Publications, POB 3477, Jerusalem 91034, Israel
Tel: 972-2-644-3434, Fax: 972-2-644-3509, Email: publications.marketing@yadvashem.org.il Website: www.yadvashem.org

Greg Schneider, Claims Conference Chief Operating Officer, attended a gathering at Yad Vashem on 15 January in honor of the longstanding cooperation between the two organizations. Since March 2002, 35 Claims Conference workers have been based at Yad Vashem, searching archival materials to substantiate Jewish slave and forced labor fund claims. To date they have found a record-breaking 21,000 matches linking Holocaust survivor claimants to their places of internment.



As part of Yad Vashem's multi-year development plan, a new Museum Complex is currently under construction and slated to open in spring 2004. Pictured on left: the new Holocaust History Museum. Pictured on right: the new Visitors' Center (Mevoah)

W Friends WORLDW

U.S.A.



Three generations of the **Mitzner** family from Houston visited Yad Vashem on 27 December: **David Mitzner** (third from right), his son, **Ira** (fourth from left), **Ira's** wife, **Mindy** (second from left), and their children **Steven, Laura, and Michael**. The family—which recently became benefactors of Yad Vashem—extensively toured the site. Pictured second from right: **Avner Shalev**, Chairman of the Yad Vashem Directorate. Pictured far left: **Shraga I. Mekel**, Director of Development, American Society.



The Young Leadership Associates (YLA) of the American Society for Yad Vashem hosted a buffet dinner entitled "An Evening for the Children of Tomorrow," at Dylan's Candy Bar in New York City on 30 January. The event was attended by American Society Chairman, **Eli Zborowski**, and 400 guests. It benefited the education programs of the American Society's Education Department, which recently held its fifth annual professional development conference on Holocaust education at the Ramaz Middle School on 26 January. Pictured on left: **Aliza and Elie Singer**, YLA Co-Chair.

Jan (left) and **Andy Groveman** led a national UJC solidarity mission to Israel. Among mission participants who visited Yad Vashem on 12 December were: **Marilyn** (second from right) and **Jack Belz** (right), National Vice Chairman of the American Society, Southern Region. Pictured second from left: **Shaya Ben-Yehuda**, Director of the International Relations Division.



The American Society for Yad Vashem held an inaugural event in Massachusetts at the Davis Museum and Cultural Center in



February. The event was attended by 60 guests and included a reception, a viewing of *The Last Expression: Art and Auschwitz* exhibit (containing artworks on loan from Yad Vashem), and a series of addresses. Guest speaker was **Yehudit Shendar**, Senior Art Curator, Yad Vashem Museums Division. Other speakers included **Meir Shlomo**, Israel's Consul General to New England; **Julie Ross**, President of "Generations After"; and **Shraga I. Mekel** (left).

Among the sponsors were: **Judith and Douglas Krupp** (center), **Linda** (right) and **Harold Schwartz**, **Rachel Goldstein** and **Jim Elkind**, **Steve** and **Barbara Grossman**, **Katherine D. Kane**, **Rachel and Mark Winkeller**, **Ellen Jawitz** and **Robert Leikind**. Guests included: **Rick Mann**, President of New England Holocaust Memorial; **Mary and Steven Ross**, founder of the Memorial, and son, **Michael Ross**.



Ezra Katz (third from right), **Jan** (right) and **Dan Lewis** (left), and their daughter, **Marilee** (second from right) from Florida visited Yad Vashem in January. They met with **Avner Shalev** (second from left), and viewed the model of the new Holocaust History Museum. Pictured third from left: **Shaya Ben-Yehuda**. **Ezra Katz** is one of the founders of the Miami Holocaust Museum.

VENEZUELA



In November 2002, the Venezuela Committee for Yad Vashem held an event in Caracas attended by over 400 marking *Kristallnacht*. Auschwitz survivors, Annie Reinfeld (second from left) and Trudy Spira (center), were honored with the dedication of the Yad Vashem publication *The Auschwitz Album*, published through the generosity of Caracas residents: Thalma and Milton Gruszka, Raquel and Henrique Margulis, Lilian and Ernesto Spira, Lya and Zoltan Gaspar, Perla and Daniel Slimak, Dora and David Yisrael, Rosa and Moric Dum, Raquel and Jacobo Szkolnik. The first volume of the annual publication *Remember* (Remember) was also released. Pictured above: Dita Cohen (left); Perla Hazan, Director of the Ibero-American Desk (second from right); and Fritz Jaegerman (right).

FRANCE



A reception was held in Paris on 25 February in honor of the publication of Yad Vashem's new *Lexicon of the Righteous Among the Nations, France* and the meeting between French president Jacques Chirac and Chairman of the Yad Vashem Directorate, Avner Shalev (second from left). The reception was held at the residence of Israeli Ambassador to France, Issim Zvili (second from right) and partner, Huguette Elhadad, and was attended by leading members of France's Jewish community including: Chief Rabbi of France, Joseph Sitruk; President of the CRIF, Roger Cukierman (right); President of the Consistoire Central, Jean Kahn; President of the Paris Consistoire, Moïse Cohen; President of the French Society for Yad Vashem, Dr. Richard Prasquier; close friend of Yad Vashem, Maxi Librati; and friends and supporters of Yad Vashem. Pictured on left: Miry Gross, Assistant Managing Director, International Relations Division.

GERMANY

Prince Albrecht zu Castell-Castell (right), first Vice-Chairman of the Freundeskreis of Yad Vashem in Germany, visited Yad Vashem. He viewed

the construction of the new museum complex and met with Avner Shalev on ways to advance the work of the Freundeskreis. Pictured on left: Shaya Ben-Yehuda.



Sir Sigmund and Lady Hazel Sternberg from London visited Yad Vashem recently. Pictured above: Sir Sigmund (right) presents Prince Philip (left) the photograph of the tree planted by Prince Philip at Yad Vashem in memory of his late mother, Princess Alice of Greece, who was awarded the title of Righteous Among the Nations.

Yad Vashem JERUSALEM

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Program of Events at Yad Vashem

The Eve of Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Day

Monday, 28 April 2003

- 20:00 The opening ceremony of Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Day, in the presence of Israel's President, Moshe Katsav, and Prime Minister, Ariel Sharon—**Warsaw Ghetto Square**
- 22:00 Symposium on "Hero and Anti-Hero: What Constituted Jewish Heroism During the Holocaust?" with the participation of Professor Chana Yablonka, Brig. (Res.) Shlomo Yanai, Dr. Mor Altshuler, journalist Dov Elboim, and moderator Dr. Motti Shalem—**Auditorium**

Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Day

Tuesday, 29 April 2003

- 8:30-15:00 Tours, creative workshops, multimedia activities, and meetings with survivors—**International School for Holocaust Studies**
- 10:00 Siren
- 10:02 Wreath-laying ceremony with the participation of Israel's Prime Minister, Speaker of the Knesset, President of the Supreme Court, Chairman of the Jewish Agency, Chief of General Staff, Chief of Police, Dean of the Diplomatic Corps, Mayor of Jerusalem, public figures, representatives of survivor organizations, school children, and delegations from throughout the country—**Warsaw Ghetto Square**
- 10:30-12:50 "Unto Every Person There is a Name"—recitation of Holocaust victims' names at the Knesset in the presence of Speaker of the Knesset, Reuven Rivlin, and by members of the public—**Hall of Remembrance**
- 11:00-15:00 Screening of movies—**Auditorium**
- 13:00 Main Memorial Ceremony—**Hall of Remembrance**
- 15:30 Memorial Ceremony for Hungarian Jews who perished in the Holocaust—**Memorial to the Jewish Soldiers and Hall of Remembrance**
- 16:00 Memorial Ceremony for former members of the Jewish Resistance in France—**Auditorium**
- 17:30 Ceremony for youth movements in conjunction with the Israel Information Center, the Youth and Social Administration, and the Youth Movement Council of the Ministry of Education—**Valley of the Communities**

Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Day
2003

