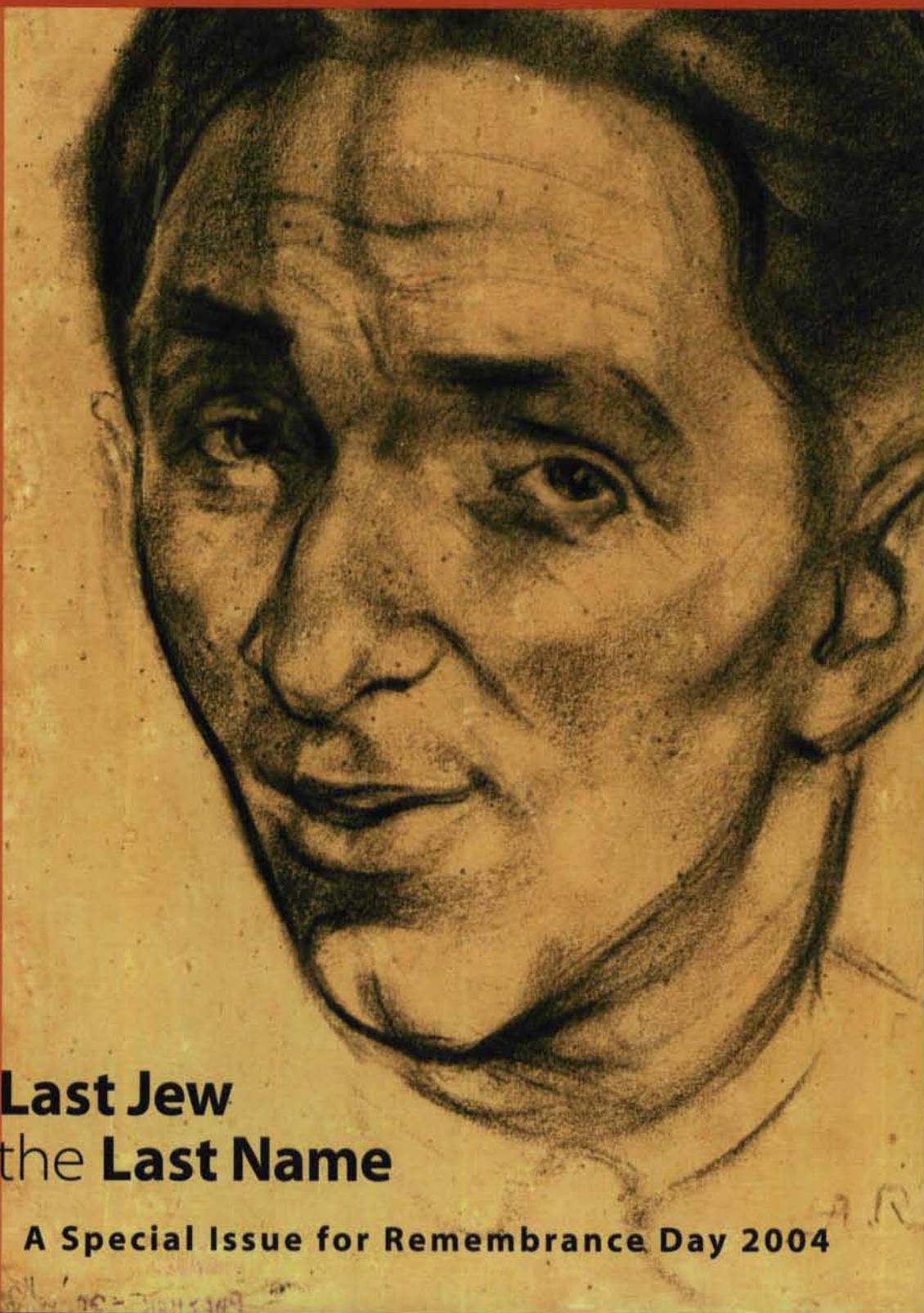


# Yad Vashem

JERUSALEM

QUARTERLY MAGAZINE, VOL. 33, SPRING 2004



Until the **Last Jew**  
Until the **Last Name**

A Special Issue for Remembrance Day 2004

# Yad Vashem

JERUSALEM  
MAGAZINE, VOL. 33, Nisan 5764, April 2004

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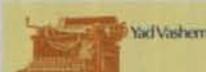
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Yad Vashem

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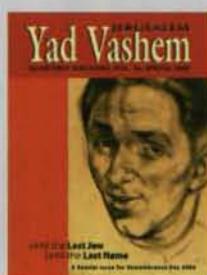
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## Editors' Remarks

**A**s we prepare to upload the Central Database of Shoah Victims' Names onto the Internet this summer, this issue—dedicated to Holocaust Remembrance Day—details Yad Vashem's efforts to name and memorialize every Holocaust victim. Sixty years after the Nazis' final push to exterminate the Jewish people and eradicate their identities, we are opening new avenues to members of the public who may have further information about those who perished.

For 50 years, Yad Vashem has made every effort to collect Pages of Testimony, photographs, works of art and other personal artifacts of six million Jews in order to redeem them from oblivion back into our collective memory. Yad Vashem appeals to you—friends, supporters, survivors and educators—to join us in remembering every last one.



Cover:  
Alter (Arthur) Riton,  
Portrait of Michael  
Rapaport, Riga, 1943,  
charcoal on paper  
(pp. 10-11)

**Correction:** The article "Combating Antisemitism: Education" in Magazine 32 (Winter 2004) was written by Dr. Robert Rozett, Director of the Library. We apologize for the omission.



## The Central Th

by Dr. David Silberklang

**“**If you live—I will live within you...The city's Jews have disappeared from the streets. There is nowhere to flee."

*Last letter of Pinchas Eisner, Hungary, October 1944*

Sixty years ago, on 19 July 1944, the Germans began rounding up the 2,000 Jews of Rhodes and Kos. After being detained for several days, they were loaded onto barges headed for Athens. During the eight-day journey, the ships stopped at Leros and collected the island's sole Jewish resident. Once in Athens, the Jews were put onto a train; four weeks after the round up they reached Auschwitz-Birkenau. Nearly all who survived the torturous journey were murdered immediately upon arrival.

1944 was a decisive year in WWII. Allied victory was clearly in the offing and, despite stiff resistance, defeat after defeat was inflicted on the German forces, pushing them back towards Germany. And 1944 was the year in which Nazi Germany determined to complete the most important task it had set for itself—the murder of European and North African Jewry, the achievement of the "Final Solution." Driven



# Until the Last Jew Until the Last Name

ame for Holocaust Remembrance Day 2004

*Thrace, Greece. Jewish deportees on a ship*

by a radical and uncompromising antisemitic ideology, the Nazis redoubled their efforts to reach every last Jew before the war ended. They were in a rush; time was running out.

Drawing on sorely-needed resources from the war effort, German forces swept across Europe, assembling and annihilating community after community, individual after individual, from their homes, ghettos and hiding places. In this way, the Nazis murdered more than 700,000 Jews in the last full year of the war, including most of the last large Jewish community in Europe, Hungary. In one of the most efficient deportation and murder operations of the Holocaust, the Nazi and Hungarian regimes deported 437,000 Jews to Auschwitz-Birkenau in just eight weeks, and killed tens of thousands more later that year.

But this was not enough. In the same year, as their empire crumbled around them, the Nazis garnered their remaining resources to slaughter the last Jews in Lodz, Kovno, and Shavli; the Jewish inmates of Majdanek, Kaiserwald, Klooga, Koldyczewo, Starachowice and other forced labor camps; entire communities from Corfu, Rhodes, Kos, and other Greek islands; and as many Jews as possible

from Italy, France, Holland, Berlin, and elsewhere. Jews in hiding were hunted and killed; partisans attacked and shot. Thousands upon thousands of camp prisoners were marched hundreds of kilometers, away from the front and towards other German camps and labor installations, where their bodies could be further exploited before finally expiring. Three hundred children and their caregivers were seized from Izieu and other children's homes in France and deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau from 21-25 July, just five weeks before France was liberated. Holland saw the last deportation train leave for the East on 3 September 1944, with 1,019 Jews on board.

Who were these men, women and children the Nazis were so determined to kill, whose memories they tried to obliterate? The Jews murdered in the Holocaust were six million universes entire. One of Yad Vashem's very first projects was documenting their names and ultimate fates. Since 1954, approaching three million names have been recorded, but much remains to be done; indeed, some of the names may never be known. For entire families, even entire communities were annihilated, leaving behind no trace and for whose memory there

is no one who can step forward. After five decades, Yad Vashem reaffirms its commitment to redeem their names, their faces, and their life stories. We will leave no stone unturned in our efforts to retrieve the memory of the life of every Jew killed in the Holocaust.

Sixty years since that dramatic and fateful year, we stand at a threshold. In a few months, the Central Database of *Shoah* Victims' Names will be accessible on the Internet, thereby making this unique and precious resource available to every Jewish household worldwide. As we strive to salvage the memory of each of the six million from the oblivion the Nazis intended; as we reclaim our families, their neighbors and friends, and our people's lost worlds, we continue to search everywhere for more information, photographs and personal stories about each and every one. It is upon the Jewish people and the world at large to help restore their memory. We must assist remaining survivors to complete Pages of Testimony for all those they knew who perished in the Nazi drive to exterminate our people. We must salvage the memory of six million individuals, until the very last name.

*The author is Editor of Yad Vashem Studies*

# Online This Summer: *Shoah* Gathering Data from Every Source

by Zvi Bernhardt and Nadia Kahan

**W**hen the Central Database of *Shoah* Victims' Names is launched onto the Internet this summer, it will mark a significant milestone in over 50 years of intensive work at Yad Vashem, and cooperation with international governmental, voluntary and academic institutions.

To make the database as comprehensive as possible, Yad Vashem has sought to unify the community of those committed to memorializing Holocaust victims worldwide. Using the database and tools developed for the Hall of Names, hundreds of lists are being incorporated into the database, making it the most extensive such list available. This momentous task is being assisted by businessman and high-tech entrepreneur Yossi Hollander and other individuals.

The reason for uploading the database onto the Internet is multidimensional: to give free unhindered access to all the data digitized so far, ensuring lasting commemoration of those victims for whom we already have some information; to enable every family to check if their relatives are already commemorated in the Hall of Names and if not, to allow the direct submission of as yet unrecorded victims' names via online Pages of Testimony; to correct or supplement already existing data; and to enable Holocaust education and commemoration to reach the farthest corners of the world. The database will thus become an interactive platform for the public to join Yad Vashem in creating as complete a memorial as possible to each and every Holocaust victim. Chief Judge Edward R. Korman—responsible for the distribution of funds from the Holocaust Victim Assets Litigation against Swiss Banks—is supporting this vital endeavor as part of an extensive list of all the victims of the Nazi regime.

Although uploading the database at this stage is a notable watershed, it by no means signals the culmination of the project. The process of collecting and computerizing names continues.



## Pages of Testimony

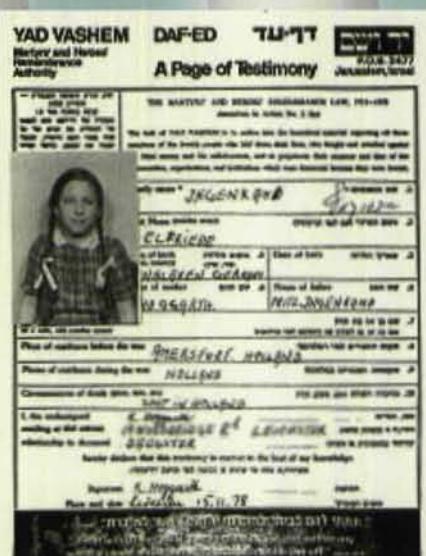
From its inception, Yad Vashem realized that one of the best resources for gathering information about and memorializing individual Holocaust victims were Pages of Testimony. Over two million personal accounts of family and friends who perished during the *Shoah* recorded on Pages of Testimony have been digitized so far, forming the core of the database. However, the Pages alone do not memorialize all the victims, institutions and organizations—the Jewish world—destroyed in the Holocaust.



*The Stryj Megilah*

Other communities wanted to express the memory of their loved

ones artistically, and created traditional *megilot* (memorial scrolls), which were also frequently deposited for safekeeping in Yad Vashem. With the help of volunteers, Yad Vashem has digitally recorded some 300,000 names which appear in these valuable sources.



## The General Public

In addition to Pages of Testimony, the public is encouraged to provide photos and personal documentation (birth certificates, diaries, works of art, cards from ghettos and camps, etc.) of

those who perished. These may then be scanned and added to the information that already exists for that person.



International Fencing Association membership card of Hungarian Olympic Fencing Champion Attila Petschauer, who was murdered in 1943 in a Hungarian labor camp in the Ukraine.

## Archival Lists

In a 1997 survey, Yad Vashem found over 10,000 different lists in its archives, amounting to many millions of names. Since then, Yad Vashem has made every effort to digitize these names, with the help of volunteers and members of the JewishGen organization. There is still much to be done to complete this task, and Yad Vashem hopes to find the resources to accelerate and complete this process as quickly as possible.

# Victims' Names Database

## International Cooperation

Among the international bodies Yad Vashem is working with is Terezinska Iniciativa in the Czech Republic, an institution dedicated to researching and memorializing Holocaust victims who passed through Theresienstadt. Yad Vashem has both provided names and received digitized versions of original lists of victims written in the camp.



This photo from the Auschwitz Museum—sent to Yad Vashem by a private individual—shows the suitcase of Petr Eisler, whose name appears in the Theresienstadt list.

Serge Klarsfeld has contributed to the database a digitized copy of the list of Jews deported from France. He also helped finance the ongoing effort to computerize the *Nerek* (names) series—lists of Hungarian Jews already in our archives.



Israel Museum, Jerusalem.  
Gift of Caroline and Joseph Gruss, New York.  
On permanent loan to Yad Vashem.

Joachim Weingart (1895-1942), *Flowers*, oil on canvas. Weingart's name appears in the Klarsfeld list. Images of his paintings and information about him from an art catalogue have been entered into the database.

The DOW (Archives of the Austrian Resistance Movement) has compiled a list of Austrian Jews deported by the Nazi regime, which has been added to the database.

These are only a few of the organizations with which Yad Vashem is cooperating, and whose computerized lists have been or will be incorporated into its central database. Additional projects include the Museum of Genocide Victims in Belgrade (list of victims from Yugoslavia), the Lodz Ghetto census, listings of camp inmates from Mauthausen, Dutch Oorlogsgravenstichting (deportees from The Netherlands), Bundesarchiv Germany (victims from western Germany), Dr. Rita Meyhoefer from the Freie Universität Berlin (victims from Berlin), Thessaloniki Jewish Community (victims from Thessaloniki), Bergen-Belsen memorial (camp inmates from Bergen-Belsen), Schweizerisches Bundesarchiv (refugees rejected on the Swiss border), Daniel Kazee and the The Czestochowa-Radomsko Area Research Group.

## Funding digitization worldwide

Yad Vashem has given small grants to organizations dedicated to digitizing *Shoah* victims' names, with the generous help of the Zantker Charitable Foundation, USA. One of these projects is the Slovakia Holocaust Jewish Names Project, which is digitizing names based on archival material in Slovakia. Among others are the Lithuanian Names project, the Latvian Names project and the Names project for Estonia.

Zvi Bernhardt is Deputy Director of Reference and Information Services and Head of Data Processing in the Hall of Names, and Nadia Kahan is Director of Reference and Information Services

## Holocaust Education Online

by Na'ama Shik-Eytan

The Development Department of the International School for Holocaust Studies is designing an online educational program as an adjunct to the Central Database of *Shoah* Victims' Names. The site will enable users to "become acquainted" with a Page of Testimony and follow the unfolding story of a particular person, family or community by addressing questions such as: What did he/she do for a living? What do we know about the place he/she lived? What happened to other members of his/her family during the war? How did he/she die and what else do we know about that event? Users will be able to augment the historic-biographical data contained within a Page of Testimony through links to additional available testimony, books or photographs relating to the victim or the individual who filled out the Page.

The Pages of Testimony collection may also be utilized for educational activities, ceremonies, and history lessons. Presently in Hebrew and English (and additional languages in the future), the site will help educators prepare activities, and connect them to Yad Vashem's current database of learning resources.

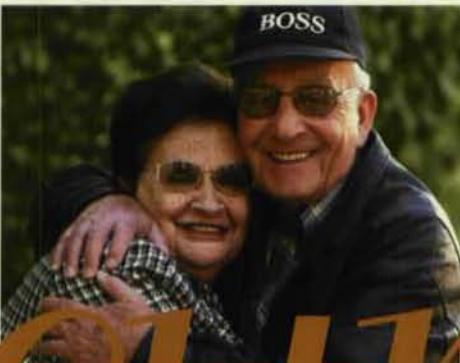
The author works in the Development Department of the International School for Holocaust Studies

Friday, 19 December 2003 (Sabbath eve and the first night of *Hanukkah*) was an ordinary day of work. I barely noticed three visitors who apparently had no intention of looking at the Database of *Shoah* Victims' Names. Nevertheless, I offered my routine advice to one of them—an elderly lady—to use the opportunity to search the database for possible entries on family members.

For me everything was clear. It was one of those cases when two survivors thought the other had perished in the Holocaust. Even more astonishing was that the brother and sister had lived for almost half a century only 70 km from each other in Israel, a small country with rarely more than a degree or two of separation. After long decades of

an elderly woman pushed her out of the line of children waiting to enter a gas chamber. Meanwhile, Beniek had found shelter in the Soviet Union; from 1943 he fought the Germans in the ranks of the Red Army. In early 1945, he was among those who liberated Auschwitz. However, by that time Ruza was being forcibly transferred by the Nazis to Ravensbrueck. She was finally liberated in Neustadt-Glewe, a sub-camp of Ravensbrueck, on 2 May 1945.

Zitka Tishler, Courtesy Yad Vashem Archives



# Reunited

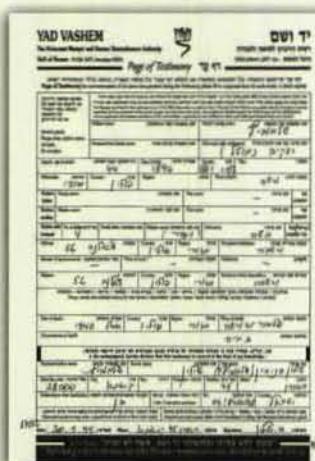
## Siblings Find Each Other Through Pages of Testimony

Now 73 years old, Shoshana November had visited Yad Vashem several times before, but had never searched for the names of dear ones who had perished in the Holocaust. Then a friend from the United States who was making a documentary film about Shoshana asked her to accompany her on a visit to Yad Vashem.

I helped Mrs. November search the database and we soon found a Page of Testimony in memory of her father, Yakow Shlamowicz, which she had submitted in 1956. The Page also listed two of her brothers—Beniek and Samek—as having died. Shoshana remembered a third brother, Shlamek, whom she assumed was also dead. I searched the database further and, to our surprise, found an additional Page of Testimony on Yakow Shlamowicz, submitted in 1999 by Binyamin (Benny) Shilon, formerly Beniek Shlamowicz, in memory of his father.

**"You cannot describe this in words. I grew up alone and I was immune to crying; I didn't know how. But last night, I cried."**

It quickly became apparent that four years previously, Benny (now aged 77) had sent Pages of Testimony to Yad Vashem recording all his family as Holocaust victims. Among them were his parents Yakow and Basia, brothers Shlamek and Samek, and younger sister Ruza (Shulamit) Shlamowicz—now Shoshana November.

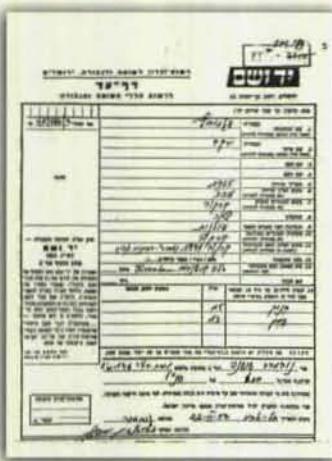


Pages of Testimony on Yakow Shlamowicz, submitted by his children Binyamin (Benny) Shilon (left) and Shoshana November (right)

despair they had finally found each other, thanks to Yad Vashem and the unique collection of Pages of Testimony. These Pages—symbolic tombstones of those who perished—are sometimes the key to linking long-lost living relatives.

Both siblings were born in Warsaw: Beniek (Benny) in 1926, and Ruza (Shoshana) in 1930. Due to unfortunate family circumstances, Beniek and Ruza, along with their brothers, were dispersed in orphanages or to their relatives' families. Ruza spent some years in Dr. Janusz Korczak's orphanage. But on the eve of the war, Ruza was reunited with her father, who had settled in Krakow.

Against all odds, Ruza had survived the Holocaust in Nazi concentration and extermination camps, including Auschwitz, where



looked for her and my siblings during all the years after the war," Benny recalled, after their reunion. "You cannot describe this in words. I grew up alone and I was immune to crying; I didn't know how. But last night, I cried."

The story of Shoshana November and Benny Shilon is indeed rare. But is it unique? How many similar stories may lay hidden in the Pages of Testimony collection? The most recent case of reunited siblings was in 2000, under similar circumstances. It is my hope that when Yad Vashem provides global Internet access to its *Shoah* Victims' Names Database this summer, other survivors will find each other, even if it is only after 67 years.

*The author is in charge of Reference and Information Services in the Hall of Names*

The Hungarian Jewish community was annihilated towards the end of WWII, as the Red Army approached the Hungarian frontiers. The impending Nazi defeat and the responsibility the perpetrators of the crime were about to face had no effect on bringing the killings to an end. In fact, the deportations of Hungarian Jews to Auschwitz in the spring and early summer of 1944 proceeded more quickly than those that had been employed against any Jewish collective in Europe, except for the mass deportation from the Warsaw ghetto in the summer of 1942. The murder machine accelerated to peak speed during these months in terms of both the magnitude of the extermination of Jews in Auschwitz-Birkenau and the barbarity employed in this operation.

course of many months and even years. Beginning in mid-April, stunned families and communities were subjected to terrifying searches for valuables, while being crowded into makeshift and then often larger ghettos.

The transports to Auschwitz began on 15 May, and continued until July. In all, 147 freight trains packed with over 435,000 men, women, children and elderly set out from points spanning the entire country. Only the bulk of Budapest Jewry was spared. In her memoirs, Sarah Beinhorn (Klein) of Munkács recalled: "The distressing journey lasted two days, and nobody knew where it was heading. Each person was preoccupied with himself, attempting to overcome the great fear in his heart... Fatigue and helplessness overwhelmed them and caused them to fall asleep on their feet for a moment

"I remember the arrival of one of the first Hungarian transports," wrote Alfred Fiderkiewicz, a Polish physician who worked in the infirmary barracks at Birkenau, in his memoirs. "We saw a large number of well-dressed men and even more elegant women... Despite the screaming of the SS men, the people milled about or consulted with each other in groups. The SS men shouted and cracked their whips, but the newly-arrived people did not yield. They threatened, cursed, and demanded an audience with the commander... Members of the transport who saw us next to the barbed wire began to approach us. They spoke an unfamiliar language. When we gestured that we did not understand them, they began to speak German and French. Then one of us shouted, '*Das ist Birkenau!*' Did this mean anything to them? I do not know."

The summer months saw a respite. But following the failed attempt by Regent Miklos Horthy to break his alliance with Nazi Germany on 15 October, the Hungarian fascist Arrow Cross Party rose to power. Soon thereafter the deportations recommenced, accompanied by mass murder in Budapest. Tens of thousands of Jews were marched by foot to the Austrian border, where they were cruelly enslaved building fortifications. The survivors were then taken on death marches, mostly to German camps in the Austrian interior. Many died on the way; others perished in the camps on the eve of liberation and even afterward.

During the deportations—especially the last phase—Jews were aided by many dedicated and courageous people. Foremost were diplomats Raoul Wallenberg of Sweden and Carl Lutz of Switzerland, representatives of the Red Cross, and Christian



## A Community Destroyed 60 Years Since the Annihilation of Hungarian Jewry

*Jews being deported from Koszeg, Hungary, 1944*

In the shadow of humiliating defeat in the First World War and the unfolding economic crisis, Hungary moved closer to Nazi Germany in the late 1930s hoping, among other goals, to regain the vast territory it had lost in the Trianon peace settlement. The alliance with Germany yielded fruit; by 1941, Hungary's territorial annexations greatly increased its physical and economic boundaries. By default, it also nearly doubled the Jewish population of the country, bringing it to about 800,000 people.

Despite the disabling "Jewish Laws," until 1944 Hungarian Jews retained some personal freedoms. However, as Hungary began making moves to quit the war, the German high leadership decided to invade. On 19 March 1944, the *Wehrmacht* marched into Hungary, accompanied by hundreds of Gestapo operatives and some 100-150 members of a special unit (*Sonderkommando*) under the personal command of Adolf Eichmann.

The rapid assault on Hungarian Jewry—a community noted for devotion to its country—was marked by intensity and brutality. Within just a few weeks the Germans had implemented measures they had taken against other Jewish communities over the

of slumber followed by a shocking awakening."

Before the Germans arrived, Hungarian Jewish men serving in slave labor battalions on the Eastern Front had witnessed murder operations, or had seen their fresh traces. However, they generally believed this violence was a local by-product of an extremely brutal war—not part of a larger systematic campaign of murder—and reported it as such. Jewish refugees from neighboring countries described similar experiences, but they too were unable to express the extent of the unfolding slaughter. Moreover, Jews in Hungary commonly believed their government would continue protecting them. Even just before the occupation, young Zionists who had tried to alert provincial Jewry about German intentions were generally rebuked and sent home. Soon after the deportations to Auschwitz began, a report of the camp's activities, known as the "Auschwitz Protocols," reached several Hungarian Jewish leaders. Perhaps on the background of earlier failed warnings, the report was not disseminated. Thus Auschwitz and its operation remained unknown to the masses of Hungarian Jews until they set foot in the death camp.

groups, who granted them protection and became involved in their fate. Backed by the American War Refugee Board, and funded in large part by American Jewry, Hungarian Jews worked closely with them, playing a central role in rescue operations. Particularly prominent were members of the Zionist youth movements who realized that in their specific situation, the requisite form of resistance was maximum exploitation of existing rescue opportunities, rather than an armed uprising. Preparing forged papers, obtaining food, protecting groups of children, and activating underground escape to Romania became meaningful ways to foster rescue; some Jews even negotiated with the SS to save their brethren. Especially in the autumn, the goal was to keep Jews out of the hands of the Arrow Cross.

Tragically, these heroic rescue efforts were too late for most. By the time the Red Army took Budapest in January 1945, some 570,000 Hungarian Jews had been murdered—and another entire Jewish community wiped out in the last year of the war in Europe.

## Combating Antisemitism

by Richelle Budd Caplan

In recent years, we have witnessed a rise in antisemitic expression worldwide, unprecedented since the end of the *Shoah*. The Holocaust has become an integral part of antisemitic slurs hurled against Jews, such as “Jews to the gas chambers” or “We’ll finish Hitler’s job.” Banners declaring “Auschwitz is your country and the ovens are your homes” have been waved at sports events. Violent antisemitic attacks have been launched against Jewish students and their schools, synagogues burned, Jewish cemeteries desecrated with swastikas, and Jewish neighborhoods defaced with graffiti calling for “Death to Jews.”

But it is not just skinheads, neo-Nazis or radical Islamic activists who have declared “open-season” on the Jews. Artists, intellectuals, educators and politicians connect their disapproval of Israeli government policy to accusing the Jewish people of being “the root of all evil” and perpetrating a Holocaust against the Palestinians. In effect, we are now witnessing a complete “*Shoah* reversal”: Judaism is equated with Nazism, and Jews are accused of exaggerating—or even fabricating—the *Shoah* for their own benefit. Holocaust remembrance is under attack, and “Holocaust fatigue” is growing.

A number of European nations, such as France and Italy, have begun to recognize the severity of this anti-Jewish hatred. Policy-makers argue that by commemorating and educating about the Holocaust, the younger generation will become

# A Call to Action

## Fostering Holocaust Education

less antisemitic, less xenophobic, and more tolerant. In recent years, some 20 European countries, (including Croatia, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Norway, Romania, Russia, Sweden and the United Kingdom), have legislated 27 January—the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau—as their national Holocaust Remembrance Day. (In Israel, beginning this year, Minister for Jerusalem and Diaspora Affairs Natan Sharansky initiated 27 January as the national day for combating antisemitism.)

Yet some Holocaust educators now believe traditional Holocaust education is no longer enough to overcome contemporary antisemitism. As such, the International School for Holocaust Studies at Yad Vashem is committed to finding new ways to foster Holocaust awareness around the world, and to impart its lessons using a variety of tools and concrete guidelines. According to Pedagogical Director Shulamit Imber, “Until now, we have taught about the Holocaust only through historical accounts. Today we must continue to teach the

subject with its unique factual-historical components, but also integrate its relevance to the present, and to antisemitism today.”

To assist educators in preparing effective activities for 27 January, the School now provides



Minister for Jerusalem and Diaspora Affairs Natan Sharansky addresses European Ambassadors and diplomatic representatives at the presentation of a new lesson plan on the Holocaust and current antisemitism, at Yad Vashem

guidelines for Holocaust remembrance ceremonies, lesson plans, online exhibitions, a photograph library and lists of victims’ names for memorial readings (available on Yad Vashem’s website: [www.yadvashem.org/education/ceremonies/auschwitz](http://www.yadvashem.org/education/ceremonies/auschwitz)). On 26 January this year, a new one-hour lesson plan for junior and senior high school students, “Remembering the Holocaust and Combating Xenophobia on January 27<sup>th</sup>,” was presented to some 30 ambassadors and

## From Crisis to Hope

by Osnat Dadon

“Why do we need to learn about the Holocaust today?” “How is the Holocaust relevant to me?”

Questions like these were the starting point when the International School for Holocaust Studies began planning “From Crisis to Hope”—an educational program for some 3,000 11<sup>th</sup> grade students who attend learning institutions sponsored by the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Employment. The students—both Jewish and Arab—have social, scholastic and emotional problems, and often find themselves on the fringes of society.

Recognizing that these young individuals comprise an important part of the population,

and believing in their abilities, members of staff designed a five-day thought-provoking program with both academic and experiential components. The curriculum includes three days of seminars at Yad Vashem; one day of creative, hands-on activity using Yad Vashem’s mobile “Identity Card” program; and a tour of Jerusalem on the theme of the Holocaust and Courage, led by guides from the Ben Zvi Center.

The program seeks to foster a connection between the youth and the subject of the Holocaust, enabling them to understand its implications for all of humanity, especially Israel. It also aims to provide the historical knowledge necessary for them to deal with questions about

the nature of mankind, society, and individual and collective memory. The personal dilemmas and tragedies experienced by people during the Holocaust are approached by examining them in light of their own lives. At the end of the program one pupil said, “Although I will never be able to understand this tragedy, or find answers to all of my questions, after all these encounters it is clear to me that the Holocaust cannot be forsaken. We must learn its lessons for the future in order to prevent this from happening again, either to us or to anyone else.”

The author is Coordinator of the Informal Training Division at the International School for Holocaust Studies

# in Europe

diplomatic representatives at Yad Vashem, in the presence of Minister Sharansky. Already translated into five languages (English, French, German, Italian and Swedish), this classroom activity explores the teaching of Nazi racist ideology in German schools following Hitler's rise to power, and examines key moral questions raised by the Holocaust. The lesson plan features authentic source material from the Nazi period, including visual aids and testimonies of Jewish schoolchildren, as well as questions for discussion and a section on the resurgence of antisemitism including examples from recent times.

At the presentation, Minister Sharansky said, "There is a deep connection between remembering the Holocaust and meeting the challenge posed by antisemitism today. Antisemitism must not be allowed to stain legitimately expressed criticism of Israel, as this is a dangerous abuse of free speech and democracy. Schools, community centers, and other institutions around the world would do well to utilize Yad Vashem's lesson plan, which combines learning about the Holocaust, remembrance, and insight into today's antisemitism."

Chairman of the Directorate Avner Shalev added, "Seething Jew-hatred has made a very dangerous incursion into all facets of public life in Europe. As the

Holocaust taught us, demonization of Jews is dangerous first to the Jews, and then to the societies in which they live—even those in the very cradle of democratic civilization. The only remedy is education."

The lesson plan was also featured at a teacher-training seminar held in Milan on the same day, in conjunction with the organization *Figli della Shoah* (Children of the Shoah) and attended by 60 Italian teachers. The School's Dr. Irit Abramsky-Bligh outlined pedagogical techniques in teaching the Holocaust and distributed copies of the lesson plan to all the participants. As a result of the successful workshops held during the seminar, the School and *Figli della Shoah* is planning more seminars for Italian teachers later this year.

In addition to the lesson plan, the School has also prepared a reader, in Hebrew and English, featuring articles on the current rise of antisemitism for participants in its programs. School Director Dr. Motti Shalem is convinced that the Holocaust must remain central to any educational activity aiming to combat antisemitism today. Further, he adds, "by fighting contemporary antisemitism and other forms of xenophobia, we safeguard Holocaust memory and put its universal lessons into practice."

*The author is Director of the Asper International Holocaust Studies Program, The International School for Holocaust Studies*

## Teaching the Holocaust to Future Generations The Fourth International Educators' Conference, 8-11 August 2004

The International School for Holocaust Studies, in cooperation with Oranim Educational Initiatives, Ltd., is planning its fourth international conference on "Teaching the Holocaust to Future Generations." The conference will provide educators with an enriching and productive dialogue on the central dilemmas and complex issues involved in teaching about the Holocaust; explore new areas of research and the extensive variety of teaching materials, curricula, films, and Internet sites in the sphere of Holocaust education; present contemporary manifestations of antisemitism and Holocaust denial and the means for coping with such phenomena in the classroom; and introduce new directions in Holocaust education in other disciplines such as literature, art and theater. Conference participants will discuss current topics, including "The Holocaust in Jewish Education—the Challenge for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century," the meaning of morality and ethics in the interdisciplinary teaching of the Holocaust, and new pedagogic approaches for classroom activity. There will also be scholarly lectures to the conference plenum, learning groups and a broad range of participant-led workshops. For further information please visit: [www.teachingholocaust.com](http://www.teachingholocaust.com) or e-mail: conference2004@yadvashem.org.il

## Recent Highlights at the International School for Holocaust Studies

During the first third of 2004, the International School for Holocaust Studies conducted six seminars for teachers from abroad attended by teachers from Hungary, Austria, Switzerland, Russia and the Ukraine, English-speaking teachers, and Jewish teachers from the CIS (in conjunction with the Jewish Agency and *Lohamei Hagetaot*). Seminar days were also held for hundreds of "birthright" students—groups of young Jewish people from the Diaspora who come to Israel to strengthen their Jewish identity and connection to Israel—as well as for other local audiences including teachers, students, teachers in training, school principals and Ministry of Education superintendents.

Events and seminars were held to mark the 10<sup>th</sup> of Tevet (the Jewish universal Day of Mourning) on "Those who Risked their Lives—Saving Others in the Holocaust," with the participation of some 2,000 junior high and high school students, as well as youth movement members.

In February, a training course for youth guides traveling to Poland commenced, and will continue once a week until September. In the same month, a seminar was held for staff of the "Green Leaf" project who will accompany a delegation of Israeli youth to Poland. A modular historical-experiential program for students traveling to Poland was held in March under the auspices of the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs. In addition, an IDF delegation of 200 soldiers underwent two days of intensive preparation before their trip to Poland and Riga.

A course of seminars, supported by the Fund in Memory of Dolly Steindling, was held for senior members of the security forces—IDF officers, police and GSS personnel—in advance of Holocaust Remembrance Day.

## Through Our Eyes Children Witness the Holocaust

" You must realize that we are still only children like children everywhere else. We may be more mature, because of Terezin, but we are children just the same."

Jiri Zappner (age 14), Terezin

Drawing on diary entries and survivor testimony, *Through Our Eyes* presents the Holocaust as experienced by adolescents. The collection explores the terrible dilemmas faced by some of the one-and-a-half million Jewish children who perished in the Holocaust, as well as of a number who survived. Through the candor of their words, the reader becomes familiar with their personalities and innermost feelings, as well as the appalling hardships they faced daily.

This new and revised edition of *Through Our Eyes* was researched and written by Itzhak Tatelbaum in collaboration with Yad Vashem's International School for Holocaust Studies, and made possible through the generosity of the Koschitzky family of Toronto, Canada.



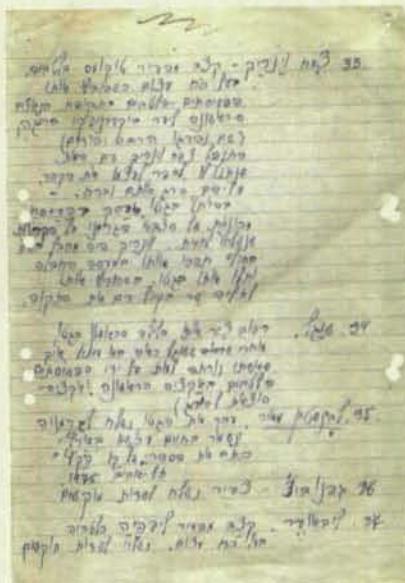
# AN Face Name Unto Every

by Yehudit Shendar

**A**winter's eve, 1943. In the basement of a house on Riga's Valmieras Street, inside a complex that holds the German army's auto repair shop, a Jewish prisoner sits for his portrait. Meir Levinstein movingly captures the unique moment in his book *The Holocaust in Riga*:

"We didn't think of Arthur [Alter Ritov] simply as a talented artist, but as someone with a soul, more than just another prisoner. It was as if he had been sent to us for a purpose, to make us feel that we were still alive... and that the Jewish people still lived—and would do so forever."

Even before the exterminations began, the Nazi war machine had worked tirelessly to eradicate the Jews' individual identities. Their sense of humanity was taken away; their personal histories obliterated. But that ineffable moment, while the artist focused on each individual's face and soul



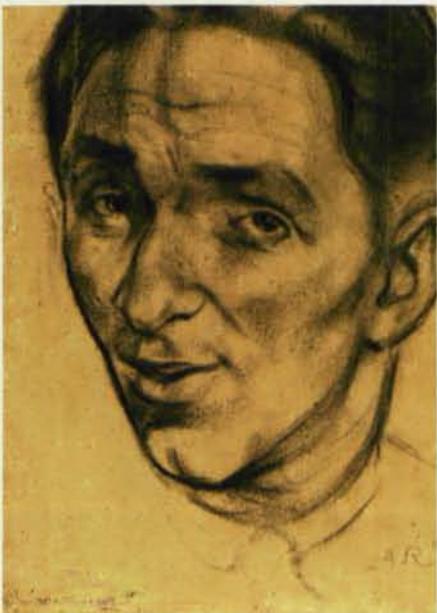
Alter (Arthur) Ritov, *Portrait of Zemah Weinrich*, Riga, 1943-1944, charcoal on paper

was a rare treasure hidden from German eyes.

Few of the *Farbrechtschaft* group survived that winter; the prisoners' days of forced labor were accompanied by sadistic torture at the hands of Latvians and Germans alike—and death was just around the corner. Some of the prisoners, however, are now being brought back to life in the magnificent art collection at Yad Vashem, which contains about 50 of the drawings executed during that winter. These drawings managed to survive the inferno, hidden by Ritov under a cupboard in the repair shop. When, finally, liberation was at hand, he recovered the drawings, bringing them to Israel when he immigrated in 1970.

Attached to the drawings, which reached Yad Vashem in 1979, was a handwritten note listing some of the people whose portraits Ritov had rescued. One of them was Zemah Weinrich, described as "a butcher from the Latvian city of Tukums. He possessed enormous strength... In the ghetto he loaded German trucks onto railroad cars bound for the front. Weinrich would sabotage them. In the end he was caught, and they hung him in the ghetto."

Levinstein's book reveals more about Weinrich. From his solitary prison cell, he managed to smuggle a letter out to his friends. "They interrogated me and brutally tortured me," he wrote, "but that's all over now... I am content to be sitting here alone and waiting for the end to come... Dear Friends! I bid you farewell. I beg you not to forget that for all of us putting up a fight is of the utmost importance... I would rather they didn't hang me—I would prefer to be executed by a firing squad. Yours, Zemah."



Alter (Arthur) Ritov, *Portrait of Michael Rapoport, Riga, 1943*, charcoal on paper

People in the ghetto reported seeing Weinrich, with his murderers at his side, taking his final journey. He walked, they said, with his head held high and the *Hatikva* on his lips.

Yad Vashem's Art Museum staff was determined to learn more about this remarkable man. Cross-referencing Yad Vashem's databases, over two million Pages of Testimony, personal documents, photographs, books, artifacts and works of art, enables researchers to restore victims' identities and garner invaluable information about surviving members of their families. Members of staff soon found a Page of Testimony submitted in 1956 by Zemah's brother, Avraham. A swift search of the phone book revealed that the Weinrich family still lived at the address listed on the Page of Testimony.

One employee dialed the number, and Avraham's wife answered. Sadly she related that her husband had died the previous year. After words of condolence, she was told that a portrait of her brother-in-law Zemah dating back to the Holocaust, had made its way to Yad Vashem. "Zemah der gibbor [the hero]," she replied in Yiddish, her voice choked with tears.

As it was a few weeks before *Rosh Hashanah*, in the spirit of the holiday, museum staff sent her a facsimile of the painting. A second conversation, charged with emotion, followed, as Mrs. Weinrich expressed her gratitude both for the gesture and for the portrait of her courageous brother-in-law, about whom her husband had talked so much.

Another individual whose portrait was in the collection was described by Ritov as "Rapoport—sent to Stuetzpunkt—a place where Jews were murdered." Museum staff were anxious

to trace this man too, but only knew his last name. Nevertheless, with the help of Yad Vashem's advanced computerized database, they found a Page of Testimony submitted in 1999 about Michael (Misha) Rapoport, an economist from Riga, submitted by Rapoport's nephew Arieh Reisser. Over the phone, Reisser confirmed that his mother's brother had lived in Riga. In 1939 he and his mother had gone to visit his uncle, but the war broke out and they were forced to return home to Palestine. After the war, Arieh's mother learned that her brother had not survived.

When Mrs. Reisser gave birth to a son a few years later, she named him Michael after her brother. Michael grew up, joined the *Likud* party and eventually became a member of the Knesset. Tragically, he was killed in a traffic accident in 1988.

Michael's older brother Arieh still had an old photograph of his uncle that was sent to his relatives in Palestine. Excited by this discovery, museum staff asked if they could examine it to help verify that Arieh's uncle Misha and the Rapoport of the portrait were the same man. They sent Arieh a facsimile of the drawing and in turn, he sent the photo—and a letter. "In light of the circumstances," he noted, "it is hard to compare the photo of a happy man, probably on his wedding day, with his portrait drawn after a considerable period of intense suffering. What makes it even more difficult is the fact that the one person who can best make the identification was five at the time—and 61 years have passed since then."

Yet a close examination of the photo and the portrait left no doubt that they were the same person, despite the fact that the portrait reflects the horrors Misha experienced, his face emaciated almost beyond recognition. His eyes are veiled in melancholy, offering mute testimony to his tragedy. "Over and above the impact it has already had on me," wrote Arieh Reisser, "I recognize the value to my grandchild of displaying the portrait of my uncle, who was murdered by the Nazis."

As with Misha Rapoport and Zemah Weinrich, dedicated Art Museum staff follow every possible lead to learn about the fate of both model and artist. The Nazis tried to eradicate completely the memory of those they murdered, but with pencil and paper Alter Ritov managed to bestow upon a few of their victims eternal life. Staff at Yad Vashem continue in this diligent pursuit, retrieving every possible piece of information in order to rescue them from oblivion. Redeeming their names and histories, these once anonymous portraits bring those who perished back unto the family of man.



Michael and Ella (Levenstein) Rapoport, Riga, pre-WWII. Courtesy of Arieh Reisser, Rehovot

The author is Senior Art Curator of the Museums Division

# Torchlighters

## Vera (Miriam) Dotan

Vera (Miriam) Dotan was born in 1931 to a family of four in Ujpest (today part of Budapest), Hungary. When the Germans invaded in 1944, her happy and culture-rich life completely changed, and within a month all the Jews were sent to a ghetto where they lived in intolerable conditions.

In July they were taken on a three-day journey, without food or water, to Auschwitz. Upon arrival, Vera and her mother were separated from her father and brother, and Vera was sent off with the other children. Desperate to rejoin her mother, Vera seized the first opportunity to escape from the group and look for her mother, but she was caught by the warden of the women's camp, beaten, and returned to the children's quarters. Later that day she fled the children's group again. This time she found her mother, and the two managed to stay together.

After two months of *selektions* and labor, they were sent to work at Wohldorf, an air base near Frankfurt. After Wohldorf was evacuated, they were transported to Ravensbrueck. When Vera's mother was sent to work in the Siemens factory, Vera ran after her. Fortunately, the group was one worker short, and Vera was allowed to join.

At the end of April 1945, Ravensbrueck was evacuated and the prisoners were marched away. They

walked under constant allied bombardment, and any stragglers were shot. In the confusion, eight women—including Vera and her mother—ran to hide in a nearby stable. When the stable caught fire, they escaped to a ditch, only to find three SS soldiers lying there. The soldiers tried to use them as human shields, but again they managed to flee, and Vera and her mother slowly made their way towards Berlin, from where they traveled to Prague and then back to Ujpest. When they arrived home, they were heartbroken to discover that Vera's father had been murdered and cremated the day he arrived at Auschwitz, and her brother had died just a few weeks before liberation.

After the war, Vera married a friend of her brother's, and in 1949 they moved to Israel, followed a year later by her mother. Today they have two sons and five grandchildren.



Vera's last picture with her brother Gabi, 1942

# 2004

## Yehuda Feigin



Yehuda Feigin was born in 1931 in Kovno, Lithuania, the youngest child to a Zionist family of four. In 1941 the Germans entered the city, and many Lithuanians joined in the rioting against the Jews. Within a few months, all the Jews were concentrated in the ghetto in Slobodka; the Feigins shared a four-roomed house with three other families. Yehuda helped support his family by cultivating a small vegetable garden in the courtyard, gathering wood and selling candies.

The *aktions* in the ghetto took the lives of many residents, including much of Yehuda's extended family. During the children's *aktion* Yehuda and his mother hid in the basement. The following day, still fearing for his son's life, Yehuda's father asked the food distributor to hide Yehuda underneath the canvas in his truck. Yehuda returned to the ghetto the next day.

In July 1944 the ghetto was liquidated and the remaining residents were loaded onto trains. The women and children disembarked at Stutthof, but Yehuda chose to stay with his father and the train continued to Landsberg. After a week, the 131 children of Kovno were separated from their families and sent to Auschwitz, where they were used as "human horses", hitched to wagons carrying items from place to place. The children formed a cohesive group and gave each other vital support.

During *selektions* on the eve of *Rosh Hashana* and *Yom Kippur* in September 1944, some 90 children were sent for extermination, including the youngest—an eight-year-old boy—who tried in vain to exchange his portion of bread for his life. After Auschwitz was destroyed, the remaining children were marched 50 kilometers to the train station, and sent to Mauthausen. During the journey the train was bombed, killing a number of passengers. After two months, they were transferred to a tent encampment and then on to Gunskirchen, where they lay in the mud under pouring rain, without shelter or food. Many people died, but the children of Kovno managed to survive until their liberation in May 1945.

After the war the Feigin family reunited, and in 1948 made *aliyah*. Yehuda married an Israeli-born woman, Aviva, in 1955, and today the couple has three sons and three grandchildren.



Yehuda and his mother walking in Kovno, before the war

## Esther Eisen



Esther Eisen was born in 1929 in Lodz, Poland, to a family of four. In 1939, after the German invasion, the family was relocated to the ghetto. Crowded into one room with her aunt, cousin and another woman, and with no income, it was difficult to subsist. After her eldest brother died of starvation and her mother fell ill, Esther found a job making artificial flowers.

In September 1942 the Jews were commanded to report to the courtyards; the elderly, children and the sick—including Esther's mother—were taken to Chelmno. Esther soon fell ill herself with typhus, but she later recovered and returned to work. In August 1944, the ghetto was liquidated, food supplies ceased and the remaining Jews—including Esther and her father—were transported to Auschwitz. The men and women were separated immediately upon arrival, and after ten days, Esther was sent to Bomlitz labor camp. A month later she was transferred to Bergen-Belsen, and then to Elsnig, where she worked until April 1945.

As the allies approached, the prisoners were loaded onto trains without food or water, and taken deeper into Germany. On the way, the train was bombed and many passengers were killed, but Esther escaped with a friend into the woods. Returning to the destroyed railway the next day, they learned that the Germans had assembled 100 of the women prisoners inside a building and burned it down.

At the end of the war, Esther returned to Poland and tried, in vain, to discover the fate of her father. After the Kielce pogrom, she decided to leave Poland along with other DPs. Along the way, Esther met Ya'akov (Kobe); they fell in love, married in Bergen-Belsen, and immigrated to Israel. Kobe fought and was killed during the War of Independence. Esther later married Romek, a childhood friend from Lodz, and the couple had three children and two grandchildren. Today Esther is a sculptor, a poet and a writer.



A silver goblet from Esther's home, recovered from her basement by her aunt after the war

## Zvi Kratz

Zvi Kratz was born in 1924 in Chust, Czechoslovakia, into a religious family of six. Following the Nazi invasion in March 1939, all the Jewish children were expelled from school, and Zvi worked to help support his family.

Zvi was transported to Auschwitz-Birkenau in June, with the other Jews of Chust. After a three-hour wait in the cattle cars while Jews from the previous transport were being exterminated, Zvi and his father Avraham were separated from his mother and three brothers, who were sent straight to the gas chambers. The next day, Zvi persuaded his father to sign up for work with him. They remained in Auschwitz for a few more days where Zvi found Pnina, his sweetheart. They pledged to meet after the war.

Zvi and his father were sent to work in a labor camp inside the destroyed Warsaw ghetto, tearing down the ruins to reclaim the building materials. In the summer of 1944, after the Polish uprising, the prisoners were evacuated to Dachau—an exhausting 13-day journey in which many prisoners died. Zvi and his father were placed in Kaufering 7—a secondary camp of Dachau—where the prisoners lived in dugouts and performed hard labor. Two months later typhus swept through the camp, killing more than half the prisoners. Zvi's father died in his arms in February 1945, two months before liberation. Zvi also fell ill, but a week later all the prisoners, including the sick, were forced on a three-day march to Allach.



Zvi (right) with his younger brother Shaya, 1937

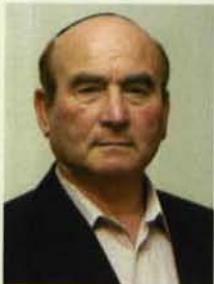
Lying exhausted in his cabin, Zvi soon heard cries of joy; the Americans had arrived and liberated the camp. Despite losing his will to live, Zvi was transferred to a hospital near Munich, where he spent a month recuperating. He then returned to Chust, found Pnina and married her. In 1949 they immigrated with their young son to Israel and settled in Jerusalem, where their daughter was later born. Today Zvi has eight grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren.



# Torchlighters

2004

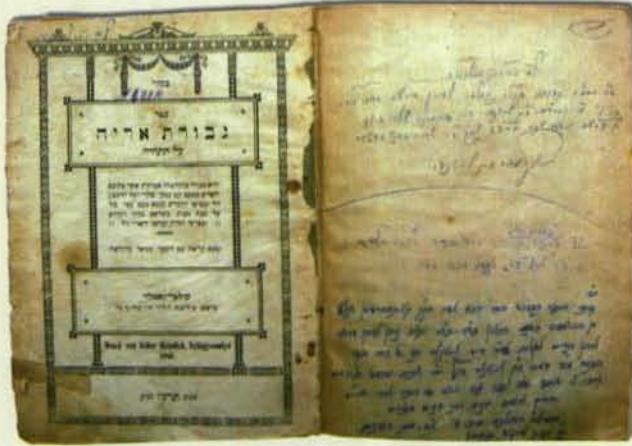
## David Leitner



David Leitner was born in 1930 in Nyiregyhaza, Hungary, into a religious family of six. In 1938, his father was drafted into the Hungarian army, returning in March 1944, just before the German invasion. Within a few weeks, local gendarmes had confiscated the Jews' valuables and herded them into a ghetto. Six weeks later they were taken to the train station, packed into cattle cars and deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau.

At Birkenau, the men of David's family were separated from his mother and sisters, who were murdered immediately. David's father and brother were sent to Buchenwald and from there to Bergen-Belsen, while David remained in Birkenau with 40,000 other children. Being tall and strong, David survived further *selektions*, as well as a severe beating after he was caught trying to escape on one of the transports exiting the camp. On *Simchat Torah*, David was herded with hundreds of other children to the crematorium. Amid cries of *Shema Yisrael* and calls for their parents, the children were stripped naked for extermination. Suddenly the process stopped; a group of children was needed to unpack potatoes from a train of supplies that had just arrived. David was among 50 children chosen for the task; they worked amidst the whistle of bullets, as guards shot at them for amusement.

In January 1945, David was transported to Mauthausen where the prisoners were whipped by SS soldiers and left naked in the freezing cold for three days.



A holy book inscribed by David's father and given to him on his wedding day

In April, they were marched through the pouring rain to Gunskirchen, where thousands of them huddled together in a camp of roofless shacks. On 4 May, the survivors discovered that the Germans had fled the camp so David made his way to a nearby town. After six months in hospital, David was strong enough to return to his ruined home. There he found his brother, who told him that their father had died marching from Bergen-Belsen.

Three months later David traveled to Czechoslovakia with the *Bricha* (Escape) organization, and then to Austria and Italy. In 1949, he sailed to Israel, joining the IDF while still aboard the ship. He settled in Nir Galim, where he met his Israeli-born wife, Sarah. Today David and Sarah have two daughters, ten grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

## Stella Franco Israel



Stella Franco was born in Rhodes in 1926, the eldest of seven children. Until 1943, the country was far removed from the war, but in 1944 Rhodes began being bombed heavily. During Passover a bomb struck the family's home, killing Stella's mother and five siblings. Overcome by grief, Stella's father moved the remnants of his family to a nearby Greek village. In July, the Germans entered the village and assembled the 2,000 Jews into a building. The day after Stella was incarcerated, they were all loaded onto four freighters headed for Piraeus. One ship was sent to Kos, to collect the island's 200 Jews. Another stopped in Leros and picked up Daniel Rahamim, the only Jew on the island. (Daniel perished in the Holocaust, together with his family from Rhodes.)



Stella (left) with her family, 1942

Nearly a month later, with no food and little water, they arrived in Auschwitz-Birkenau. Those who had survived immediately underwent a *selektion*—Stella's father, who was young and relatively healthy, chose to go with his elderly parents and small daughter to their deaths, leaving Stella alone. She and the other young women from Rhodes who were admitted into the camp refused to believe their families had been destroyed, despite the smoke spiraling out of the crematoria.

In November, Stella was transported to the Wilstedt camp in Germany. There she met 32 other women from Rhodes, including her aunt, which slightly alleviated her suffering. Following bombings of the camp, the women were transferred to Theresienstadt. On 8 May, the Russian army arrived and was greeted with great joy. Stella stayed in the camp for a few more weeks to regain her strength before journeying on to Prague, and eventually settling in Bologna, Italy. Two years later, she succeeded in contacting one of two uncles who lived abroad. He flew her to his home in the Congo and warmly welcomed her into the family. Soon after she met Salvator Israel, originally from Rhodes, who had also lost his family in the Holocaust. They married and had two children, and after many happy years, immigrated to Israel. Today Stella has four grandchildren.

## The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations – France (English Edition)

In the darkness of the Nazi occupation, a few lights flickered: the Righteous Among the Nations, who represent the best of humankind, fraternity, justice, and tolerance...

In Jerusalem, Yad Vashem has commemorated those who risked their lives, who heeded nothing but their hearts and their human conscience, and who rescued Jews."

*Jacques Chirac, President of the Republic of France*

The concept of Righteous Among the Nations is based on the Talmudic saying, "He who saves one human being is as if he saves an entire world." But what did this mean during the Holocaust? For some it was the adoption of a "recently orphaned niece or nephew from the countryside." For others, it was sharing their meager food supplies with strangers they had hidden in their attic, or supplying false identity papers for former colleagues on the run.

Over the past five decades, some 20,000 Righteous Among the Nations have been recognized by Yad Vashem. Each has a deeply human story representing the preservation of human values in the midst of absolute moral collapse. They prove that despite the grave dangers involved, there were still those who were willing to take enormous risks in order to fulfill the precept, "Love thy neighbor as thyself." These ordinary individuals are a source of hope, a role model and an inspiration.

This encyclopedia is the first in a series published by Yad Vashem containing the personal stories of each of the Righteous Among the Nations. It presents an authentic record of some of the most moving and heroic acts of our time, and is a fitting tribute to the men and women who performed them. The French edition, co-published by *Edition Fayard*, was released last year.



## Yad Vashem Marks its 50th Anniversary Activities, Projects and Special Events 2004

- 9 June International cantorial concert in Yad Vashem's Warsaw Ghetto Square; for the first time in public, the Yuval Choir and renowned cantors from Israel and around the world will perform works by the greatest cantors and composers in Jewish history—some of whom perished during the Holocaust—as well as a collection of today's well-known pieces.
- 4-9 July 24<sup>th</sup> IAJGS International Conference on Jewish Genealogy in conjunction with Yad Vashem, in Jerusalem. A special session will be held for participants at Yad Vashem on 5 July. For further information: [www.ortra.com/jgen2004](http://www.ortra.com/jgen2004)
- 8-11 August The Fourth International Educators' Conference at the International School for Holocaust Studies, in conjunction with "Oranim", on "Teaching the Holocaust to Future Generations." For further information: [www.teachingholocaust.com](http://www.teachingholocaust.com)
- Summer Uploading of the Central Database of Shoah Victims' Names to the Internet
- 21-24 November International Institute for Holocaust Research Conference on "Holocaust Research in Context: The Emergence of Research Centers and Approaches."

Marking the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of the WWII and the "Return to Life," Yad Vashem will hold a special International and Multi-Generational Gathering of Holocaust Survivors and Their Families from 4-9 May 2005. The conference will focus on identification with Holocaust survivors and recognition of their rehabilitation and involvement in society, on their contribution to the memory of the Shoah, and on preparing future generations to continue Holocaust remembrance.

## Events December 2003 – March 2004

10 December Official unveiling ceremony recognizing Luis Martins De Souza Dantas—Brazilian ambassador to France during WWII—as Righteous Among the Nations; attended by the Brazilian Ambassador to Israel H.E. Mr. Sergio Moreira Lima. The certificate and medal in De Souza Dantas' name were presented to the Dantas family at the Israeli Embassy in Brazil.

29 December Study evening marking the publication of the book *Be'Lev Ha'Ofel* (In the Heart of Darkness) by former judge Aryeh Siegelson; with the participation of President of the Supreme Court Professor Aaron Barak, Speaker of the 12<sup>th</sup> Knesset Dov Shilansky, Chairman of the Yad Vashem Directorate Avner Shalev, Head of the Institute for the Study of Antisemitism and Racism at Tel Aviv University Professor Dina Porat, Hebrew University Professor Dov Levine and the author, in the presence of 400 people.

12 January Ceremony honoring Righteous Among the Nations Father Alexandre Glasberg and his brother Vila Glasberg of France. Assisted by Vila, Father Alexandre rescued and sheltered Jews in France during the *Shoah*. Certificates and medals in their honor were presented to their relative Major General (Res.) Yosef Geva in a ceremony attended by French Ambassador in Israel H.E. Mr. Gerard Araud, Knesset Chairman Shlomo Hillel, former Minister of Immigrant Absorption Yair Tzaban, and Avner Shalev.

14 January Study evening marking the publication of the *Pinkas Kehillot* (Encyclopedia of the Communities)—*Slovakia*, in conjunction with the Association of Immigrants from Czechoslovakia, headed by Chairman Nathan Steiner; with the participation of Professor Shlomo Breznitz of Haifa University, Avner Shalev, Academic Advisor to Yad Vashem Professor Yehuda Bauer, editor Yehoshua Bichler, and Moshe Gold-Gilad, who supported publication of the volume. Some 400 people attended.

29 January Study evening marking the publication of *Aviv Bal'ata* (Spring in the Midst of Darkness) by Dov Zalmanovitch with the Association of Immigrants from Zaglembia headed by Abraham Greene; with the participation of Chairman of the Yad Vashem Council Professor Szewach Weiss, the author, and a 300-member audience.

4 February Evening of Ladino songs, in conjunction with the Israeli Organization of Extermination Camp Survivors from Greece.

10-11 March International conference on "Emmanuel Ringelblum—the Person and the Historian," conducted by the International Institute for Holocaust Research, commemorating 60 years since Ringelblum's murder; with the generous support of the Gertner Center for International Conferences on the Holocaust.

18 March Seminar on 60 Years Since the Extermination of Hungarian Jewry at the International Institute for Holocaust Research, held with the Association of Hungarian Immigrants headed by Meir Gal; with the participation of the Hungarian Ambassador to Israel H.E. Dr. János Hóvári, and Executive Committee Chairman of the Claims Conference Moshe Sanbar, and with support of the Fund for Research on Hungarian Jewry during the Holocaust in Honor of Dr. Ingrid D. Tauber (established by Dr. Laszlo N. Tauber z"l). Some 600 people attended.

## Highlights of Yad Vashem's Activity in 2003

### Holocaust Education

- 78,000 pupils from Israel and abroad and 26,000 Israeli soldiers participated in educational courses at the International School for Holocaust Studies. Two workshops were held for survivors on giving testimonies.
- 22,700 Israeli students participated in the International School's *Nayedet* (Mobile Unit) programs.
- 1,234 Israeli educators attended 33 teacher training seminars across the country, and 390 educators from abroad participated in 14 seminars at Yad Vashem.
- 4,200 educators participated in training courses in 18 countries abroad, and 96 teachers completed 2 online courses.

### Events, Ceremonies and Public Relations

- 70 events (including Holocaust Remembrance Day) and 173 memorial services were conducted by the Commemoration and Public Relations Division.
- 522 official visitors received guided tours of the Yad Vashem site.
- Approximately 120,000 people per month accessed the Yad Vashem website.

### Research and Publications

- 15 research workshops and seminars were conducted, 2 research chairs were established, and 1 international conference was held by the International Institute for Holocaust Research.
- 8 senior researchers were hosted by the Research Institute, assisted by research fellowship grants. In addition, 15 awards to masters and doctoral students, 1 doctoral research scholarship and 2 research awards were granted by the Institute.
- 27 new books were published by Yad Vashem, including the first volume of the *Lexicon of the Righteous Among the Nations* and further volumes of *The Comprehensive History of the Holocaust*.

### Documentation, Photographs, Testimonies, Names and Library Books

- 1,900,000 pages of Holocaust-era documentation were received by Yad Vashem. To date, Yad Vashem's Archives contain over 62 million pages of documentation.
- 236,000 names from archival lists and documentation were added to the Central Database of *Shoah* Victims' Names. Approaching 3 million names of Holocaust victims have been digitized so far.
- 15,000 new Pages of Testimony were submitted to the Hall of Names. The Yad Vashem database now contains over 2 million Pages of Testimony.
- 3,170 new photographs were added to the Photo Archives, and 1,452 photos to the Hall of Names. Yad Vashem currently houses over 267,500 photographs, including 100,000 attached to Pages of Testimony.
- 637 new Holocaust survivor testimonies were recorded by the Oral History Section, Archives Division. The Archives currently house over 40,000 video, audio and written testimonies.
- 3,600 book titles were acquired by the Yad Vashem library. To date, the library holds 90,000 titles in 50 languages.
- 10,100 on-site searches were conducted by members of the public for names of Holocaust victims. 53,000 online searches were made during experimental pilots of the Names Database during a genealogical conference, at the General Assembly (GA) and the Israel Business Forum.
- 23,000 public inquiries were answered by the Reference and Information Services.

### Art works and Artifacts

- 677 artifacts and 212 works of art were added to Yad Vashem's Museums Division collection. The artifacts collection now holds over 22,000 items, and the art collection includes some 8,000 pieces.

### Righteous Among the Nations

- 499 individuals were recognized as Righteous Among the Nations. To date, 20,205 individuals have been recognized as Righteous Among the Nations by Yad Vashem.

## Miraculous Survivor, Generous Supporter

Sol (Szulem) Silberzweig's survival of the Holocaust is an astonishing tale of remarkable courage, amazing initiative and incredible luck.

Originally from Warsaw, Sol survived the Warsaw ghetto uprising and endured seven concentration and death camps, including Treblinka, Majdanek, Auschwitz-Birkenau, Dachau and Mauthausen. He barely escaped becoming a victim of Dr. Mengele's experiments and survived two death marches, fleeing one while being shot at by a German soldier. When he was liberated in 1945, Sol had lost his parents, three sisters, two brothers, and their families.

Sol's experiences—recently published by Yad Vashem—also include



Left to right: Sol Silberzweig; American Society for Yad Vashem's Director of Development Shraga Mekel; Former White House Press Secretary Ari Fleischer and his wife Becki; Dr. Rochelle Cherry (Sol Silberzweig's daughter)

the story of his childhood sweetheart Gittel (Gloria), whom he lost and found in the camps, only to lose her once more. When he finally found her again after the war, they married and moved to America where they raised a family. Some 30 years later Gittel was tragically killed in a car accident; heartbroken, Sol never remarried.

Sol Silberzweig continued his family's tradition of fur manufacturing through his two companies Royal Mink and Luxurious Furs. A successful businessman, he regularly contributed to worthy causes, and donated a model to Yad Vashem depicting the horrors of Auschwitz. When he recently became a Yad Vashem benefactor, Sol remarked: "I believe this vital institution will always remind our children and grandchildren—and the whole world—what happened."

## Buchman Memorial Prize 2003

Yad Vashem awards the annual Buchman Memorial Prize to authors, artists, and researchers for exemplary work in the field of the Holocaust. The prize—established by the Jacob Buchman Foundation in memory of Buchman's wife, Esther, and daughter, Hanaleh, who perished in the Holocaust—was presented in an official ceremony in December 2003 to Lizzie Doron for her book *Days of Tranquility* and to Itamar Levin for his book *Walls Around*.

In their recommendations, committee members wrote: "Lizzie Doron's devotion, empathy, sensitive writing and acute insights regarding the reality of life after Auschwitz have made a vital and



2003 Buchman Memorial Prizewinners  
Itamar Levin and Lizzie Doron

notable contribution in creating awareness of the ongoing effects of the Holocaust, recognizing its effects beyond the time and location in which it took place.

"Itamar Levin has played an important role in turning public attention to the multifaceted economic robbery of Jews during the *Shoah*... His book presents a broad perspective of the Warsaw Ghetto and its destruction, and points at the centrality of theft in shaping the Jews' lives in the ghetto and its debilitating and fatal repercussions even before the 'Final Solution' officially began."

# VISITS AT YAD VASHEM



**D**uring his visit to Yad Vashem on 4 March, Romanian Minister of Education, Research and Youth Alexandru Athanasiu (left) committed to bringing Romanian high-school students to Yad Vashem for educational programs, developing new Holocaust curricula for Romanian schools, teacher training for

educators, and a Romanian-language Holocaust textbook. Chairman of the Yad Vashem Directorate Avner Shalev said Yad Vashem would be pleased to serve as pedagogical consultant and provider of educational services and content, and that this cooperation was an important step for Romania in coming to terms with its past.



**A**ctor Richard Gere (center) was given a tour of Yad Vashem by Executive Assistant to the Chairman of the Directorate Irena Steinfeldt (left) on 11 December 2003, accompanied by Chemi Peres, Chairman of I.V.A. Israel (right).

## Gertner Scholarship

**T**he Danek Gertner Yad Vashem Ph.D. scholarship is granted to an outstanding young doctoral student studying at an Israeli university finishing his or her dissertation on a Holocaust-related topic. The scholarship encourages students to complete their dissertations and join the academic world.



Danek Gertner (left) and Ronit Fisher

This academic year (2003/4), the scholarship was awarded to Ronit Fisher of Haifa University for research on "Jewish-Christian Neighbor Relations in Multi-National Border Regions in Eastern Europe in the Years 1938-1944: The Bukovina and Bessarabia Districts in Romania as a Case Study."

Next year (2004/5), Cyril Fefferman of the Hebrew University will receive the reward for his research on "The Holocaust in Crimea and the Caucasus."

**O**n 8 February, the American Jewish Committee Board of Governors visited Yad Vashem as part of its trip to Israel. The 130-person delegation was led by President Harold Tanner, Executive Director David Harris, Board of Governors Chair Robert E. Goodkind, and Board of Governors Policy and Program Chair Mimi Alperin. Also participating were family members of Righteous Among the Nations diplomats—Louise von Dardel, the niece of Raoul Wallenberg; Agnes Hirschi, daughter of Carl Lutz; Manli Ho, daughter of Dr. Feng Shan Ho; and Abigail Bingham Endicott, daughter of Hiram "Harry" Bingham IV—who were in Israel accompanying the exhibition "Visas For Life."

After a brief introduction by Chairman of the Directorate Avner Shalev in the new Visitors' Center (pictured), the group toured the construction site of Yad Vashem's new Holocaust History Museum and Hall of Names, as well as the International School for Holocaust Studies. Afterwards, Alperin chaired a panel discussion focusing on Yad Vashem's new projects and activities; the resurgence of antisemitism; the work of the International School for Holocaust Studies at Yad Vashem; and the historic visit to Auschwitz by a delegation of Israeli Arabs, which included a preparatory seminar at Yad Vashem.



**O**ver 500 foreign tour operators, representatives of tourism institutions, and journalists visited Yad Vashem on 23 February. As Israel's second most-visited site (after the Western Wall), Yad Vashem is committed to meeting the evolving needs of organized groups as well as individual visitors. The group—participants in the Third Annual Prime Minister's Conference for Tourism to Israel—were given an exclusive multi-language tour of the new Holocaust History Museum and Hall of Names (pictured), due to open in March 2005. They learned about preparations for the uploading of the Central Database for Shoah Victims' Names this summer, a major cantorial concert planned for June, and the International and Multi-Generational Gathering of Holocaust Survivors and Their Families due to take place in May 2005.



## Dedicated to Education, Research and Memory

**I**n September 2003, Hertha Najmann continued in the spirit of her late husband by endowing The John Najmann Chair of Holocaust Studies in the International Institute for Holocaust Research on behalf of the Najmann family. Isaak John Najmann arrived in England in 1939 from Germany on the *Kindertransport*. Through his communal and philanthropic work with the Joint Israel Appeal (now the UJIA), he became one of British Jewry's most dedicated volunteers for Israel and the Jewish people.

Najmann was determined to give meaning to the *Shoah* through study and research, and by perpetuating the victims' memory. His appreciation of the crucial importance of Holocaust education was further demonstrated in the annual prizes he established at the Yad Vashem's International School of Holocaust Studies in memory of his late parents.

John Najmann believed every generation should know and remember what happened in the *Shoah*; the legacy he left at Yad Vashem will allow the values he cherished to continue for generations to come.



Left to right: Shimon Peres, Hertha Najmann, Avner Shalev

# Friends WORLDWIDE

## U.S.A.

Ernst Hacker (right, with his wife, Bilha) of Beverly Hills dedicated a classroom in the International School for Holocaust Studies in memory of his first wife, Menora (z"l). At a moving ceremony attended by family and friends, Hacker also unveiled a memorial plaque in memory of his relatives who perished in the *Shoah*.



In January, a Miami Jewish Federation group toured the site of the new Holocaust History Museum. The group, headed by Norman Braman (right) was informed about the project to upload the Central Database of *Shoah* Victims' Names to the Internet, and participants were able to search for names of relatives who perished in the Holocaust. They were also given a presentation by Pedagogical Director of the



International School for Holocaust Studies Shulamit Imber (left), and heard about School programs and seminars.

## UNITED KINGDOM

Chairman of the London College of Music and President of the London Jewish Cultural Center Clive Marks (right, with Director of the International Relations Division Shaya Ben Yehuda), gave a presentation at Yad Vashem on Music and the *Shoah*. Marks is a board member of the National Yad Vashem Charitable Trust, which has been incorporated into the recently established **Yad Vashem UK Foundation**. A **Yad Vashem Forum**, comprising all major UK Holocaust-related organizations, will act as a conduit between the Forum's individual members and Yad Vashem.



Ariele Zandman Klausner (back row, left, with her daughter Jessica, front left, in the Family Plaza donated by her father Felix Zandman and his wife Ruta), her husband Steven Klausner and family visited Yad Vashem with a group from their Philadelphia congregation, Temple Beth Hillel-Beth El. Children and parents toured separately, and then met for a memorial ceremony in the Hall of Remembrance.



Linda and Hal Gottschall toured Yad Vashem with a group from Temple Israel of West Palm Beach, Florida. The Gottschalls reaffirmed their continuing support of the International School for Holocaust Studies' educational outreach programs.



Henry Grunwald QC, President of the Board of Deputies of British Jews (left, with Chairman of the Yad Vashem Directorate Avner Shalev, right, and Director of the English Desk, International Relations Division, Solly Kaplinski, center) led a January visit of the Board to Yad Vashem. The tour included the "No Child's Play" exhibition, a memorial ceremony in the Hall of Remembrance, the Children's Memorial and a lecture by Head of the International Institute of Holocaust Research Professor David Bankier, who spoke on "Current Antisemitism—Lessons from the *Shoah*."

# IDE

## CANADA



Saul and Toby Feldberg, Patrons of the Canadian Society for Yad Vashem, toured the site of the new Holocaust History Museum with Chairman of the Yad Vashem Directorate Avner Shalev (left).



Buschie Kamin of Toronto recently endowed the Documentation and Cataloguing Center in the Archives and Library Building, a gift of the Jack and Buschie Kamin Foundation.

## AUSTRALIA

Olga Nowak (third from left) was recognized by Yad Vashem as a Righteous Among the Nations in a ceremony in Sydney. Present at the ceremony were (left to right): President of the Sydney Jewish Museum John Roth; President of the Australian Association of Holocaust Survivors George Foster; Olga Nowak; Polish Ambassador H.E. Mr. Jerzy Wieclaw; Israeli Ambassador H.E. Mr. Gabi Levy; Righteous Among the Nations award recipient Adrianus Vanas; Gandel Charitable Trust and Yad Vashem representative Lisa Thurin; and Treasurer of the Freundeskreis of Yad Vashem in Germany, Josef Grotte, who was rescued by Nowak.



## MEXICO

Marcos and Adela Katz toured Yad Vashem and viewed some of the archive documents.



## AUSTRIA

Yad Vashem presented the first issue of its German magazine at a press conference in Vienna in February. Speaking at the event were (left to right): publisher Dr. Wilhelm Hopf;

Yad Vashem friend and supporter Fini Steindling; Professor Dr. Wolfgang Neugebauer from the DOW (Archives of the Austrian Resistance Movement); and Chairman of Austrian Friends of Yad Vashem, Günther Schuster.



## FRANCE

On 2 March, 250 members of the Consistoire visited Yad Vashem. The delegation represented the umbrella organization of France's Jewish communities, and was led by President of the Consistoire Jean Kahn (right, in the Valley of the Communities), Vice Presidents Joel Mergui (center) and Guy Toubiana, and heads of France's Jewish communities. Director of the French, Benelux and Scandinavian Desk at Yad Vashem,



Miry Gross (left) accompanied the participants, who visited the Children's Memorial and held a wreath-laying ceremony in the Hall of Remembrance. The group also heard a presentation about the uploading to the Internet of the Central Database of Shoah Victims' Names and President Kahn committed to financial support of the project.

## GERMANY



Director of the German Desk, International Relations Division, Arik Rav-On, (left), visited the Minister President of Sachsen Professor Georg Mildbradt (right) in Dresden in October. The State of Sachsen is supporting the German audio-guide for the new Holocaust History Museum.

## ISRAEL

President and CEO of Ness Technologies Raviv Zoller visited Yad Vashem on 7 December. During his visit, Zoller heard about Yad Vashem's plans to meet the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and was given a special preview of the project to digitize Yad Vashem's information databases.

2004

# Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Day

## Program of Events at Yad Vashem

The Eve of Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Day  
Sunday, 18 April 2004

- 20:00** The opening ceremony marking Holocaust Heroes' and Martyrs' Remembrance Day, in the presence of President Moshe Katzav, Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and Speaker of the Knesset Reuven Rivlin—Warsaw Ghetto Square
- 22:00** Symposium on "And these are the names of the Children of Israel..." with the participation of Professor Yehuda Bauer, Dr. Dina Vardi and artist Eran Tzur—Auditorium

Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Day  
Monday, 19 April 2004

- 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 President, Prime Minister, Speaker of the Knesset, President of the Supreme Court, Chairman of the Jewish Agency, the 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
- 10:30-12:30** "Unto Every Person There is a Name"—recitation of Holocaust victims' names by members of the public—Hall of Remembrance
- 13:00** Main memorial ceremony—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 Ministry of Education's Information Center, Youth and Social Administration and Youth Movement Council—Valley of the Communities

### Additional events

- 19 April** "Unto Every Person There is a Name"—recitation of Holocaust victims' names in the presence of Speaker of the Knesset Reuven Rivlin—11:00, Knesset
- 22 April** Dedication of the Last Survivor memorial on Mount Herzl, in the presence of Minister of Defense Shaul Mofaz, Chairman of the Jewish Agency Directorate Salai Meridor, Minister of Education, Culture and Sport Limor Livnat and some 1,200 schoolchildren, youth movement members, soldiers, survivors and veterans. Participants will march to the ceremony along the path connecting Yad Vashem to Mount Herzl.