New Exhibition
Charlotte Salomon
"Life? Or Theater?" (pp. 10-11)
The Pope's Visit to Auschwitz

by Prof. Israel Gutman

The visit of Pope Benedict XVI to Poland aroused considerable attention across Europe, and in Poland in particular. Poland is a conspicuously Catholic country, and the visit was interpreted as a gesture of respect for the previous Pope, John Paul II, who was Polish by origin and greatly revered by his fellow Poles.

The Pope's Polish itinerary included Warsaw—Pope John Paul II's birthplace—and Auschwitz-Birkenau. The Pope prayed at several sites and addressed the crowds of devout Catholics who came in their droves to hear him. However, various ideas expressed by the head of the Roman Catholic Church—or rather failed to express—during the course of his speeches caused disappointment, even astonishment, in certain quarters. At Warsaw Ghetto Square, for example, next to the monument to Mordechai Anielewicz, a group of Jews, journalists and other interested parties had gathered, but the Pope passed them by without so much as acknowledging them. Members of many ethnic groups, including Jews, waited in vain during the Pope's visit to Birkenau for the Pontiff—who is also German by nationality—to ask forgiveness for the anguish and loss suffered by so many during the Holocaust. In his address, the Pope stated that Heaven was silent during those difficult times but said nothing about the silence of God's “emissary on earth,” Pope Pius XII, during the same period.

Jews expected that, while standing at the very epicenter of the atrocity, at Birkenau, the Pope would also address the issue of antisemitism, a phenomenon largely driven over the generations by the Catholic Church. This hatred penetrated the hearts of many Christians, reaching its apex during the period between the two world wars. Antisemitism poisoned the Catholic masses across Europe, evolving into a full-blown cultural disease that even today has yet to be eradicated. The condemnation of, and struggle against, antisemitism are duties for which the Pope and the hundreds of millions of believers who hang on his every word must be held accountable.

The author is Academic Advisor to Yad Vashem.
Willing Accomplices?

by Dr. David Silberklang

Much attention has been focused over the last decade on the role of banks in various countries in laundering the Nazis' stolen loot and helping finance the Third Reich. Most recently, the Dresdner Bank published a major study of its own activities in assisting the regime in the 1930s. However, the question of the direct financing of, and benefit from, the persecution and murder of the Jews had not been closely examined until now.

In his article, "Credit Banks and the Holocaust in the Generalgouvernement, 1939-1945," published in the latest volume of Yad Vashem Studies (34), Ingo Loose traces the activities of the branches of three major German banks—Deutsche Bank, Dresdner Bank, and Commerzbank—in the Generalgouvernement in occupied Poland during the war. The fact that German individuals, officials, offices and firms in occupied Poland maintained bank accounts is self-evident. Yet only now has serious research been undertaken into how this operated—and shocking conclusions drawn.

Bankers as accomplices in genocide? While this is not the usual association we would make—not even in connection to the Holocaust—this is precisely the very disturbing conclusion of Loose's article. German banks in the Generalgouvernement not only had comprehensive knowledge about Nazi anti-Jewish policy, claims Loose, but also profited both indirectly and directly from the persecution of Jews and Poles. Through the "registration" and "handling" of "alien" (i.e. Jewish) property, the banks contributed significantly to the rapid impoverishment of the Jews, and were therefore also active players in the steps leading to their mass murder.

By way of their local branches and affiliates in the Generalgouvernement, these banks not only opened accounts for stolen goods and confiscated Jewish property, they also insinuated themselves into the new exploitative German economy in Poland and made sure to propose ideas and measures that would guarantee them a handsome profit from the proceeds of the persecution and grand theft. With detailed knowledge of all aspects of Nazi policy, their cooperation was an integral part of the destruction of the Jews' economic existence in the region and, ultimately, of their liquidation.

The banks' role in destroying the Jews, economically—in advance of their physical destruction—should not be underestimated, Loose argues. Nor should the fact that they did good business in an area that was in essence state-decreed and state-practiced terror, as well as in connection with crimes of an unimaginable scope.

Moreover, the banks were actively involved in helping economically to manage and finance the murder of the Jews in "Operation Reinhard." Not only did they accept stolen goods left behind by murdered Jews, they also took initiatives in laundering and processing them. As Loose convincingly shows, despite their knowledge of the source of the funds and the fate of the Jews, they chose to involve themselves ever more deeply in the process. The sums they dealt with were in the many tens of millions of Reichsmarks. And, Loose adds, there is nothing in the documents to indicate that any of the banks ever considered distancing themselves from a business that could be clearly identified as immoral, illegal and criminal. Their cost-benefit analyses and risk estimations contain not a single reference to any possibility that moral considerations regarding the fate of the Jews could have influenced business calculations in any way whatsoever.

Loose's conclusion is devastating, and it also opens the door to a new avenue of research into the Shoah. A history of the German banks in Poland during WWII must begin, he says, with the fact that without the banks' more or less smooth cooperation with the authorities, it would hardly have been possible to put the German occupation and anti-Jewish policy into practice. In the process, the banks noted the Jews' fate and continued with their criminal business, reaping millions in profits from the massive slaughter happening all around them.

The author is Editor-in-Chief of Yad Vashem Studies.
How Do You Teach About the Holocaust?

by Yael Richler

"Dear Yad Vashem Teachers,
My name is Gal. I am seven years old. I have a question: Why did the Holocaust happen? Please send me written material and pictures. Thank you very much."

This touching letter was received by the International School for Holocaust Studies last May. Though simple in words, it raises many complex questions: How should we answer Gal? Where do we start? What can we tell her and what should we avoid? Which pictures should we send her? What should our educational goals be in responding to her letter? At the same time, the letter itself embodies the answer to another question entirely: Should the Holocaust be taught to young children at all?

In a special interview, Pedagogical Director of the School Shulamit Tamir explains Yad Vashem's approach to this challenging issue: "The Holocaust is part of our identity and collective memory. Every year—especially in Israel, but also abroad—pupils are exposed to the subject through Holocaust Remembrance Day events. From a young age, pupils hear about the Holocaust in various contexts, and they watch programs and films commemorating Holocaust Remembrance Day, most of which are not suited to their cognitive or emotional level.

Activities in Europe

Within the framework of the ICHEIC Program for Holocaust Education in Europe, some two hundred European educators participated in seminars at the International School for Holocaust Studies during the spring semester (April to June). Educators from Austria, France, UK, Lithuania, and Poland—and, for the first time, Finland and Liechtenstein—spent an intense period of study at Yad Vashem, participating in tours of the site and lectures on a variety of Holocaust-related issues. Yad Vashem also held seminars for European educators in Austria, Lithuania, Poland, Romania and Russia.

A Researchers' International Colloquium for European and Israeli academics took place at Yad Vashem in April. The colloquium—held in conjunction with the Herman Cohen Academy—explored "Holocaust and Context: History, Memory and Education."

The European Department has recently developed a number of new educational study units, including online programs in Russian, German and Polish.

The First International Seminar for Teachers, September 2006 in Auschwitz

In September 2006, the International School will hold its first International Seminar for Teachers. This seminar—organized within the framework of the ICHEIC Program for Holocaust Education in Europe and in conjunction with the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum—will be held in Auschwitz from 6-10 September. The program will be geared towards graduates of 2005 Yad Vashem seminars and the main points to be covered will be new teaching units, the other victims of Auschwitz, and issues regarding multiplicators.
Although it is understandable to wish to shelter children from this frightening topic, a delay in starting Holocaust education could also lead to children forming an inaccurate impression of the concepts they hear about. Teachers must confront the educational and ethical challenges posed by children's awareness of the Holocaust.

So, how should young children be taught about the Holocaust?

The Holocaust should be taught in a spiral, modular format which expands according to age. At a very young age, the topic is presented in terms of individual experiences, supplemented by discussions of certain basic concepts in a limited and controlled way, without revealing all the events and atrocities that occurred. Pupils should be taught by a familiar teacher, or by an adult with whom they have a trusting relationship. This individual is a source of security for them while being exposed to this troubling subject. The younger the child, the more appropriate it is to present him or her with a personal story that has a positive dimension to it—a rescue story or one about a Righteous Among the Nations.

For older children, in order to broaden their understanding of the real variety of fates for Jews during the Holocaust, we talk about the family. Concentrating on the family enables us to touch on the main framework with which children are familiar and for which they are able to develop empathy. At this stage, we can also begin raising basic issues understandable to children, rooted in their world and family experience. Their knowledge of the day-to-day challenges faced by Jews during the Holocaust is expanded, with attention to various ways of coping with crisis situations.

Can you tell us about the School's curricula and teacher training for the elementary grades?

"Over the years, the School has developed several educational programs suitable for this age group, like Tommy and I Wanted to Fly Like a Butterfly, which draws children into the world of a Jewish girl who tenaciously clung to life amid a harsh reality of destruction and loss, eventually finding her way to Israel and building a new life.

"The School also has a new course for Israeli elementary school teachers, training them to incorporate Holocaust education in an age-appropriate way into school curricula and activities."

What about the Internet?

"A mini website in Hebrew, supported by the Claims Conference, was recently launched jointly by the School and Snunit (Internet-based learning) called "Children in the Ghetto" (www.ghetto.galim.org.il). Written by and for children, the site describes life during the Holocaust from the perspective of children living in a ghetto, and tries to present the complex experience of ghetto life in a way accessible to children today. The site centers on an imaginary ghetto street that forms the background for various original exhibits such as video testimonies, photographs, artifacts and drawings. Each exhibit is accompanied by thought-provoking interactive activities. The School's website also has a lesson plan for third- and fourth-grade teachers using the book I Wanted to Fly Like a Butterfly, which includes suggestions for guided reading, class discussion and creative work."

And finally, can you explain how young children are taught about the Holocaust at Yad Vashem itself?

"The School offers a wide range of activities for fifth- and sixth-graders at Yad Vashem, as well as the "Memories in a Box" mobile educational unit that goes directly to schools in Israel. Yad Vashem's educational program familiarizes pupils with the world of Jewish children before and during the Holocaust by means of hands-on activities that make use of visual and tactile media. Thus, for example, on a tour of the Valley of the Communities, pupils encounter "Mottl the Fool" and "Jokha the Salonican," through the mediation of a professional actor. Pupils also tour the site in a special project based on the stories of Uri Orlev; they view artistic creations and process their experience via creative activities such as art and drama."

The author is Head of Hebrew Curriculum Development in the International School for Holocaust Studies' Teacher Training Department.

*Name changed to protect identity

**New online course in English**

Teaching the Holocaust: The Fifth International Educators’ Conference

On 26-29 June, the Fifth International Educators’ Conference took place at Yad Vashem. Some three hundred participants from 21 countries worldwide attended the biennial event, which was organized by the International School for Holocaust Studies and Oranim Educational Initiatives Ltd., and supported by the Asper International Holocaust Studies Program at Yad Vashem.

Preceding the conference was a tour of the Yad Vashem Campus and the new Museum Complex, as well as a special panel discussion held by the Association of Holocaust Organizations (AHO) on “Teaching the Holocaust in Light of Contemporary Antisemitism,” chaired by AHO President Dr. William L. Shulman.

At the conference’s opening ceremony, participants were addressed by Chairman of the Knesset Committee for Education, Culture and Sport Rabbi Michael Melchior MK, Chairman of the Yad Vashem Directorate Avner Shalev and President of Oranim Educational Initiatives, Ltd. Shlomo (Momo) Lifshitz. Each day began with a panel discussion featuring keynote educators, scholars, political leaders and historians on the following topics: “The Face of the Individual within the Historical Narrative: Educational Uses of Holocaust Art, Literature, and Film,” “The Educational Implications of Visiting Holocaust Memorial Sites and Museums: On Site Objectives and Classroom Use,” and “The Uniqueness of the Shoah in the Context of Genocide: the Educational Objectives.” The panels were followed by moderated discussion groups and smaller educational workshops connected to the day’s topic. The Honorable Prof. Irwin Cotler, Member of Parliament, Ottawa, Canada, closed the conference.

At the time of press, the conference had just concluded. A longer report on the conference will be featured in the next issue, Fall 2006.
In a situation where words are inadequate and events are hard to convey, the human body and the language of dance may be employed to communicate emotions and narratives. A screening of two videodance works, Zu (from the Yiddish: “Gathering,” 7 minutes, 1999) and Sarah (pictured above, 6 minutes, 1999), by the Toronto-based Kaeja d’Dance dance company, was the starting-point for an investigation of the videodance medium as a tool for representing and perpetuating the memory of the Holocaust. Film maker Maya Deren has referred to such efforts as “choreography for the camera.”

The artists, director and choreographer Allen Kaeja and his partner, dancer Karen Kaeja, were guests of Vdance—Israel’s first videodance festival, held at the Tel Aviv Cinematheque and the Yad Vashem Visual Center in May. Together with director Mark Adam they created seven videodance films that deal with the personal history of Allen Kaeja’s father, Morton Norris (Nossal), a Holocaust survivor from Kutno, Poland. Only in adulthood did Allen come to learn the story of his father, a butcher by trade who survived Auschwitz as a result of his placement in the camp kitchen. “The combination of stage and film works illustrates the need to highlight emotionally-charged imagery with music in order to awaken the interest of the viewer,” Karen Kaeja explains. “The dances captured on film preserve the integrity of these two art forms and imbue them with an historical significance.” Allen adds: “There is an enormous responsibility and challenge in expressing Holocaust remembrance: to represent images of loss, betrayal, uncertainty, desperation, determination and necessity without becoming melodramatic or falling into recognized patterns of expression or clichés.”

The works screened at Yad Vashem initiated a discussion about the Holocaust through the use of images that are embedded in the collective memory but re-processed in a new language: the language of dance and film. Art historian and cultural scholar Dr. Gideon Ofrat discussed the films and their importance for the work of Yad Vashem: “What is Yad Vashem’s mission? To document, to remember, to educate of course, but also to mourn through symbols. A monument is a metaphor. But the greatness of a metaphor lies in its openness to the viewer’s interpretation. Kaeja d’Dance’s Zu can be taken as a reflection of the human condition. Zu’s context is the Holocaust, but at the same time it bears great metaphorical power, as art that transcends its context, thereby moving into the existential domain.”

Yad Vashem Directorate Chairman Avner Shalev reviewed the change that took place at the end of the 20th century in Holocaust representation, historical research and video/visual documentation: “Documentation of the atrocities at Bergen-Belsen began immediately after the camp’s liberation; the American miniseries Holocaust, Spielberg’s Schindler’s List—these all exemplify the great influence the visual medium has had on efforts to document the Holocaust and perpetuate its memory. Today we are at a crossroads, from which nothing appears certain: How will the Holocaust be remembered in another 20 to 50 years? Will it continue to live within us, as part of the raw material out of which our personal and collective identity is formed? Monumental historical narratives and visual clichés cannot, by themselves, shape consciousness. In the postmodern era, art has the power to connect people to meaningful personal experiences that enable us to cope with the Holocaust and its memory.”

The author is Director of Yad Vashem’s Visual Center.

The program was prepared with the assistance of Vdance Festival Director Ari Feldman, and Visual Center employee Mimi Ash.
"Yad Vashem Chairman's Award" to be presented for the first time this July

Yad Vashem's Visual Center will award the first annual "Yad Vashem Chairman's Award" for Artistic Achievement in Holocaust-Related Film, endowed by Leon and Michaela Constantiner, in the "Jewish Experience" category at this year's International Film Festival in Jerusalem.

The prize will be presented by Chairman of the Yad Vashem Directorate Avner Shalev at the festival's closing ceremony on 15 July 2006, to an Israeli or foreign film produced within the past year that brings extraordinary cinematic expression to a unique Holocaust-related story. Two of the films nominated for the award are Israeli productions and five were made in Europe or the United States. The films deal with a variety of Holocaust-related topics, and include features, full-length documentaries and docu-dramas.

Describing the award, Avner Shalev said: "Visual images have become the international language of our generation and this phenomenon will only become more dominant in the future. Through this prize, the Visual Center will continue to encourage excellence in the field of cinematic representations of the Holocaust."

"Alone in the Drawer"

New campaign to videotape survivors' testimony in their own homes

by Malka Tor

"They didn't ask 'How? What did you do? What happened?' And I didn't want to tell them the truth because I had decided to turn the page...."

Zev Reisman of Paris; Holocaust survivor

"I say to myself: 'What exactly do you want? ... There are many people who don't know anything.' And this puts me back into the same special box that I've been living in... alone in the drawer."

Kalman Bar On of Yugoslavia, Auschwitz survivor

Despite the feeling common among survivors that "someone who wasn't there could never understand," in recent years more and more survivors have contacted Yad Vashem to give oral testimony, perhaps due to a sense that for them time is running out. These remnants of Europe's prewar Jewish community are seeking to perpetuate the memory of the vibrant Jewish world that was destroyed and the families that perished, as well as their personal survival experiences: they are telling their entire life stories, sometimes for the very first time.

Yad Vashem's documentation enterprise began with the underground ghetto archives and has continued in recording studios established by Yad Vashem throughout Israel—for residents and tourists alike—in cooperation with other organizations such as Ginzach Kiddush Hashem and Yad LeZahava. However, many survivors are now unable to get to the studios due to advanced age and failing health, so on Holocaust Remembrance Day 2006, a national campaign was announced whereby testimonies will be collected in the homes of the survivors themselves. "The recollections of the people who personally experienced the horrors of the Shoah have crucial educational and moral importance," explains Chairman of the Yad Vashem Directorate Avner Shalev. "They represent an essential vehicle for imparting the memory of the Holocaust."

In the first two weeks after this innovative proposal was publicized, Yad Vashem received no less than six hundred relevant referrals in Israel, and the Oral History Section is currently making extensive efforts to organize and assemble home-based documentation teams. The interviews will be added to the collection of some 44,000 written, audio and visual testimonies in the Yad Vashem Archives for permanent preservation. In addition, they will be accessible to visitors at the new Visual Center, which will also house tens of thousands of testimonies collected by the Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation (established by Steven Spielberg) from Israel and around the world.

Yad Vashem urges all Holocaust survivors and their families to contact the Oral History Section to schedule an interview, and help realize the words of the prophet: "Tell your children of it, and let your children tell their children, and their children another generation." (Joel 1:3)

For more information, please contact the Oral History Section:
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E-mail: esther.friedman@yadvashem.org.il

The author is Director of Yad Vashem's Oral History Section.
Congratulations—
You Have an Aunt!

by Yifat Bachrach-Ron

Congratulations, Dad—you have an aunt!” exclaimed Nurit Margalit to her astonished father Amir, after her search of Yad Vashem's online Names Database last Holocaust Remembrance Day revealed that her grandmother’s sister, thought to have perished in the Shoah, was in fact still alive.

Nurit originally visited the website to search for Pages of Testimony that her late grandmother, Malka Margalit, had completed. Malka had died in a traffic accident in 1966 when Amir was just 12 years old, and all he could tell Nurit was that her grandmother had a number tattooed on her arm, and that Malka’s entire family had been murdered in the Holocaust. “I grew up with the knowledge that no-one from my father’s parents’ families had survived,” Nurit explained. “My grandparents were left alone in the world after the concentration camps. More than anything else, I was bothered by the lack of information about my grandmother—we didn’t even know her maiden name.”

Through her search, Nurit established that her grandmother had completed Pages of Testimony in 1955, and discovered Malka’s former surname (Blitz), her exact place of residence before the war, and the names of her close relatives. However, thanks to the Database’s retrieval capabilities, Nurit also found that another woman had completed Pages of Testimony for the same people her grandmother had sought to commemorate, and that the familial relationships stated by the two women were identical. The woman, Paula Eizenberg, had also mentioned the name of her sister on the Page of Testimony dedicated to her parents—Malka. “This was when it dawned on me that Paula Eizenberg was my grandmother’s sister,” Nurit explains. “I realized that each sister thought the other had perished, when in fact they lived just 17 kilometers away from each other.”

Despite the late hour, Amir Margalit immediately telephoned Paula and Moshe Eizenberg at their residence Kibbutz Nir David. “It was 11:30pm. I couldn’t calm down; I just had to find out if it was true. My aunt, who is now 84 years old, was very excited. We agreed to meet. I didn’t sleep the whole night.”

The moving reunion between the two families—at which three generations were present—took place at the kibbutz. “I lost my mother at the age of 12,” says Amir. “To find my mother’s big sister brought back my feelings as a child towards my mother. I’m so grateful to Yad Vashem, who made it possible for me to find this wonderful extended family.”

Enlisting the Community

Jewish Genealogical Internet forums, seminars and meetings of survivors and next generation groups, Jewish educator conferences, landsmanshaft societies (aid organizations for immigrants from the same town of origin), immigrant housing projects and veteran groups from the former Soviet army in Israel are some of the venues where Yad Vashem is currently presenting the Shoah Names Recovery Project. “We’re hoping to reach our target audiences through the organizations and groups they are associated with,” explains Cynthia Wroclawski, the project’s outreach manager. “These groups can best promote the project by assisting their members to fill in Pages of Testimony, and returning them to Yad Vashem.”

Following is a sample of some of the recent platforms where the Names Recovery Project has recently been presented:

During the month of April, the Names Recovery Project was launched in Ukraine. Presentations were made in Kiev, Lvov, Dneproprovsk and Kharkov in the presence of Israel’s Ambassador to Ukraine, community leaders and supporters, and local Jewish organizations joining the project, including the Joint, Nativ, the Jewish Agency, Hillel, Chabad, and Holocaust research and education centers such as Tkuma and the Ukrainian Center for Holocaust Studies. Boris Maftsir, Manager of the Names Recovery Project in the FSU and Russian-speaking countries, met a well-known Jewish businessman from Dneproprovsk whose grandfather lost almost his entire family at the Babi Yar massacre in 1941. “Although he is a great supporter of the Jewish community and makes frequent visits to Israel, he was not aware that the names of his relatives would not be commemorated in the Yad Vashem Names Database unless he filled out Pages of Testimony,” recalled Maftsir.

The Limud conference—a celebration of Jewish life and learning—took place on 12-14 May, in Moscow. Participants included community members, educators, Hillel students, Jewish groups and community leaders and supporters. Chairman of the Yad Vashem Directorate Avner Shalev and Boris Maftsir presented the Names Recovery Project.

The Amigur Immigrant Absorption Housing project, sponsored by the Jewish Agency in Israel, announced its enlistment in the Names Recovery Project by encouraging Amigur residents from the FSU to complete Pages of Testimony. The announcement was made on 7 May in advance of VE Day during a ceremony at Yad Vashem in which Amigur presented a collection of one thousand survivor testimonies to Avner Shalev.

The uploading of the Database was made possible by the generous support of the Victim List Project of the Swiss Banks Settlement, under the supervision of the Honorable Edward B. Korman, Chief Judge of the United States District Court for the Eastern District of New York; Hi-tech entrepreneur Tossie Hollander; the Noaber Foundation; and the Claims Conference.
by Dr. Mordecai Paldiel

A Rescue Mission

A ceremony posthumously honoring Martha and Waitstill Sharp of the United States as Righteous Among the Nations was held in Yad Vashem’s Garden of the Righteous on 13 June, in the presence of US Ambassador to Israel Richard H. Jones, Chairman of the Commission for the Designation of the Righteous Justice Jacob Turkel, Chairman of the Yad Vashem Directorate Avner Shalev, and Executive Vice President of the Jewish Foundation for the Righteous Stanlee J. Stahl. Martha and Waitstill’s daughter, Martha Sharp Joukowsky, received the certificate and medal on her parents’ behalf. Also present were Eva Esther Feigl—whom the Sharps helped escape from Europe—family and friends. The Sharps are the second and third Americans, after Varian Fry, to receive the honor.

In 1939, Waitstill Sharp, a minister in the Unitarian church in Wellesley, Massachusetts, and his wife Martha, a noted social worker, accepted an invitation by the Unitarian Service Committee to aid members of their church in Nazi-controlled Czechoslovakia. After helping a number of Jews leave the country, the Sharps received warnings of their possible arrest by the Gestapo, and left for Portugal. From there they made their way to Vichy-controlled France, where they sought ways to help fugitives from Nazi terror.

Martha and Waitstill Sharp

While in France, the Sharps heard of the plight of Lion Feuchtwanger, a world-famous German-Jewish author of historical fiction, who was interned in France as a national of an enemy state. After his escape from an internment camp, they helped the Feuchtwangers leave the country by train by organizing forged identity cards, bribing French border guards, purchasing tickets and disguising themselves. They traveled through fascist Spain and into Portugal, where in September 1940, the Feuchtwangers boarded a ship to New York.

Martha Sharp then returned to France, where she managed to obtain US visas for a group of children—nine of them Jewish, including Eva Esther Feigl and the Diamant triplets from Austria—to leave the country after they too were detained as nationals of an enemy state. After the war, Martha Sharp was involved in many efforts to assist Israel and Jews around the world. She died in 1999 at the age of 94; Waitstill passed away in 1984.

Humility in the Face of Danger

In the summer of 1943, Ben and Yitzhak Monnikendam were living with their parents in Amsterdam. Their older brother Jacob had been deported and killed in Mauthausen two years earlier. As the persecution of the Jews in Amsterdam intensified, 18-year-old Ben and 16-year-old Yitzhak decided to escape the city with the help of their friend Luke, a member of the Dutch underground. Their parents, Barend and Katrina, remained in Amsterdam; they were caught and sent to their deaths in Auschwitz in October 1943.

Following their escape from the city, Ben and Yitzhak hid in a farm in Eastern Holland, until they ran out of money to pay the farmers. They were then moved to the Colenbranders’ family farm in Varsseveld—a small village near the German border—where Bernard and Hendrika lived with their 11 children and a grandfather. Bernard Colenbrand had just been released from Vught concentration camp where he had been sent for resisting the regime, and on suspicion of hiding Jews. Upon Bernard’s arrest, his 21-year-old son Elbert had hurried to find alternate hiding places for the three Jews being sheltered on the farm. Despite the grave danger, the Colenbranders also agreed to hide the two Monnikendam brothers, along with two British pilots, in a small room above the pigsty. Later on during the war, Elbert brought an additional two Jews to hiding places on the farm.

Towards the end of the war, German soldiers billeted part of the farm for their own use. Nevertheless, the Colenbranders continued to hide the Jews on the property and, despite the added risk, provided food for them all. Ben and Yitzhak Monnikendam remained in their rescuers’ home until they were liberated in April 1945.

On 31 May, a ceremony honoring Bernard and Hendrika Colenbrand and their son Elbert as Righteous Among the Nations was held in Yad Vashem’s Garden of the Righteous. Elbert Colenbrand traveled from Holland to participate in the ceremony, together with his brother Johan, who received the honor on behalf of their late parents. Ben and Yitzhak Hulata (formerly Monnikendam), now living in Israel, also attended the event, along with some 45 family members. The medals and certificates were presented by Yad Vashem Director General Nathan Eitan.

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

www.yadvashem.org
NACHWORT
Charlotte Salomon was born in Berlin in 1917 to a family immersed in the city's cultural and social life. Despite being Jewish, she was admitted in 1935 to the city's School of Fine Arts and Applied Crafts. Charlotte's father was arrested during Kristallnacht and, in the wake of the pogrom, her family decided that Charlotte should join her grandparents, who had found refuge in Villefranche, France. There, under Nazi occupation, she created a series of hundreds of paintings, entitled "Life? Or Theater?"—an autobiographical narrative recounting the fate of her family and that of German Jewry. In the summer of 1943, Charlotte married Alexander Nagler, a Jewish refugee, and in September the couple was arrested. They were deported to Auschwitz, where Charlotte, pregnant with their first child, and Alexander were murdered.

The Exhibition "Life? Or Theater?" was organized by the Jewish Historical Museum, Amsterdam, and sponsored by Le Comité français pour Yad Vashem, Stichting Vrienden van Yad Vashem - Nederland, and Jacqueline and Michael Gee, UK. It will be on display between 16 June and 1 October 2006, in Yad Vashem's Exhibitions Pavilion.

As a possible antidote to Charlotte's crippling depression, her doctor recommended she resume painting. And when Charlotte received a shipment of art supplies, the despairing young woman began using them to liberate her tormented soul.

Charlotte's art turned into an existential voyage of self-discovery, an odyssey in which she could explore life, death and art—and the links between them. Over the course of two years, she produced 1,300 works of art, her prolific creativity fueled by an uncontrollable urge, and the fear that the clock was ticking.

She named her works "Life? Or Theater?" and her question-marks call for the viewer's response. Are we witnessing reality or illusion? Where is the boundary between art, life and death? The answers are found in the body of her works, which are nothing less than a personal encounter between each of these components. Helpless, we are pulled into a marathon that leaves us breathless and drained—almost like the artist herself.

For young Charlotte, a protagonist in the theater of life, a final curtain awaited. Deported from France and sent to Auschwitz-Birkenau, she was murdered upon arrival, along with the child she carried in her womb. When these two lives were cut short, the question marks lost their significance, for in Auschwitz there was neither life nor theater. There was only the cowardly murder of an artist who had succeeded through the power of her soul to delve into the depths and retrieve hues of such colossal vitality that they continue to awe onlookers 60 years after her murder.

"I will create my story so that I will not lose my mind," wrote Charlotte in her last letter to her parents. And, indeed, by the sheer strength of her creativity, she was able to escape the suicidal fate that haunted her family. Yet even such resolve could not withstand the physical power of Nazi troops.

Art cannot replace life, but it has the power to endure. In this display of her works at Yad Vashem, Charlotte Salomon finally becomes the victor in the cruel theater of life.

Charlotte Salomon
1917-1943

Charlotte Salomon was born in Berlin in 1917 to a family immersed in the city's cultural and social life. Despite being Jewish, she was admitted in 1935 to the city's School of Fine Arts and Applied Crafts. Charlotte's father was arrested during Kristallnacht and, in the wake of the pogrom, her family decided that Charlotte should join her grandparents, who had found refuge in Villefranche, France. There, under Nazi occupation, she created a series of hundreds of paintings, entitled "Life? Or Theater?"—an autobiographical narrative recounting the fate of her family and that of German Jewry. In the summer of 1943, Charlotte married Alexander Nagler, a Jewish refugee, and in September the couple was arrested. They were deported to Auschwitz, where Charlotte, pregnant with their first child, and Alexander were murdered.

The Exhibition "Life? Or Theater?" was organized by the Jewish Historical Museum, Amsterdam, and sponsored by Le Comité français pour Yad Vashem, Stichting Vrienden van Yad Vashem - Nederland, and Jacqueline and Michael Gee, UK. It will be on display between 16 June and 1 October 2006, in Yad Vashem's Exhibitions Pavilion.
E. H. (Dan) Kampelmacher, Fighting for Survival
Foreword by Dan Michman
Series Editor: Dr. David Silberklang; Managing Editor: Daniella Zaidman Mauer
Yad Vashem in association with The Holocaust Survivors' Memoirs Project, 2006
188 pp., $21 (airmail included) / NIS 69

This is the story of an 18-year-old boy who left his family and fled his native Vienna to Holland. There, as an illegal refugee, Dan Kampelmacher was incarcerated in the state prison at Veenhuizen, where he wrote a diary recounting his recent experiences in both countries. The diary ends on 31 December 1938 with the question: "Where will I be next New Years Eve?"

The book continues as a memoir, relating the story of Kampelmacher's survival during the war working on Dutch farms, acquiring forged documents from the underground, and hiding in Charlotte van Dijk's home in Utrecht from late 1942 onward. Kampelmacher even worked for the Dutch Psychotechnic Foundation in Utrecht in 1943, where, despite knowing he was Jewish, his employers did not betray him.

In his foreword to the book, Yad Vashem Chief Historian Prof. Dan Michman writes: "As an historian of Dutch Jewry for many years, I have addressed many of the issues mentioned in this book... However, reading this book provided me with a new perspective, one that is not to be found in my studies. It is the inside look; the sense of the steadily gathering storm, as seen through the eyes of one person who—luckily—kept a diary and who—luckily—survived (with the help of non-Jews), so as to be able to tell us how it was actually to live through it all.

"Kampelmacher's book is a prime example of the corrective to historical research that personal accounts—both diaries and memoirs—can provide. Historians tend to classify their subjects of research into categories, such as 'events,' 'developments,' 'causes,' and so on. As a result, their work can give the reader the impression of a past with clear-cut, neatly defined categories. Reality, however, is much more complicated and multi-faceted, even chaotic. The individual who experienced the events does not fully fit into the categories later applied by scholars. Kampelmacher leads us through the complexion of flowing events, the real-life impression that categories cannot provide."

Also New on the Shelf...

"Dies sind meine letzten Worte...": Briefe aus der Shoah (Last Letters from the Shoah — German edition)
Edited by Zvi Bacharach, Yad Vashem in association with Wallstein Verlag, 2006, 336 pp., Israel only: NIS 139

"Estas son mis últimas palabras...": Últimas cartas del Holocausto (Last Letters from the Shoah — Spanish edition)
Edited by Zvi Bacharach, 2006, 350 pp., $39 (airmail included) / NIS 139

"Estas son mis últimas palabras..." is a sentence found over and over again in this unique volume of letters written by those who would not survive the Holocaust. The letters, treasured by the victims' families and friends, were uncovered over the last 60 years and ultimately collected by Yad Vashem. These last letters were sent from the ghettos, hidden in the cattle cars and train stations, and smuggled out of the concentration camps. Each short letter describes the end of a difficult journey even as it reveals the raw emotions of mothers, fathers, sisters and brothers trying desperately to tell their story before it was too late.

A fin que sache la jeune génération... Shoah et Mémoire à Yad Vashem (To Bear Witness: Holocaust Remembrance at Yad Vashem — French edition)
Edited by Bella Guterman and Avner Shalev, 2006, Yad Vashem, 300 pp., $48 (airmail included) / NIS 149

Pará que lo sepan las generaciones venideras: La recordación del Holocausto en Yad Vashem (To Bear Witness: Holocaust Remembrance at Yad Vashem — Spanish edition)
Edited by Bella Guterman and Avner Shalev, 2006, Yad Vashem, 300 pp., $48 (airmail included) / NIS 149

Yad Vashem's new Museum Complex was constructed to enable it to renew its mission as the world center of Holocaust remembrance, documentation, research and education in every generation. This album leads the reader through Yad Vashem's history, and relates the story not only of the Jews, but of humankind, through individual accounts, original documents, works of art, personal artifacts and thousands of photographs—some published for the first time—of a world that is no more.

12
Dedication of New Entrance Plaza

On 26 April, the new Entrance Plaza at Yad Vashem was endowed in memory of Harry Wilf and his sons Lenny Wilf (third from left) and Harry Zborowski (left), and then Minister of Education, Culture and Sport Miri Regev (second from left) also addressed the participants. The dedication was chaired by the Yad Vashem Directorate Avner Shalev, and Yad Vashem Benefactors Joseph and Elizabeth Wilf (right).

The Opening of the Arolsen Archives

Yad Vashem welcomed the decision in May by the 11-nation International Commission for the International Tracing Service (ITS) to open the archives at Bad Arolsen in Germany. According to experts at Yad Vashem, the decision will give the public and researchers access for the first time to some 50 million WWII-era files containing new information on forced labor and concentration camps, as well as names of Holocaust victims added to the archives since Yad Vashem received 20 million pages in the early 1960s, including most of those relating to Jews.

In order to organize the way the archives are accessed, the committee established a working group of high-level archival and technical experts, including a Yad Vashem representative. The working group will study and compile a report on the archives, including a list of collections already digitized; develop rules for accessing documents; and make recommendations regarding the prioritization and processing of future digitization.

“This is an important step in the process of opening wartime archives in Europe,” noted Chairman of the Directorate Avner Shalev. “Yad Vashem’s knowledge and expertise in digitizing archival information and presenting it to the general public will certainly contribute greatly to the committee’s work.”

Shalev also thanked the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum for its efforts in opening the archive, as well as Israel’s Foreign Ministry, which was instrumental in bringing part of the archive to Yad Vashem in the 1950s.

Yad Vashem Website Wins Award

Yad Vashem’s website has won the prestigious “special category” award in the People and Computers Web Awards 2006 for outstanding websites. Explaining the honor, Judge Einat Meron wrote: “The judges have no doubt that this is one of the most ambitious, complex and important projects undertaken in Israel in recent years. Yad Vashem has created the perfect, user-intelligent Internet site for documentation and commemoration of the Holocaust. Yad Vashem’s website has succeeded in making the historical events easily accessible, allowing the younger generation to continue to grapple with the memory and legacy of the Shoah. Considerable thought was clearly invested in the planning and implementation of this site.”

Yad Vashem wins “Roaring Lion” 2006 PR Award

Yad Vashem has won the “Roaring Lion” prize, bestowed annually by the Israel Public Relations Association (ISSPA), and based on the Golden World Awards of the International Public Relations Association (IPRA), with which ISSPA is affiliated. Yad Vashem was awarded first place in the “Special Events” category for the successful public relations campaign it implemented marking the opening of the new Museum in March 2005.

Chairman of the Yad Vashem Directorate Avner Shalev congratulated the Director and staff of the Media Relations and Marketing Communications Department, “who invested a great amount of energy in order to ensure that the new Museum and the events surrounding its dedication would receive extensive coverage in the national and international media.”

Yad Vashem Supports Name Change for Auschwitz

The Polish Government has approached UNESCO to add the words “former Nazi German” to the official name of the Auschwitz-Birkenau Concentration Camp. Yad Vashem concurs with the suggested change, as it represents an historical fact. Chairman of the Directorate Avner Shalev said: “While we understand the rationale that stands behind this request, we also believe the word ‘extermination’ should be included in the camp’s formal name.”
Claims Conference Approves Additional Support for Yad Vashem
by Arie Zuckerman

The Claims Conference has two main goals in disbursing the Holocaust victim funds under its administration: assisting needy Holocaust survivors (the use to which most of the finances are allocated), and ensuring that the Holocaust—and those who were murdered—is memorialized.

Yad Vashem, as the Jewish center for perpetuating the memory of the Holocaust, is the Claims Conference’s loyal ally in its efforts to attain the second of these goals. The Conference has supported and taken part in Yad Vashem’s major endeavors for over five decades, including the uploading of the Names Database onto the Internet, and the computerization of Yad Vashem’s Archives. During the early 1990s, the Claims Conference was the main supporter of Yad Vashem’s development program, and committed itself to funding a third of its budget. With the program’s expansion, the budget grew and, following renewed global interest in the Holocaust after the opening of the new Museum Complex, the Claims Conference recently approved additional large-scale funding for the program.

Over one and a half million people have so far toured the new Museum, and more than eight million have visited the site of the online Names Database. Yad Vashem attaches great importance to its strategic and steadfast partnership with the Claims Conference and, along with the Conference, will continue forging ahead in its quest to fulfill the last wishes of those murdered by the Nazis and their accomplices. “Remember us and never forget us.”

The author is Special Advisor to the Chairman of the Directorate.

News from the Research Institute

Institute Awards New Scholarships

Since its establishment, Yad Vashem has recognized the need to develop a broad and deep knowledge and research base of Holocaust-related subjects. In a ceremony held on 29 May at Yad Vashem, the International Institute for Holocaust Research granted scholarships to 17 M.A. students and Ph.D. candidates studying in Israeli universities. The awards were distributed from endowments established primarily by Holocaust survivors, in order to perpetuate the memory of their loved ones, encourage Holocaust-era research, and preserve Holocaust remembrance for future generations.

Simon Weishlum, representative of the endowments, congratulated the laureates. Michal Ronen, one of the recipients, spoke on the subject of her research: “The Giado, Libya Concentration Camp: The Holocaust Survivor Life-Story Pattern.”

Academic Exchange with Serbian Researchers

From 15-20 June, a group of Serbian historians and museologists visited Yad Vashem to participate in an academic exchange workshop with Israeli scholars as part of the International Institute for Holocaust Research’s biannual seminar program with researchers from abroad. The lectures dealt with varied issues such as: “The Universality and Uniqueness of the Holocaust;” “The Holocaust in Yugoslavia;” “Jewish Art in Jasenovac;” “The Holocaust in Kosovo and Metohija and its Context;” “Jews Under the Italian Occupation in Yugoslavia;” and “The History and Historiography of Jasenovac.” Participants included: Chairman of the Yad Vashem Directorate Avner Shalev; Yad Vashem’s Chief Historian Prof. Dan Michman; Academic Advisor to Yad Vashem Prof. Yehuda Bauer; Head of the International Institute for Holocaust Research Prof. David Bankier; Rev. Jovan Cülibrik of the Jasenovac Committee of the Holy Assembly of Bishops for the Serbian Orthodox Church; Serbian Ambassador to Israel H.E. Mr. Miodrag Isakov; Former Ambassador of Serbia-Monenegro to Israel H.E. Ms. Krinka Vidaković; Minister Silvana Hadži-Dokić of the Ministry of Culture, Serbia; Dr. Seda Tritković of the Rockford Institute, Chicago; Dr. Milan Ristović of the University of Belgrade; Milan Koljanin of the Institute for Contemporary History, Belgrade; Jovan Mirkovic, Dragan Cvjetkovic and Nenad Antonijević of the Museum of Genocide Victims, Belgrade; Dr. Iael Nidam-Orvieto and Kiril Fefferman, of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and Yad Vashem; and Dr. Mirjam Rajner of Bar-Ilan University.

During their visit, the Serbian scholars attended a series of presentations on Yad Vashem’s new Holocaust History Museum and Visual Center, the activities of the International School for Holocaust Studies, and Holocaust documentation and material housed in the archives and library.
Events April – June 2006

24 April State ceremony opening Holocaust Martyrs’ and Heroes’ Remembrance Day in Warsaw Ghetto Square, in the presence of President Moshe Katzav and Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, Holocaust survivors from Israel and abroad, state dignitaries, Righteous Among the Nations and some two thousand participants. Prof. Walter Zwi Bacharach spoke on behalf of the survivors and Prof. Szewach Weiss kindled the Memorial Torch.

25 April Wreath-laying ceremony for Holocaust Martyrs’ and Heroes’ Remembrance Day with the participation of the President, the Prime Minister, the Speaker of the Knesset, the President of the Supreme Court, the Chairman of the Jewish Agency, the Chief of General Staff, the Chief of Police, the Dean of the Diplomatic Corps, the Mayor of Jerusalem, representatives of survivor organizations, school children and delegations from all over the country. Other Remembrance Day events and ceremonies included: Unto Every Person There is a Name—recitation of Holocaust victims’ names in the Hall of Remembrance; a memorial ceremony for former members of the Jewish resistance in France; a screening of Holocaust-related films in Yad Vashem’s Visual Center; Boulevard des Misères—a memorial concert for Dutch Jews who perished in the Holocaust; and a ceremony for youth movements in the Valley of the Communities, in conjunction with the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport’s Youth and Social Administration and Youth Movement Council, attended by hundreds of youth movement members and representatives of student and youth councils from around the country.

26 April Memorial evening for the Sephardic communities of the Balkans annihilated during the Holocaust, in Yad Vashem’s Holocaust Educational Center, Givatayim (Beit Wolyn), in cooperation with the Organization of Greek Concentration Camp Survivors headed by Moshe Ha’Elyon, the Organization of Yugoslavian Immigrants represented by former Chairperson Miriam Aviezer, and the Organization for Macedonian Immigrants’ Next Generations headed by Moshe Testa. Event participants included Center of Organizations of Holocaust Survivors in Israel Chairman Noah Flug.

4 May Righteous Among the Nations ceremony posthumously honoring Jana Sudova of the Czech Republic, who gave shelter in her home to a group of young Jews, including Jakob Silberstein. The award and medal were presented to Jana’s daughter, Anna Gerlova of the Czech Republic, by Director of the Department for the Righteous Among the Nations Dr. Mordecai Palidai. Some 50 people were present at the ceremony, including Silberstein’s family and friends.

9 May Ceremony marking the Allied victory over Nazi Germany, at Yad Vashem’s Monument to the Jewish Soldiers and Partisans, in the presence of Immigration and Absorption Minister Ze’ev Boim and Avner Shalev, and with one thousand participants, including veterans and disabled veterans (most of them immigrants from the CIS), partisans, Tzahal volunteers, ambassadors and military attachés of the Allied countries, and officers and soldiers from the IDF Liaison Division.

10 May Conference marking the 62nd anniversary of the liberation of the concentration camps and ghettos in the former Soviet Union, in cooperation with the Organization of Concentration Camp and Ghetto Survivors in Israel, and in the presence of Yad Vashem Director-General Natan Edan and Center of Organizations of Holocaust Survivors in Israel Chairman Noah Flug.

18 May Event marking the publication of the Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations: Italy (Yad Vashem and Mondadori), in cooperation with the Institute of Italian Culture, Tel Aviv, the Italian Embassy in Israel, Irgun Olei Italia and the Organization of Italian Jews. Some two hundred Holocaust survivors and Italian immigrants participated in the event, including Avner Shalev, Italian Ambassador to Israel H.E. Mr. Sandro de Bernardin, Encyclopedia chief editor Prof. Israel Gutman, Italian edition editor Dr. Liliana Picciotto of Milan, Irgun Olei Italia President Claudia Amati and Encyclopedia author Dr. Bracha Rivlin. A particularly moving speech was made by Shoshana Evron (née Cassuto), who, along with her brother, was rescued by Righteous Among the Nations in Italy. The event was hosted by Dr. Simonetta Della Setta, Director of the Institute of Italian Culture, Tel Aviv.

30 May Commemorative event and annual gathering of Carpatho-Russian survivors and immigrants and members of the next generations in Israel, with some three hundred participants. Speakers included Carpatho-Russian survivor organization chair Tuvia Klein, Dr. Bracha Rivlin of Yad Vashem’s Encyclopedia of the Communities, Dr. Ilana Rosen of Ben Gurion University, and Dr. Moshe Avital.
Sincere, gentle and true

Yad Vashem mourns the tragic and untimely passing of our dear friend and colleague, Zita Turgeman z’l.

Zita was born in August 1972 in Budapest, Hungary. After completing high school in 1990, she fell in love with the State of Israel on a pilot trip with a group of young Hungarians and subsequently made aliya. In 2001, through a personal recommendation, Zita was contacted by Yad Vashem with a request to assist with the first course for Hungarian-speaking educators, after which she went on to guide groups from various countries. After many years of guiding and a series of promotions, Zita began organizing seminars for educators from abroad; seminars for Holocaust survivors; and lecturing on a variety of subjects.

In a moving ceremony held in her memory, Director of the European Department at the International School for Holocaust Studies Dr. Doron Avraham recalled Zita’s ability to stay “sincere, gentle and true” to her efforts in Holocaust education.

In November 2005, as Head of the Czech Republic, Slovakian and Croatian Desks, Zita was honored by the Hungarian Government with the Star of the Order of Merit of the Republic of Hungary, in recognition of her work in promoting Holocaust education and remembrance in Hungary. While working at Yad Vashem, Zita also strived to gain recognition for the rescuer of her father, Dr. Miklos Gabor. The rescuer, Janos Jurinkovits, was officially honored as a Righteous Among the Nations in 2003.

Zita was murdered on 23 April (25 Nissan). She leaves two children, Tom and Sophie, who were the center of her life. May they and her vital work in Holocaust education be an everlasting tribute to her memory.

Lifelong devotion to the Jewish Community

Yad Vashem mourns the loss of Judith Wilf z’l, who passed away on 28 June. Judith and her late husband, Harry Wilf z’l, and the Wilf family are Benefactors of Yad Vashem.

Judith (née Jakubowicz) was born in Tarnobrzeg, Poland. In her youth, she was an active member of the Zionist youth group, Hanoar Ha’zioni. With the outbreak of WWII, she was expelled from her home and spent the war years in Siberia and Uzbekistan. Upon returning to Poland at the end of the war, she learned that she had lost many family members and close friends.

Following the war, Judith married Harry Wilf—one of the founders of the American Society for Yad Vashem—and was an active participant in the US Jewish community for more than 30 years. She was a devoted philanthropist and contributed to organizations such as Shaarei Zedek Medical Center, Jerusalem; UJA; Israel Bonds; the Mount Sinai Medical Center; and Yeshiva University. Yad Vashem’s new Holocaust History Museum was established through the generous support and leadership of the Judith and Harry Wilf Family and the Elizabeth and Joseph Wilf Family, and Yad Vashem’s newly dedicated Entrance Plaza was established by the Wilf family in memory of Harry.

Judith and Harry are survived by their son, Leonard Wilf and his wife Beth, and by their grandchildren Orin, Hallel, Jenna and Harrison. Judith’s dedication and devotion to her family, to Israel and to the Jewish People inspired the love of many. She will be sorely missed.
Friends Worldwide

U.S.A.

Yad Vashem Benefactor and Holocaust survivor Elizabeth Wilf (right), and Young Leadership Associate Keren Toledano (left), a formative force behind the Clarion Award-winning journal The Jewish Child From Then To Now, were each presented with the American Society for Yad Vashem Achievement Award at the Society’s Sixth Annual Spring Luncheon (here pictured with American Society Chairman Eli Zborowski). Guest speaker at the luncheon, held at the Park Avenue Synagogue in Manhattan, was survivor and noted author and lecturer Gerda Weissmann Klein.

Due to the tremendous interest in Yad Vashem’s exhibition on the Auschwitz Album at the Field Museum in Chicago, the American Society for Yad Vashem has agreed to extend its showing for another four months. Since its opening in January, more than 110,000 people have viewed the exhibition, brought to Chicago by Yad Vashem Benefactors Renee and Lester Crown (left) and family. Lester Crown said he “was delighted that so many people are interested in the exhibition. It is very important for Chicago.”

On 7 May, Prof. Fred Tauber (right) of Boston, son of Yad Vashem Benefactor Dr. Laszlo N. Tauber z”l, presented Avner Shalev with a signed letter written by Albert Einstein to Hermann Kesten of the Emergency Rescue Committee. In the letter, Einstein asks Kesten for his assistance in helping Jews flee Nazi Germany prior to the outbreak of the war.

Yad Vashem mourns the passing of Samson Bitensky z”l. Samson and his wife Halina are Builders of Yad Vashem.

Born in 1920 in Molczadz, then part of Poland and today Belarus, Samson emigrated to the United States in 1938 and served in the US Army during WWII. He founded Fab Industries, a successful textile company, and was a long-time member of the American Society for Yad Vashem. He is survived by his wife, daughters Beth and Susan, and their families.

On 9 June, the Mitzner family of Houston and Florida attended the dedication of Yad Vashem’s newly renovated Warsaw Ghetto Square. Pictured with Chairman of the Yad Vashem Directorate Avner Shalev (from left to right): Yad Vashem Benefactor David Mitzner, who grew up on Mila Street in Warsaw; son Jacob Mitzner; son Ira and his wife Mindy Mitzner; and Jacob’s wife Marilyn Mitzner. Mitzner’s grandson Michael (not pictured) was awarded a plaque in recognition of his recent bar-mitzvah.

In March, the delegation of the American Jewish Congress (AJC) visited Yad Vashem as part of its centennial activities. Pictured: Director of Yad Vashem’s International Relations Division Shaya Ben Yehuda (left) leading the tour through the new Holocaust History Museum, attended by Yad Vashem supporter Shrub Kempner (center) and former AJC president Bruce Ramer (right).

Honored guest, American Society Chairman Eli Zborowski at the official state opening ceremony of Holocaust Remembrance Day at Yad Vashem, together with grandson Boaz Zborowski (in uniform) and granddaughters Tamar and Maya Naveh.
UNITED KINGDOM

Commemoration Ceremony at Logan Hall, flanked by Holocaust survivors and their grandchildren. In attendance were Israeli Ambassador H.E. Zvi Hefetz, Chief Rabbi Sir Jonathan Sacks, Rabbi Dr. Abraham Levy of the Spanish and Portuguese Jews' Congregation, and prominent representatives of the Anglo-Jewish community.

Isaac and Myrna Kaye and family in a classroom they endowed at the International School in May, following the unveiling of the recognition plaque in their name.

CANADA

Yad Vashem welcomed its new Director of the English Desk, David Metzler (center), and bid farewell to outgoing director, Solly Kaplinski (right), pictured here with Canadian Society for Yad Vashem President Hank Rosenbaum (left).

At a Holocaust Remembrance Day ceremony outside the Parliament Buildings in Ottawa, Prime Minister of Canada Stephen Harper (second from left) laid a memorial wreath, joined by (left to right) Harry and Dora Kichler, and Howard, David, Luba and Jarrett Smuschkowitz.

THE NETHERLANDS

On 11 May, Yad Vashem Friend and Benefactor Paul Baan and his wife Mineke (fourth and third from right) visited Yad Vashem, accompanied by son Paul and daughter-in-law Danielle (right), and Chairperson of the Noaber Foundation, Israel, Cecile Erez-Biliouis (left). They were hosted by French and Benelux Desk Director Miry Gross (second from left).
As part of the Holocaust Remembrance Day ceremonies, members of the Ukrainian Society of Yad Vashem led by Igor Kolomoiski (right), Gennady Bogoliubov and Rabbi Shmuel Kaminetzki (center) visited Yad Vashem and met with Avner Shalev (left) and Special Advisor to the Chairman Arie Zuckerman. The Society agreed to establish the Ukrainian Yad Vashem Fund in memory of victims of the Shoah, which will provide long-term support for many of Yad Vashem’s activities.

CHILE

Among the distinguished guests at a ceremony marking Holocaust Remembrance Day in Santiago, Chile, were President of the Chilean Society for Yad Vashem and Benefactor David Feuerstein (second from right), Keren Hayesod representative David Raz (left), CREJ President Julio Froimovich (second from left), and Chilean Minister of the Interior Andres Zalvidar (right).

MEXICO

Yad Vashem Benefactors Marcos and Adina Katz (center) at the dedication of a new garden at Yad Vashem in memory of Marcos’ parents Efroim Arie and Golda Katz z”l, flanked by Avner Shalev (right) and Director of the Ibero-American Desk Perla Hazan (left).

VENEZUELA

Freddy and Irene Pressner attended an unveiling ceremony in the Square of Hope, where Perla Hazan presented them with the Yad Vashem key.

Yad Vashem appreciates the generosity of its friends in supporting its mission of Shoah commemoration, documentation, research and education. Together we can continue our journey, ensuring Jewish continuity and conveying universal aspirations for understanding, tolerance, and mutual respect between people everywhere. Yad Vashem would be honored to welcome you into its circle of friends and supporters.

To make tax deductible donations:

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For information on societies in other countries, or to donate online, please visit: http://www.yadvashem.org and click on “Friends of Yad Vashem.”

Donations may also be sent to: International Relations Division, Yad Vashem, PO Box 3477, Jerusalem 91034, Israel.