

# Yad Vashem Jerusalem

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For International  
Holocaust  
Remembrance Day:

## “Behind the Scenes”

New Exhibition  
Details the Rescue  
of Personal Items  
from the Holocaust

(pp. 2-3)

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**Yad Vashem**

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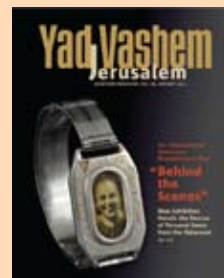
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Yiddish Theater in the DP Camps



■ On the cover: Bracelet  
made by Boas Leser, a  
Jewish prisoner in a work  
camp, in which he inserted  
a photograph of his  
fiancée Lola Gebirtig. Lola,  
daughter of the composer  
Mordecai Gebirtig, was  
murdered in Auschwitz.  
The bracelet, donated by  
Batya Chayko, appears  
in the new "Behind the  
Scenes" exhibition  
(see pp. 2-3).

## Gathering the Fragments

■ In July 2011, Ariel Shalom came to a  
"Gathering the Fragments" collection day  
carrying a very special object: a guest book  
from a Jewish restaurant/pension in Rome  
dating from 1937-1941. He had no information  
about the artifact, as the book had come into  
his possession accidentally, having caught his  
eye amid old maps that had been placed in a  
trash bin on Raines Street, Tel Aviv.

The guest book is one of the items featured in  
a new exhibition at Yad Vashem, which presents  
the process of collection, cataloging and research  
carried out within the framework of the national  
campaign in Israel to salvage privately-held  
Holocaust-related items and reconstruct the  
stories behind them. The exhibition, entitled  
"Gathering the Fragments - Behind the Scenes  
of the Campaign to Rescue Personal Items from  
the Holocaust," will open on 27 January 2013 in  
the lobby of the Library and Archives Building  
at Yad Vashem to mark International Holocaust  
Remembrance Day.

"About half of the items handed to Yad  
Vashem for safekeeping during the campaign  
have come via second or third-generation  
descendants of the survivors, who at best know  
only their partial stories," explains Michael  
Tal, curator of the exhibition. "The exhibition  
therefore showcases the research work carried  
out at Yad Vashem in order to reconstruct the  
full story behind the items. We are committed  
to learning as much as possible about the items  
we receive, and to sharing new insights with  
the greater public."

This is certainly the case of the guest book  
from Rome. At first glance, it testifies to a very  
special Jewish establishment that operated in  
Rome during the years of Fascist occupation, and  
even for some time under German occupation,  
when all Jewish businesses were shut down.  
However, while information about the pension  
and its owner, Yitzchak-Eliyahu Pines, could  
be gleaned from the inscriptions left by his  
guests, more clues were needed to unravel the  
full picture.

Several months after it was received, Dr. Iael  
Nidam-Orvieto, Editor-in-Chief of Yad Vashem  
Publications, told the participants at the annual  
assembly of the Association of Italian Immigrants  
in Israel about the guest book from Rome. The  
next speaker, Dr. Sergio Minerbi, identified

# "Behind the Scenes"

## New Exhibition Details the Rescue of Personal Items from the Holocaust

Miriam Urbach-Nachum



■ Yitzhak-Eliyahu Pines c. 1937-8

himself as a relative of Pines, and related to those gathered that he knew Moshe and Eldad Labi, Pines' grandchildren. A meeting with the grandsons helped reconstruct the story in its entirety.

Yitzhak-Eliyahu Pines was born in 1873 in Belarus. He studied at the Volozhin Yeshiva and married Haya (née Ginzburg). Their sons, Arieh-Leib and Israel, were born in Bialystok. In 1906, following a pogrom in the city, the Pines family moved to Austria, where in 1910 their daughter Gita was born. In 1922, they moved to Rome, where Yitzhak-Eliyahu set up the Pines Guesthouse – the only kosher restaurant in Rome that also offered lodging services.

The pension became a meeting place for Jewish leaders and thinkers visiting Rome, as well as for Jews stopping over en route to *Eretz Israel*. Their gratitude for the cordial reception and delicious meals is expressed in the inscriptions they left in the guest book, in many languages. For example:

*Dear Mr. Pines!*

*I stayed with you as an émigré, a refugee – may it be G-d's will that I visit you in the future as a tourist!*

*Rome, 9.5.1940*

*Yitzhak Issac Calel*

*Lodz, Poland*

In 1930, Gita married Haim Vittorio Labi, a wealthy jeweler from Benghazi, Libya, who stayed at the pension during a business trip and fell in love with the innkeeper's beautiful daughter. After the wedding, the couple sailed to Benghazi, where their sons were born. Every year, the boys were taken to visit their grandparents in Rome. Moshe and Eldad remember visiting the local synagogue and marionette theater with their grandfather.

The last inscription in the guest book is dated March 1941. A short time later, the pension closed down, and the Pines family went into hiding.

The Labis emigrated to *Eretz Israel* from Benghazi in 1943, via Egypt. In 1946, they were joined by Gita's parents. After Haya died, Yitzhak-Eliyahu moved into his daughter's house, and in 1950, the family moved to Raines Street in Tel Aviv. Due to a shortage of space in the apartment, the documents brought along by Yitzhak-Eliyahu were placed in the attic. Several months later, Yitzhak-Eliyahu passed away.

Gita was certain that the guest book had remained in Italy, and the family mourned its loss. Meanwhile, the book remained in the attic, and when the apartment was sold, its new owners emptied out the storage area and placed everything they found there in the garbage. This is how the book came to be discovered by Ariel Shalom, who brought it to Yad Vashem.

### The exhibition showcases the research work carried out at Yad Vashem in order to reconstruct the full story behind each item

The news of the book's reappearance was received by the family with great emotion. Dr. Minerbi (Pines's brother's grandson), as well as Moshe and Eldad Labi, Yitzhak-Eliyahu's grandchildren, came to Yad Vashem where they could see the book again – a testament to their grandfather's story and to what was probably the last center of bustling Jewish activity in Rome, even in the shadow of the war. Moshe Labi noted that the guest book had always been his grandfather's pride and joy.

"Over the past two years, thousands of people have found the strength to part with various personal effects of great emotional value, in order to enable their safekeeping and to dedicate them to commemorating family members and loved ones who were murdered in the Holocaust," says Yad Vashem Chairman Avner Shalev. "We call upon every family in Israel to check whether they may have personal effects, documents, letters, artwork



■ Inscription in the guest book from Rome donated to Yad Vashem, including a portrait of its owner, Yitzhak-Eliyahu Pines

or anything connected to the Holocaust era in their possession and to bring them, along with their stories, to Yad Vashem, where they will be preserved for generations to come."

*The "Gathering the Fragments" campaign is run in cooperation with the National Heritage Program at the Prime Minister's Office, the Ministry for Senior Citizens and the Ministry of Education. To donate Holocaust-related personal items, please call (in Israel): 1-800-25-7777.*

*The author works in the Teacher Training Department, International School for Holocaust Studies and in the "Gathering the Fragments" Project.*

# A Unique Learning Opportunity

## International Seminars Reach Educators Around the Globe



■ Left to right: Participants in the seminar for academics held jointly with the UN; Chinese educator Yunqing Ha with Holocaust survivor Yehudit Kleinman; participants in the first-ever seminar for Indian educators

■ As the world prepares to mark the UN-sanctioned International Day of Commemoration in Honor of the Victims of the Holocaust, Yad Vashem continues its ongoing and far-reaching efforts to educate students and teachers, decision-makers and public figures, religious dignitaries and lay leaders about the *Shoah* and its global relevance today. Over the fall and winter months of 2012, educators and persons of influence from all continents participated in tailor-made seminars at the International School for Holocaust Studies or in their home countries to learn new information and tools, to share productive initiatives and proposals, and to spark new ideas and inspirations for Holocaust education worldwide.

In mid-October 2012, the third annual seminar for Chinese educators took place at Yad Vashem. "With each successive annual seminar, it is clear what an impact they are having, especially in mainland China," said Stephanie Kaye, of the School's Desk for Seminars in English. "This year, over 70 qualified candidates applied to attend the seminar and only 29 spots were available. The 'word' is obviously getting out to

different universities about this unique learning opportunity."

Participants included MA and Doctoral students, as well as university department heads and professors who are well-versed in their own disciplines, but seek further knowledge about the Holocaust and the appropriate pedagogy. During the seminar, source materials in English and Chinese were provided, and the attendees posed insightful questions during a range of academic lectures and didactic workshops. Highlights of their program were meeting eight Holocaust survivors, as well as intricate question-and-answer sessions with International School Director Dorit Novak and Yad Vashem Chairman Avner Shalev.

The participants all left with renewed enthusiasm for the work that lies ahead. "I suggested to the post-graduate English study center at my university to screen some films about the Holocaust or the Jews during their 'Movie Day,' and they screened *The Pianist*, one of my favorites, last weekend," wrote one participant in an email received shortly after the seminar's end. Another plans to "invite Holocaust survivors and their families to give lectures at

our university, and encourage researchers and local government officials to study Holocaust education in Israel."

In November 2012, 30 Finnish educators took part in a seminar organized in cooperation with the Finnish National Board of Education, aimed at equipping them with the necessary information and training to impart the meanings of the Holocaust to their students. Participants, selected from some 120 applicants, were also provided with tools and techniques on how to use the Yad Vashem "No Child's Play" traveling exhibition, that recently opened in Finnish in Helsinki. "We hope seminar participants will order this exhibition so that they can guide their students in their respective schools and communities," remarked Richelle Budd Caplan, Director of the European Desk at the International School. "This seminar was hugely successful, and we are now hoping to translate some of our educational materials into Finnish for the first time, as well as plan a follow-up seminar in Finland."

At the end of November, a group of German jurists from North Rhine-Westphalia took part in a tailor-made seminar at the International

Following continuous and encouraging feedback from past visitors to the International School, staff members have been working hard over the past year to implement high-level follow-up programming for their seminar graduates. As a result, three such graduate programs have been recently held in Europe in conjunction with the School's strategic partners and supported by the Federal Government of Germany:

■ Seminar for Danish educators at Terezin in conjunction with the Danish Institute for International Studies (DIIS): Participants first

attended a pre-seminar organized by the DIIS in which they received educational materials sent by Yad Vashem as well as a voucher to participate in a Yad Vashem online course. The seminar itself was attended by two dozen International School graduates from across Denmark.

■ Seminar for German-speaking teachers at the International Tracing Service (ITS), Germany: The newly opened ITS research and education departments helped plan this seminar, which was attended by 12 graduates from various German states. Participants also made use of

the ITS archives, opened to the public only in recent years.

■ Seminar for British educators at the Centre for Holocaust Education, University of London's Institute of Education: This seminar was held also in conjunction with the Central Europe Center for Research and Documentation (Centropa), an NGO based in Vienna that uses advanced technologies to preserve Jewish memory in Central and Eastern Europe. The seminar topic was "Multimedia in Holocaust Education," which aroused great interest among the 40 participants.

Lauren Abecassis-Kandravy and Leah Goldstein



School. The participants were given a special tour of the Yad Vashem campus, including the museum complex, and heard lectures from world experts in the field of Holocaust studies. In addition, they toured Israel's Supreme Court and gained new insights into the multicultural aspects of Israeli society. "We are very pleased that this group of important jurists had the opportunity to gain a deeper understanding into the history of the Holocaust and meet with Holocaust survivors," said International School Director Dorit Novak. "Over the years, we have worked with hundreds of educators from North Rhine-Westphalia, and we look forward to formalizing our ties with their educational authorities in the near future."

From 9-16 December, a delegation of Polish municipal leaders – mayors and other senior officials – attended a specialized seminar held in conjunction with Poland's Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum. The seminar included special meetings with Speaker of the Knesset Reuven Rivlin and officials from the Jerusalem municipality.

Together with Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and United Nations Academic Impact and Holocaust Outreach Programs, in early December Yad Vashem hosted a seminar for 22 academics from 11 countries, including Senegal, Serbia, Ghana and Singapore, as well as two members of the UN. Prior to the seminar, each participant submitted a proposal for a project related to Holocaust education, and during their stay in Jerusalem they obtained the tools and techniques they needed to put these projects into action. The seminar offered a glimpse into the unique challenges that educators face in different countries around the world, while inspiring each other with their dedication to the global messages for humanity acquired through learning about the Holocaust. "The seminar

was one of the most important experiences of my life," said one participant. "The tours in the Museum were excellent, and the learning process gave me the methodological tools to do our work better back home."

At the end of December, the International School hosted 20 university professors, high school history and English teachers, and several high school principals from six cities for the first-ever seminar for educators from India. During their trip, which was partially subsidized by Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, participants heard presentations on the history of the Jewish people in general and in India specifically; the educational philosophy of the International School; the phenomena of antisemitism; the "Final Solution"; the response of the Jewish population to Nazi persecution; and stories of Holocaust survivors from different countries, including a Jewish refugee family which escaped from Poland and made their way to Bombay for the duration of the war.

As with other visitors who come to Israel for the first time, they were also taken on guided tours in and around Jerusalem and to other pertinent sites across the country. "We hope these educators can now connect with the history of the Holocaust and use our educational tools to teach this topic to their students," said Ephraim Kaye, Director of International Seminars for Educators at the School.

*The seminars for educators from China and from India took place with the generous support of the Adelson Family Foundation. The "No Child's Play" exhibition in Finnish was brought to Finland with the support of Israel Ystävyysoimikunta, the National Board of Pro-Israel Organizations in Finland.*

*Lauren Abecassis-Kandravy works in the European Department, International School for Holocaust Studies.*

## New Szold Report: Graduates Display Solid Commitment to Yad Vashem Educational Principles

■ A recently released report by Israel's Henrietta Szold National Institute of Research in the Behavioral Sciences indicates that seminars conducted by the International School for Holocaust Studies have a "significant impact" on participants. The report details how participation in a seminar or course at the School, or conducted abroad by its staff, leaves participants feeling "impelled to discuss [their experience] with friends and family." More than 90% passing on Yad Vashem's educational principles to other educators, "a fact that bears witness to the dissemination potential of these principles among those involved in education worldwide."

The report finds that the majority of seminar graduates have created courses and workshops, learning units, ceremonies, websites and exhibitions about the Holocaust on return to their home countries, with more than 50% using art as a means to teach the topic and over 80% making a change in the instruction of the Holocaust according to the age-appropriate approach of Yad Vashem. An impressive 82% have also switched their focus to teaching about Jewish life before, during and after the *Shoah*. In addition, the findings reveal that overseas seminar participants routinely use the School's website, and that their teaching of the Holocaust is also "markedly impacted" by the use of personal stories and testimonies – one of the central educational principles of the International School.

"Being at Yad Vashem was a defining and unforgettable experience," remarked one participant in the study. "It has forever changed me, and it has brought a new urgency to my teaching. My time at Yad Vashem has changed what my students hear and how they perceive the information. Somehow, it all seems more real to them."

## Recent International Agreements Lauren Abecassis-Kandravy

■ In September 2012, Yad Vashem and the University of West Scotland (UWS) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to deepen their existing cooperation in the University's teaching about the Holocaust and global citizenship. The MOU, signed via videoconferencing as a symbol of their close working relationship, also promises to



facilitate a scholarly exchange between the two institutions. Pictured, standing: Prof. Paul Martin, Interim Depute Principal of UWS. Right screen: Dr. Henry Maitles, Interim Head of the School of Education and Paula Cowan, Senior Lecturer in Education, UWS. Left screen: Dorit Novak, Director of the International School for Holocaust Studies, and Richelle Budd Caplan, Director of the International School's European Department, Yad Vashem

■ On 21 October 2012, Yad Vashem Chairman Avner Shalev (center) and Executive Director of the Anne Frank House in the Netherlands Ronald Leopold (left) signed an agreement at Yad Vashem in the presence of Dutch Ambassador to Israel H.E. Mr. Casper Veldkamp (right). The agreement calls for an annual teacher-training seminar for Dutch educators



at Yad Vashem; joint outreach activities for teachers in the Netherlands; and a meeting of pedagogical experts from both institutions to discuss and develop strategies on formal and informal educational networks at the Anne Frank House, as well as educational methods to combat contemporary manifestations of antisemitism.

■ On 11 December 2012, the Holocaust Documentation Center in the Slovak Republic signed a MOU with Yad Vashem in Liège, Belgium, at the Plenary meetings of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA, formerly the ITF). The MOU, which was signed in the presence of the head of the Slovak Republic's delegation to the ITF Ambassador



Peter Holasek, followed a successful seminar for 25 Slovak educators at Yad Vashem's International School for Holocaust Studies - supported by the Adelson Family Foundation - after a three-year hiatus. The directives of the MOU include coordinating an annual teacher-training seminar at Yad Vashem and joint outreach activities for educators in the Slovak Republic. Pictured: Dorit Novak (left) with Monika Vrzgulova, Director of the Holocaust Documentation Center in Bratislava

## New Survivor Testimony CD for Arab Students

■ *"The Holocaust is the most horrendous crime against humanity in modern history... Let us listen to history, so that we may build a different future and ensure that such a crime is never committed again."*

Ahmad Tibi MK, International Holocaust Remembrance Day, 2010

Several years ago, the topic of the Holocaust was incorporated into the compulsory curriculum for students of state-run Arab schools in Israel, and related questions were included in the matriculation exams. In order to enable teachers from the Arab sector to tackle the subject of the Holocaust in the classroom, the International School for Holocaust Studies has been running extensive training seminars for Arab history teachers for the past three years. Alongside broadening the teachers' historical

knowledge, these seminars facilitate an ongoing discussion of pedagogical and educational issues concerning teaching about the Holocaust in the classroom.

"The seminars sparked a fascinating dialogue among professionals, but an urgent need was recognized for new teaching material - not just of an informative nature - specially suited to the audiences in question," explains Sarit Hoch-Markowitz, Director of the Teacher Training Department at the International School. "To meet this need, our staff translated and adapted a recently released CD containing survivor



### Yael Richler-Friedman

testimony for use by Jewish history teachers in Israel." The process proved challenging. History teachers from the Arab sector helped School staff understand which parts of the testimony would be meaningful for their students, and which could raise questions that the teachers may find themselves unable to answer. "The desire to bring a human Jewish voice into the learning program ultimately helped us produce a disk containing the survivors' personal stories that will be viewed in classrooms of Arab students," concludes Hoch-Markowitz.

*The survivor testimony CDs were produced with the generous support of the Adelson Family Foundation and the Claims Conference.*

*The author is Head of the Educational Materials Development Section, Teacher Training Department, International School for Holocaust Studies.*

## "Echoes and Reflections" Seminar at Illinois Holocaust Museum and Education Center

■ The second training seminar for "Echoes and Reflections," a multimedia educational program, took place at the Illinois Holocaust Museum and Education Center in Skokie from 2-5 December 2012. Nine educational directors from Holocaust museums and centers in Illinois, Oregon, California, Texas, Florida, Virginia,

West Virginia, Rhode Island and Wisconsin came to this intensive seminar to learn how to become "Echoes and Reflections" master trainers, who will reach out to and instruct hundreds of new teachers to use the program. Leading the seminar were Shulamit Imber, Pedagogical Director at Yad Vashem's International School

for Holocaust Studies, and Ephraim Kaye, Director of International Seminars for Educators at the School.

*"Echoes and Reflections," developed by the ADL, the USC Shoah Institute and Yad Vashem, is funded by Dana and Yossi Hollander.*

## Graduate Spotlight

Every year, the International School for Holocaust Studies holds hundreds of educational activities, in a dozen languages, for over 300,000 students and educators in Israel and around the world. Featured here is one of the School's graduates, and what she has achieved since:



## Esther Sterental USA

### Leah Goldstein

■ In October 2012, Esther Sterental, a high school teacher in the Miami-Dade County public school system, received the Florida Holocaust Education Teacher of the Year Award. Sterental, a graduate of a number of Yad Vashem educational seminars, was given the award for "encouraging appreciation and respect for others, involving students in the process of Holocaust awareness, evidencing mastery of the subject matter and exemplifying Holocaust education."

Among other professional roles, Sterental is currently an adjunct professor at two universities in Miami and conducts teacher training sessions in Holocaust education. "Why do I do what I do?" deliberates Sterental. "I am an educator. Being an educator does not translate into just teaching... it also involves building character and fostering moral development. I want to make a difference in the lives of the people I educate... whether children, young adults or older professionals; with the hope that they will, in turn, make a difference in the lives of the people they touch."

Sterental attended her first Yad Vashem educators' seminar in the summer of 2004, after becoming aware of societal prejudice and its inherent dangers following the 9/11 terror attacks. "I always knew that the Holocaust was part of my heritage, though I was not aware of having lost family members to the horrors

of the *Shoah* until I visited Yad Vashem," she recalled. "I also attended the seminar because I wanted to learn more about the history of the Holocaust and how to teach about it. I wanted to absorb anything and everything I could – to become a 'professional' in the field."

Sterental is certainly dedicated to collecting historical knowledge. In recent years she has traveled to many different European sites connected with WWII or Jewish history, including the Czech Republic (Terezin), Austria (Mauthausen), Spain (Cordoba), Hungary and more recently Poland, where she toured Auschwitz and Majdanek, Warsaw, Krakow and Lublin.



■ Esther Sterental (in a blue sweater) and her students display some of the reading material for their classes on the Holocaust

Embracing the idea of teaching the Holocaust to young people so they can identify and fight prejudice and antisemitism, Sterental developed a "Holocaust Education Program," integrating

historical documents and documentaries in a unit she developed for her class – which she then made available to other teachers at her school. She also created a collection of poems for Holocaust Days of Remembrance written by children murdered during the *Shoah*. Homeroom classes read one poem a day, and are then provided with information about the young author. A minute of silence to honor his or her life follows. "I feel compelled to give the victims a name, not just a statistical number. That I also learned at Yad Vashem."

Sterental is proud that her lessons are being repeated by those she has educated. One of her former students, who enlisted in the US forces after graduating, recently sent her an email. He told her that after being stationed in Germany, the first thing he did was convince four friends to rent a car and visit Dachau.

So what are her plans for the future? "As we move towards a common core curriculum throughout the US, I have made contact with several teachers from different states to develop lessons on Holocaust education. Meanwhile, I plan to continue marking Holocaust Remembrance Days in a meaningful way at my high school, and I will encourage other high schools to do the same. I will share my resources and expertise with anyone who is interested, so together we can all further the positive moral development of future generations."

## Gandel Program Closing Ceremony

■ The closing ceremony of The Gandel Holocaust Studies Program for Australian Educators 2012 took place at the Jewish Holocaust Center of Melbourne, Australia, with the participation of John Gandel and other members of Gandel Philanthropy, and Phil Symons from the Raoul Wallenberg Unit of B'nai B'rith Melbourne.

At the ceremony, participants presented the educational projects they developed as a result of their 17-day educational seminar at Yad Vashem.

*The 2012 program was supported by Gandel Philanthropy; The Raoul Wallenberg Unit of B'nai B'rith Melbourne by awarding Pauline Glass Study Grants; The Salomea Gruener Yad Vashem Scholarship; and The Alexander Israel Ivany Scholarship.*

## New at the Virtual School Special Site for 27 January

■ According to one of the central clauses in the UN Resolution proclaiming 27 January as International Day of Commemoration in Honor of the Victims of the Holocaust, the UN "urges Member States to develop educational programs that will inculcate future generations with the lessons of the Holocaust in order to help prevent future acts of genocide."

To mark International Holocaust Remembrance Day 2013, the International School for Holocaust Studies at Yad Vashem has developed a special sub-site with a range of educational materials about the topic – lesson plans, ceremonies, learning environments,

Dr. Na'ama Shik



testimonies and more. In line with the global relevance of this special day as well as the wide-ranging activities of the International School, these materials are presented in a number of languages, including English, French, Spanish, German, Russian, Italian, Polish, Ukrainian, Czech, Arabic and Chinese.

*The author is Director of the Educational Technology Department, International School for Holocaust Studies.*

# The End of 1942

## A Turning Point in WWII and in the Comprehension of the "Final Solution"?

■ In mid-December, Yad Vashem hosted an international conference marking 70 years since the end of 1942, believed by many historians to mark a turning point in the course of WWII – and the *Shoah*. Over four days, some 50 guest lecturers from 15 countries gathered at Yad Vashem to discuss key questions regarding this historical period: What did the Allies know and believe by the end of 1942 regarding Nazi policy? How much accurate information had the Vatican, the media, the Red Cross and the intelligence community received, and what messages did their declarations and statements convey? How crucial was the North African theater to the subsequent direction taken by the war? And most notably, when did the leaders of various Jewish groups and communities know about the destructive intentions of the Nazi regime, and did the late realization of the truth stand in the way of possible response measures?

The sheer scope of mass murder perpetrated by *Einsatzgruppen* since June 1941, with the invasion of the USSR, began to be known in early 1942. During that year, more and more information came through, and in August it was further strengthened by the Riegner Telegram –



■ American soldiers landing on the beach, Algeria, November 1942

a message warning the Jewish organizations in the free world of Germany's plans to kill 2-3 million people at death facilities. In late October, a group of citizens from *Eretz Israel* who had been caught in Europe arrived back home and horrified the *Yishuv* (the Jewish community under the British mandate) by what they had

to tell; US President Roosevelt notified the leaders of the Jewish community in America that US intelligence confirmed the truth of these reports. In late November, the Jewish Agency in Jerusalem issued a press release to the effect that a systematic murder operation was underway in Europe, and on 17 December,

## Raul Hilberg's *The Destruction of the European Jews* – Now in Hebrew

■ On 22 October, a seminar was held by the International Institute for Holocaust Research to mark the launch of the Hebrew translation of Raul Hilberg's seminal work, *The Destruction of the European Jews*. Considered a fundamental research publication which attempts to present a full picture of the Holocaust, several editions of the book have been published in English; it has also been translated into many languages, including Japanese.

Hilberg immigrated to America from Vienna with his family as a 13-year-old, just months after the *Anschluss* (annexation of Austria into Nazi Germany on 12 March 1938). He served in the US Army and went to Europe towards the end of WWII, reaching as far as Germany. During his academic studies after the war, he resolved to dedicate his research efforts to understanding how Nazi Germany succeeded at perpetrating such a thorough destruction of

the European Jewish world within such a short time, and with such efficiency. Applying political science methods of analysis and concentrating on the operation of the state's managerial system, he coined the term "the machinery of destruction."

Hilberg saw the Holocaust as an event brought about by the bureaucratic system of a modern centralized state, capable of creating efficient tools for the implementation of any mission. He was among the first to put forth the hypothesis (now commonly accepted) that Hitler did not define his goals with regard to the Jews explicitly in advance, and did not engage in close ongoing supervision of the policies towards Jews. Rather, following Hitler's rise to power and the declaration of his antisemitic vision of "removing the Jews once and for all," the Nazi state apparatus consistently increased the severity of its policies, following an internal

logic: first, defining who is to be considered a Jew, in order to determine to whom the policies apply; total expropriation as the second stage; concentration as the third stage; and finally, physical destruction. Hilberg fortified his hypothesis with a most extensive body of documentary proof, mostly of German origin.

Upon completing his doctorate at Columbia University, Hilberg sought to publish a significantly more extensive version of the book. Upon the suggestion of Philip Friedman, a leading Holocaust researcher in the 1950s, the manuscript was transferred to Yad Vashem, so that the Remembrance Authority might become a partner in its publication. However, researchers at Yad Vashem decided to decline the proposal: among the main reasons for this were the negative descriptions of the Jews' behavior during the Holocaust, and the fact that documents and testimony from the Jewish side were not



## Prof. Dina Porat

# Exactly at the time when news of the mass murder of European Jewry was finding its way to the international forum, Britain and America directed all their energy towards achieving military success

the Allies made another solemn announcement to this effect at the British parliament, fortifying it with a threat of trial and persecution for all war criminals seized after the war.

However, at the same time, the military front was also experiencing a change in course: in October 1942, the Germans lost the battle at El Alamein. From that point on, the wheel of war



■ Prof. Antony James Beevor gives the opening keynote address at the international research conference

started turning in the opposite direction: in February 1943, the Germans suffered a major defeat in the battle for Stalingrad and Britain launched an offensive to recover several strategic locations surrendered during the first half of the war, particularly in the Middle Eastern region.

“Operation Torch’ (7 November 1942) was certainly a turning point in WWII,” argues Dr. Haim Saadoun, Director of The Documentation Center for North African Jewry During WWII at the Ben-Zvi Institute – co-sponsors of the conference. “This was the first military initiative of the Allied forces; it changed the standing of France in North Africa and greatly influenced the lives of Jews living in the region.” Saadoun’s lecture on the performance of the Jewish leadership in North Africa during the war was one of many innovative and unique presentations that concerned this area. “This gathering of leading researchers was particularly impressive in its success in combining the events of the war in general with their connection to or influence upon the situation in North Africa,” said Saadoun. “The opening of a number of archives in recent years has allowed us to deepen our research into these areas and advance the topic to the wider public.”

Keynote speakers Prof. Antony James Beevor (Visiting Professor at University of London, University of Kent) and Prof. Gerhard Weinberg (University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill) rounded out the fascinating investigation of this historical period. The conclusions seem to

indicate that exactly at the time when news of the mass murder of European Jewry was finding its way to the international forum, and precisely when the *Yishuv* and communities of the free world began to propose rescue programs, collect funds and seek the Allies’ assistance, Britain and America directed all their energy towards achieving military success on the front lines, thus making all plans of rescuing Jews appear as hindrances to the war effort.

Although at the end of 1942 the extermination of European Jewry became a publicly known reality, the complicated process of understanding an extermination plan of such unprecedented cruelty, too horrific almost for the human mind to comprehend, still remains at the very heart of extensive pondering. Despite the impressive research presented at the conference and the lively discussions that followed, it seems that many of the familiar questions are yet to be answered.

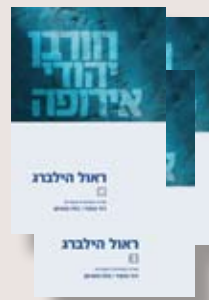
*The conference was held with the generous support of the Gertner Center for International Holocaust Conferences; the Gutwirth Family Fund; and the Ben-Zvi Institute, The Documentation Center of North African Jewry During WWII (supported by the Claims Conference).*

*The author is Yad Vashem’s Chief Historian.*

## Prof. Dan Michman

used. Hilberg was deeply disappointed by this rejection. The book was eventually published by Quadrangle Books, a small publishing house in Chicago. With time, as interest in Holocaust research grew in the English-speaking world and then in other countries, Hilberg’s book started to gain popularity. Hilberg made several extensions to his work over the years, adding many research findings but never departing from his original premise.

Following a 2004 conference at Yad Vashem on Holocaust historiography in which Hilberg was a guest lecturer, the idea was put forth to have Hilberg’s book translated into Hebrew. From the moment translation work began, Hilberg collaborated closely with the Research Institute at Yad Vashem, sending frequent additions, corrections and remarks, the last of which arrived just months before his passing on 4 August 2007.



Some 250 guests attended the seminar to launch the publication, including the author of this article and Yad Vashem Chief Historian Prof. Dina Porat, who discussed Hilberg’s views on the Judenrat establishment and the heated debate they raised within research circles. Prof. Michael Wildt of Humboldt University in Berlin analyzed the slow and late acceptance of Hilberg’s book in Germany, amid the vicissitudes of Holocaust memory within German society. Dr. Roni Stauber of Tel Aviv University compared the attitude of Philip Friedman, the most prominent Holocaust researcher of the first generation and the person who supported Hilberg during his doctoral

research, to Hilberg’s conclusions with regard to the behavior of Jews. Dr. Bella Guterman, Director of the Research Institute, retraced various episodes of the process of translating the book into Hebrew. At the completion of the seminar, Dina Hilberg, the author’s daughter who now lives in Israel, gave an emotional talk describing the world of a child whose father’s entire life was dedicated to Holocaust research, and the things she learned from her father – about the Holocaust, and about life itself.

*The Hebrew edition of The Destruction of the European Jews was edited by the late Prof. David Bankier and Dr. Bella Guterman.*

*The seminar marking the launch of the new Hebrew edition was held in cooperation with the Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, the Gutwirth Family Fund and Konrad Adenauer Stiftung.*

*The author is Head of the International Institute for Holocaust Research and Incumbent of the John Najmann Chair of Holocaust Studies.*

# News from the Research Institute

## International Book Prize Awarded to Christoph Dieckmann

■ On 10 December 2012, the International Institute for Holocaust Research awarded Dr. Christoph Dieckmann of Keele University (UK) the Yad Vashem Book Prize for Holocaust Research in memory of Holocaust survivor Abraham Meir Schwarzbaum and his family members who were murdered in the Holocaust. Dr. Dieckmann was awarded the prize for his two-volume book *Deutsche Besatzungspolitik in Litauen 1941-1944* (German Occupation Policy in Lithuania 1941-1944).

Prize Committee members noted that "Dieckmann's description of the actions and atrocities is not a dry account: while basing his

narrative on German and local records in order to understand the initiatives and circumstances, the events themselves are usually described with the help of lengthy quotes from Jewish testimonies, thereby giving the reader the possibility of sensing the horror and consternation." They called Dieckmann's work "a model for similar research to be done in other countries."

Attending the ceremony were dozens of honored guests, including Institute Head and Incumbent of the John Najmann Chair of Holocaust Studies Prof. Dan Michman; Yad Vashem Chief Historian Prof. Dina Porat; and Sabina Schwarzbaum, z"l, daughter of

Abraham Meir Schwarzbaum. Dr. Dieckmann (pictured) presented a lecture on his book, and Beda Krahemann imparted anecdotes about his friend Abraham Meir Schwarzbaum.



## Research Fellows, Fall 2012

■ This fall semester, Yad Vashem's International Institute for Holocaust Research has welcomed a number of fellows from across the globe who have come



■ Prof. Barbara Engelking

to Yad Vashem for a four-month stay to enhance their research on a variety of topics. Dr. Tobias Ebbrecht (Germany) is supplementing his knowledge on moving images from the Holocaust period; Dr. August Grabski (Poland) is studying the anti-Zionist Left's publishing activities in the Warsaw ghetto; Dr. Daniel Lee (UK) is investigating the experiences of Jewish women in Tunisia during WWII; Dr. Daniel Nadav (Israel) is looking at the medical aspect of antisemitism during the *Shoah*, including the resistance of Jewish doctors; Dr. Daniel Reiser (Israel) is furthering his quest to publish a scientific and annotated edition of Rabbi Kalonymus Kalman Shapira's famous sermon during the Holocaust; and Prof. Barbara Engelking (Poland) is exploring dreams as a source for Holocaust research.

Prof. Engelking, Deputy Chairperson of the International Auschwitz Council alongside Yad Vashem Chairman Avner Shalev, recently gave a fascinating lecture on her topic at Yad Vashem. "Surprisingly, dreams can be a great source for Holocaust research," she summarized. "Compared with testimonies and pictures, which show only the external aspects of certain experiences, dreams talk about a deeply hidden

inner reality. Dreams are an emotional response to the situations and experiences of a person, and therefore present historical events from the point of view of the dreamer's feelings. And feelings are an important element of a complex mosaic of the Holocaust experience.

"In my research I analyze dreams from the ghetto, from the deportation period, and from hiding. It is a fascinating topic from the psychological as well as historical point of view. Studying at Yad Vashem has given me access to a significant amount of documents, sources and memoirs – both published and not. It has helped enrich my archive of dreams experienced during the Holocaust."

*Tobias Ebbrecht, Daniel Nadav and August Grabski are all fellows of The Baron Friedrich Carl von Oppenheim Chair for the Study of Racism, Antisemitism, and the Holocaust.*

## Najmann Lecture on the Judenrat Phenomenon

■ The annual lecture of the John Najmann Chair of Holocaust Studies was given on 31 December by Prof. Dan Michman, Head of the International Institute for Holocaust Research and Incumbent of the John Najmann Chair of Holocaust Studies. Prof. Michman (pictured) spoke on "The Judenrat Phenomenon: Why and how did it emerge and how was it implemented by the Nazi regime and its satellite states."



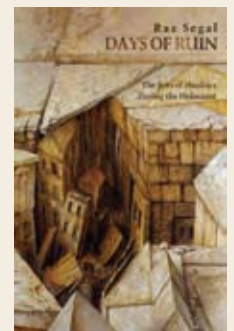
## New on the Shelf Days of Ruin

The Jews of Munkács During the Holocaust

Raz Segal

NIS 74 NIS 58

■ "This book provides a comprehensive and well-documented account of the tragic fate of the Jews of Munkács (Mukachevo), from the incorporation of the town in Hungary in November 1938 to the deportation of the majority of the community to their



deaths in Auschwitz in May 1944. A moving and shocking account of how the Final Solution of the Jewish Question was implemented in a single town in greater Hungary, it documents fully how this mass murder was overwhelmingly carried out by the Hungarian Police Force and Army with only limited German assistance, and is essential reading for all those interested in the history of the Second World War and the problem of genocide." [Antony Polonsky, Albert Abramson Professor of Holocaust Studies at Brandeis University]

To order this and other  
Yad Vashem publications:  
Tel. 972-2-6443511, Fax 972-2-6443509,  
[publications.marketing@yadvashem.org.il](mailto:publications.marketing@yadvashem.org.il)  
Or purchase through our online store:  
[www.yadvashem.org](http://www.yadvashem.org)

# New Yad Vashem Website in German

Dana Porath

■ **“Love life, and don’t be afraid of death, Believe in God and a better future”**

This inscription was written in Ester Goldstein’s journal by her 16-year-old classmate Bella Lassore on 15 September 1942. Ester Goldstein, along with her parents, sister and brother, lived in Berlin. Ester had been keeping

website in German. The launch of the website, at a press conference in Berlin organized by Axel Springer AG Publishing House, will take place on 28 January 2013, the day after the UN-designated International Holocaust Remembrance Day.

Featuring a contemporary web design and user-friendly interface, the new German website comprises a comprehensive thematic and chronological narrative of the Holocaust with related photos, documents, video testimonies, documentary footage, artifacts and works of art. It will also feature a German-language version of Yad Vashem’s Central Database of Shoah Victims’ Names, currently comprising more than four million names of men, women and children murdered during the Holocaust. In addition, the website will extend to German-speaking educators and students extensive pedagogical materials, including lesson plans, learning environments on different topics such as using testimony in Holocaust education, and interviews with survivors discussing their post-war return to life.

Fourteen online exhibitions appear on the website, focusing on such topics as deportations from German cities to the East; the Jewish-German experience before, during and immediately after the Holocaust; the Jewish experience in the DP camps; Righteous Among the Nations; the Eichmann Trial; and art and music during the *Shoah*. A video lecture series in German by Yad Vashem historians, as well as German-speaking historians who visited Yad Vashem and were specially filmed for this project, is aimed at German scholars and other interested parties. Featured among the lecturers are Prof. Yehuda Bauer, Prof. Michael Brenner, Dr. Götz Aly and Mag. Brigitte Ungar-Klein.

“Transports to Extinction” – The *Shoah* Deportations Database, which reconstructs transports that took place during the Holocaust from territories of the Third Reich and currently provides information on approximately 500 transports, is included in the new website. Also offered is a section on the Righteous Among the Nations, imparting information about the program as well as the individual stories of the men and women who risked their lives to save Jews during the Holocaust, including those from German-speaking countries.



■ *Inscription and picture in the wartime journal belonging to Ester Goldstein from Ester’s friend, Bella Lassore*

The new website in German joins Yad Vashem’s existing websites in English, Hebrew, Spanish, Russian, Arabic and Farsi, ensuring that Yad Vashem continues to reach an ever-expanding global audience.

*The website was created with the support of the Friede Springer Foundation, Berlin.*

*The author is Director of the Internet Department.*

## Yad Vashem YouTube Channel in German

■ The Yad Vashem YouTube Channel in German contains over 150 videos, including online testimonies by German-speaking survivors, documentary footage, video lectures, virtual tours and multimedia presentations. The videos link back to relevant content in the new German website, providing historical context for the event being portrayed. The German Channel is Yad Vashem’s seventh YouTube channel, joining the existing channels in English, Hebrew, Spanish, Russian, Arabic and Farsi.

*Yad Vashem’s German YouTube Channel was made possible thanks to the kind support of the Friede Springer Foundation, Berlin; Future Fund of Austria; and the Yad Vashem Friend Societies of Austria and Switzerland.*

a journal for a number of years, in which family members and teachers had inscribed messages to her. The note from Bella, together with her photo, was one of the last to appear in the journal. On 26 October 1942, Ester was sent to Riga, and on 12 January 1943 Bella was deported to Auschwitz. Both girls were murdered. The journal, along with other family documents was given to Yad Vashem by Ester’s sister, Margot Herschenbaum (née Goldstein), the sole surviving member of the family.

The story of the journal, appearing online for the first time, joins thousands of documents, artifacts, photos, testimonies and other related resources appearing on the new Yad Vashem

# "A Quiet Revolution"

Leah Goldstein

■ In 2008, Yad Vashem and the Genesis Philanthropy Group (GPG) embarked on an ambitious and challenging mission: to expand the research, education and public awareness of the history of the Holocaust in the Soviet Union. Together with the European Jewish Fund (EJF), which joined as a partner in 2010, the project aims at strengthening the Jewish identity of the Russian-speaking public in Israel as well as increasing knowledge among Hebrew speakers of the Holocaust in Eastern Europe. The success of the project stems from the cooperation with GPG and EJF, as well as the professional insight and dedicated expertise of Sana Britavsky, GPG Executive Director in Israel. "Holocaust documentation, commemoration, research and education are the most important missions of our generation," explains Britavsky.

So far, the project has already produced a broad range of impressive outcomes:

In the field of **documentation**, Yad Vashem has signed agreements with several archival authorities across the CIS, including most recently with dozens of different archives across Belarus, Ukraine and the Baltic states. This has resulted in the addition of over one-and-a-half million new Holocaust-related documents to its Archives and more than 120,000 names of

Photo: Yakov Levin, coordinator of the project in Haifa



■ Exhibition of drawings marking Holocaust Remembrance Day at the Ironi Aleph School in Haifa

Holocaust victims from the region to the Central Database of *Shoah* Victims' Names.

In its **research** efforts, GPG has supported the establishment of Yad Vashem's Center for Research on the History of Soviet Jews During the Holocaust as well as six research conferences. In addition, six research books and albums were published, some of them

available online, and an online bibliography was compiled, comprising 8,000 articles and books on the Holocaust in the USSR.

In the sphere of **education**, GPG has supported the participation of 4,500 Israeli schoolchildren in intensive study courses and 1,500 teachers in seminars and conferences at the International School for Holocaust Studies, as well as the

## International Workshop:

### The Holocaust and the War in the USSR as Reflected in Wartime Letters

■ *"My heart bleeds as I think about it... There are nights when I cannot stop thinking about my beloved ones, my family, left in the hands of such an animal. I didn't sleep last night. I ran around the room, crazed, and I am close to insanity. I try to force myself not to think, to expel these thoughts, to divert them to other directions..."*

So wrote a desperate Feivel Weiner, a Polish Jew who during the war had fled to the Soviet interior, on reading in the Soviet press in December 1942 about the Allied declaration concerning the mass murder of European Jews. Weiner's diary was one of the first-hand testimonies featured in a recent international research workshop held at Yad Vashem,

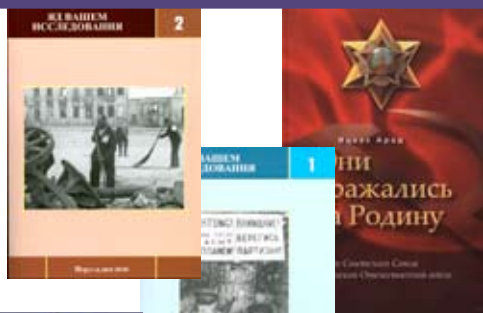
examining how the topic of the Holocaust in the USSR and the fates of Jews during the years of the Soviet-German war were reflected in diaries and letters written in Russian and in Yiddish during the war.

At the workshop, scholars from Germany, Holland, Russia, Moldova, Belarus and Israel came together to share their own unique findings on a range of sources. Presenting Weiner's diary, Yad Vashem researcher Dr. Lea Prais analyzed the personal impact on Weiner of the sudden understanding that his hope to one day be reunited with his family left behind in Poland was in vain. Other primary sources included diaries of two adolescents written in the Minsk ghetto; the reflection of the topic

of the Holocaust in letters of German military personnel; and letters from Soviet Jewish soldiers and officers at the front to their families.

"One particular challenge of this workshop was related to the comparatively small number of preserved diaries and letters," explains Dr. Arkadi Zeltser, Director of The Center for Research on the History of Soviet Jews During the Holocaust at Yad Vashem's International Institute for Holocaust Research, which organized the workshop. "Many of the surviving texts from the USSR suffered from the particularly strict censorship in the country at that time. This meant that the workshop participants needed to consider the evidence presented on the basis of various historical perspectives and

## Partnership with the Genesis Philanthropy Group and EJF Leads to Tremendous Progress in Holocaust Research and Education



development of five original educational programs and the interactive learning environment, “Children in the Ghetto.” In addition,

over a million users have viewed the Russian-language Yad Vashem web portal; 700 teachers and students from Ukraine have visited on-site learning sessions facilitated by Yad Vashem experts and educators; 100 guests from the CIS participated in educational seminars at Yad Vashem; and 90 users completed the online study course on the history of the Holocaust in Europe and the Soviet Union.



■ Selection of research and educational materials supported by GPG and EJF

A database of some 2,500 **Righteous Among the Nations** from the FSU was created on the Yad Vashem website with advanced search capabilities, together with the more detailed stories of 75 of these honored men and women. In addition, the physical files of all of the Righteous from the FSU have been scanned and digitized for preservation and research purposes.

In its efforts to broaden **general public knowledge** on the Holocaust in Eastern Europe and Jewish identity among Israel’s Russian speakers, GPG has sponsored five seminars and conferences for the general public; 24 popular video-lectures on YouTube; 3,500 participants who visited Yad Vashem in the framework of specialized guided tours; 10,000 visitors at various exhibitions; and collaborative projects with many institutions in Israel and the CIS.

“The efforts of Yad Vashem’s dedicated staff, together with the firm support of the

The project aims at strengthening the Jewish identity of the Russian-speaking public in Israel as well as increasing knowledge among Hebrew speakers of the Holocaust in Eastern Europe

Genesis Philanthropy Group, have achieved a quiet revolution in public awareness of the Holocaust in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union,” says Yad Vashem Chairman Avner Shalev. “We have seen a substantive increase in knowledge and understanding of the complexities of the war years in that part of the world, through creative educational programs, in-depth research and the use of the very latest technological tools to reach out to the Russian-speaking public in Israel and abroad. We hope to continue to partner with GPG in the coming years to further expand these achievements.”

## and Diaries



■ Pages from the wartime diary of Feivel Weiner

by comparing the impact of Jewish and Soviet factors on these texts.”

One of the letters presented at the seminar was written by Chone Shmeruk, a refugee from

Warsaw who eventually became a professor at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and an Israel Prize Laureate. Inspired by the revolt of the Jews in the Warsaw ghetto and frustrated by the fact that Polish Jews were not being accepted either into the Red Army or into the Polish Kosciuszko Division, the 22-year-old Shmeruk addressed his letter to the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee, proposing the formation of a special Jewish unit within the framework of the Polish division so that Jews could fight against the Nazis.

“It is not often that I can discuss sources of this kind produced during the Holocaust in such a focused way,” remarked Dr. Karel Berkhoff, a leading Dutch specialist in the field of the history

of the USSR during WWII, at the end of the workshop. “The setting was both professional and friendly, and allowed for plenty of conversation and the chance to become acquainted with excellent researchers.” Kiril Feferman, a former Research Institute fellow now based at the Russian Holocaust Center, wrote: “The workshop was a significant scholarly event... of particular importance was the networking and exchange of ideas with other participants, which has already led me on several new directions in my research on the Holocaust in the Soviet Union.”

*Activities of the Center for Research on the History of Soviet Jews During the Holocaust are supported by the Genesis Philanthropy Group and the European Jewish Fund.*

# "So They Might Know"

## The Caricature that Survived Auschwitz

Yehudit Shendar

■ Just before Holocaust Remembrance Day 2012, in the wake of the national "Gathering the Fragments" campaign, Iris First (née Coezijn) came to the Museum of Holocaust Art at Yad Vashem. She was carrying a book, and inside it an age-worn sheet of paper. "I waited a long, long time, before deciding on this moment," explained an emotional First, pointing at the image in the caricature drawing. "I kept it to myself for years and years, hiding it from the children up on the top bookshelf...

This is my father, this is totally my father." The caricature is more than a piece of Holocaust art to be added to the Museum collection. Its uniqueness is embodied in the spine-tingling fact that the drawing, as well as the man who



■ Jozef Coezijn on the eve of WWII

carried it on him, survived Auschwitz. Neatly folded, it was tucked inside the prisoner's clothing until he was forced on a death march and up to his later liberation. Upon making aliyah, the former prisoner held on to the drawing and kept it safe. Who was that prisoner, and what was his story?

Amsterdam, February 21, 1947. Jozef Coezijn, native of the city, born in 1923, delivered a statement to Dr. Simon Goldestijn at the National Institute for War Documentation. Just two years after liberation, Coezijn reported in a dry and factual manner his experiences during the Holocaust. Here are some brief excerpts from his testimony:

"I was sent to Budy, some eight kilometers from Auschwitz. There I worked at an agricultural camp. We were 500-600 people. We got beaten a lot. My brother was one of those who died from all the beatings. I stayed over half a year at Budy, and then I was transferred back to Auschwitz... I was put into a *Kommando* digging gravel, and stayed there for about 2-3 weeks... We were then subjected to a medical check-up, and I was sent to Golleschau. That was a cement factory. We were 1,200 men. I remained there for over a year-and-a-half. They needed strong

guys. Although thin, I was healthy and looked okay. We were forced to hew rocks out of mountain slopes and load them onto wagons. The work was impossibly difficult... I stayed there until the Russians approached in October 1944. We set off on a march. After marching 90 kilometers in two days, we boarded a train. We were told that we were going to Dachau. En route, the train was attacked by planes, and I jumped off together with a friend of mine, a guy from France... One morning, there was a knock at the door, and of course we thought that the Nazis had come – but it was the Americans. I took the train to Namen near Dodinne, where we got off and were returned to our motherland."

The horrifying fate that befell the Jews of Holland during the Holocaust is exemplified in all its gravity in the story of the Coezijn family. Jozef's fourteen siblings, aged 6-26, along with their 50-year-old father, were all murdered. Jozef (Jopi, as his friends called him) was cast into the proverbial "pit" – the Golleschau Camp, infamous for its unparalleled cruelty amid the 40-some satellite camps of Auschwitz – and survived. During his three years of imprisonment and bone-crushing forced labor, he stood strong as a young and healthy man, of pleasant temperament. His friends said he was the "joker" in their midst, and his sense of humor gave a boost to everyone. That is exactly how he is depicted in the caricature. A prewar photograph of him further sharpens the amazing likeness that the anonymous artist was able to capture with his pencil. With shaking legs, he approaches the guard asking to "go out for a bit" – i.e., to the latrine marked by the WC sign denoting its location nearby. The airplane



■ Unidentified artist: *Portrait of Jozef Coezijn, Golleschau Camp, 1943-1945*  
Pencil on paper. Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum, Jerusalem  
Gift of the Coezijn family, Beer-Sheva

hovering in the skies gives some indication to the fact that the drawing dates sometime towards the end of the war, when Allied forces converged upon the factories in Buna, seeking to cripple the German military industry.

Jopi immigrated to Israel, married an Israeli-born girl of Moroccan descent, and refused to talk to his children about his traumatic past. "He never told me," says Iris. "Before this piece of paper crumbles into pieces, I brought it here – so that people may see, so they might know."

*The author is Senior Art Curator and Deputy Director of the Museums Division.*

# The Spirit of Volunteerism

Deborah Berman

■ It is no easy task for Holocaust survivors to sift through old family photographs and painful memories to recall the names of loved ones murdered in the *Shoah*. Often the key to unlocking these memories is the empathy and understanding of a compassionate volunteer who has been trained in that very task. Yosef (Yoske) Bidichi, 81, from Moshav Moledet, joined Yad Vashem's worldwide effort to collect and commemorate the name of each individual

**Bidichi's empathy and gentle nature have enabled him to develop a warm rapport that helps guide survivors through the process of commemoration**

Holocaust victim in 2009. Answering an ad he saw while working as a volunteer at a local hospital, Bidichi completed special training by staff at the *Shoah* Victims' Names Recovery Project in order to assist people with submitting Pages of Testimony in commemoration of Holocaust victims.

"I remember when I was a child in Jerusalem and I first heard about the war, I read all the relevant information I could lay my hands on," explains Bidichi, father of four, grandfather of 13 and great-grandfather of two who has no personal connection to the Holocaust. "Whenever I can, I still delve into the stories of the survivors. They have always affected me deeply." This laid the groundwork for his dedication and endless patience with survivors, from whom he has received dozens of requests for help in filling out Pages of Testimony, or with whom he has initiated home visits. "I have helped complete some 230 Pages of Testimony recording people murdered during the *Shoah*, and I am proud of my achievements."

He isn't the only one. In November 2012, Bidichi was presented with an "outstanding volunteerism" award by Israel's Ministry for Senior Citizens for his participation in



■ Names collection volunteer Yosef Bidichi

the Names Recovery Project, among several other volunteer activities. At a well-attended ceremony in Israel's Knesset building, Bidichi was honored for "contributing to those in need with all his strength... with dedication, a deep sense of responsibility, humility and great concern."

Bidichi's empathy and gentle nature have enabled him to develop a warm rapport that helps guide survivors through the process of commemoration. "At first, not everybody is willing to give names. One has to be sensitive and cautious. I call them and ask, 'Would you host me for a cup of tea? We can sit and talk. We don't have to discuss the *Shoah*.' During the visit, however, we inevitably come around to the topic, and I tell them, 'Would you mind filling out a Page of Testimony?' And slowly I ask about their mother, father, aunts, uncles... sometimes we end up recording the names of an entire family that was wiped out forever." During the interviews, Bidichi invests a lot of his own emotional energy: "Many times I sit there and cry with them." But he is convinced of the value of his time and efforts. "When we finish filling out the Pages, I tell them how important this is, and that now their grandchildren and great-grandchildren will always know exactly where they came from. They can go straight to the Yad Vashem website and learn about their family history."

## New Names "Complete the List of Holocaust Victims from Italy"

■ On 16 December 2012, Yad Vashem hosted a gathering marking 69 years since the Jews of Italy were deported to the death camps. During the gathering, a list of Italian Jews sent to the camps was presented to the Yad Vashem Archives – the result of many years of research undertaken by the Center of Contemporary Jewish Documentation (CDEC) in Milan.

At the ceremony, (left to right) CDEC President Giorgio Sacerdoti and the Center's Research Director Liliana Picciotto presented the disk of names to Chairman of the Yad Vashem Council Rabbi Israel Meir Lau, Director of the Hall of Names Alexander Avram and Director



of the Archives Division Dr. Haim Gertner. Also present at the event were Italian Ambassador in Israel H.E. Mr. Francesco Taló; Chairman

of the Association of Italian Immigrants in Israel Vito Anav; and Judge Elishu Ben Zimra, Chairman of the Cultural Association of Italian Jews in Israel.

"The names we received today will in effect complete the list of Holocaust victims from the Jewish community in Italy – some 7,000 men, women and children murdered during the *Shoah*," said Hall of Names Director Avram. "The names will be added to Yad Vashem's Central Database of *Shoah* Victims' Names, searchable online, in which there are currently over four million names."

# “Like a Father, and a Dear Friend”

Irena Steinfeldt

■ There are different stories of Jews being saved from deportation: some were taken off the trains, some were hidden with their families during *aktionen* in the ghettos, others were smuggled out into places of hiding. In testimony given in 1945, Greta Junkler wrote: “In July 1942 the deportations began... My husband prepared a hiding place for us in the building where we lived... On Saturday my husband went to work, and did not return... I stayed alone with two children in a bunker for five days, with a loaf of bread, half a kilo of sugar and a bucket of water. On the sixth day my uncle, engineer Yakobovitz, released us, together with a German soldier, *Feldwebel* Kurzbach, Director of the HKP [a Wehrmacht workshop for the repair of military vehicles]. They took us to the HKP, where several hundred Jewish families were hiding, and we spent a week there... Six weeks later, I learned that my husband had been taken to a camp at the Rakowice airfield. Kurzbach drove there in a military car and brought my husband back to the ghetto where we remained together until 1 August 1943, when the liquidation began.”

This account is one of a number of testimonies in the Yad Vashem Archives describing *Oberfeldwebel* (Sergeant First Class) Gerhard Kurzbach's sympathetic attitude towards Jews who worked at the HKP in Bochnia, near Krakow. Kurzbach, a soldier in the German army, was in charge of the HKP facility, where hundreds of Jews from the local ghetto were forced to work. The different survivor testimonies describing their rescue by the HKP director were found by staff at the Righteous Among the Nations Department

following an email the Department received in June 2011.

The email was sent by a German man named Günther Kowalczyk. Kowalczyk explained that he was researching the history of the Kurzbach family and wished to check whether Gerhard Kurzbach, apparently a distant relative, was worthy of receiving the honor of Righteous Among the Nations. In addition to the the Yad Vashem Archives, staff also checked the German archives where Wehrmacht soldiers' personal

**On 23 August 1942, during the *Aktion* at Bochnia, Kurzbach hid the Jewish workers at the factory for a whole day, preventing them from returning to the ghetto**

files are kept. Documents there provided data on Kurzbach's military career. According to the records, Kurzbach was enlisted in 1939 and assigned to the artillery corps. From May 1941, he managed the factory in Bochnia. On 8 March 1943, Kurzbach was removed from that post and continued serving in various artillery units. The last mention in his military file was a message to his family in 1944 from Romania. Then Kurzbach went missing.

Romek Marber, a survivor from the Bochnia ghetto who worked at the HKP, immigrated to England after the war. In his memoirs, he



■ Gerhard Kurzbach during his wartime service

mentions that on 23 August 1942, during the *Aktion* at Bochnia, Kurzbach hid the Jewish workers at the factory for a whole day, preventing them from returning to the ghetto. There were rumors at the ghetto, wrote Marber, that Kurzbach was later fired from his job at the HKP and sent to the Russian front.

The witness testimonies and documentary evidence on Gerhard Kurzbach was submitted to the Commission for the Designation of the Righteous Among the Nations, and on 19 December 2011, the Commission decided to award Kurzbach the honored title. Yad Vashem approached various authorities in an attempt to

## Righteous Ceremonies Abroad

Hundreds of new Righteous Among the Nations are recognized each year. If the families are unable to travel to Jerusalem, ceremonies honoring these men and women take place in their home countries. In recent months, ceremonies abroad have included:

■ A ceremony on 29 October 2012 in the recently renovated synagogue of Alkmaar, Netherlands, posthumously honoring Pieter and Adriana Kleibroek and their daughter Nelie. The Kleibroeks hid the Drukker family in their home,

but on 17 May 1944 their house was raided and Abraham and Juliette Drukker and their 14-year-old daughter Marjan were caught and deported. Their benefactor, Pieter Kleibroek, was also arrested. All four were murdered.

■ A ceremony at the Polish Prime Minister's Office in Warsaw on 4 December 2012 honoring five Righteous Among the Nations. The ceremony also marked the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the foundation of the Polish rescue organization Zegota; present was the organization's only

surviving member, 90-year-old Polish Minister Wladyslaw Bartoszewski – himself a Righteous Among the Nations and honorary citizen of Israel – as well as other Polish dignitaries, the American and Israeli Ambassadors in Poland, members of the survivors' families and a delegation of leaders and activists from the USA.

■ A ceremony on 11 December 2012 at the Israeli Ambassador's residence in Rome, honoring the Antolini family, who sheltered Saul, Esther and Rachel Ancona; the Gerbalena



# German Soldier Honored as Righteous Among the Nations

locate the soldier's relatives, and finally, with the help of the tracing service of the German Church established after the war, established contact with Michael Scholl, a nephew of Kurzbach. Scholl sent Yad Vashem pictures of his uncle as well as a letter sent to Kurzbach's wife by Jewish workers in March 1943, right after her husband left Bochnia: "Two hundred people mourn his departure [...] We not only parted with a boss whom we loved and respected, but with a man who was like a father and a dear friend to us, to whom each and every one of us is indebted."

On 27 November 2012, almost 70 years after Kurzbach disappeared, a ceremony was held at a Berlin high school in the presence of the Federal President of Germany Joachim Gauck to mark 100 years since the birth of Righteous Among the Nations Raoul Wallenberg. At the ceremony, Israeli Ambassador H.E. Mr. Yakov Hadas-Handelman presented the certificate and medal to Kurzbach's relatives. Chairwoman of the Society of Friends of Yad Vashem in Germany Hildegard Müller praised Kurzbach's actions: "In gratitude we remember your deeds," she said, "that will serve as an example to the next generations of human behavior in inhuman times."

After much consideration and difficult soul-searching, Romek Marber, who had resolved after the war to never again set foot in Germany, decided to attend the ceremony in Berlin and honor his rescuer. When he finished speaking at the ceremony, hundreds of students stood up and for several minutes applauded both survivor and rescuer.

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

and Zanardi families, who rescued Bruno Portaleone; and the Nembrini-Gonzaga families, who helped 10 members of the Ascoli family flee by boat to Termoli. The ceremony was attended by former presidents of the Italian Senate and Chamber of Deputies and members of the rescuer and survivor families, as well as other Italian Righteous Among the Nations with their relatives.

# News

## Going Green on the Mount of Remembrance

■ **The Yad Vashem campus extends over 45 acres of forest and groves upon the hills of Jerusalem.** Some 15 acres are irrigated flower gardens and trees – most of them planted in honor of the Righteous Among the Nations.

Through the initiative of Gadi Giladi, Director of the Maintenance Department at Yad Vashem, the flowers and trees now receive water discharged by the air conditioning system of the Museum Complex. This green-minded system, built by maintenance professionals, recycles 15,000 cubic meters of water from the air conditioning network every year. "Today, about a third of the manicured grounds at Yad Vashem are irrigated with recycled water," says Giladi. "In addition to the supreme importance of preserving water, this saves Yad Vashem some NIS 180,000 a year."

The Museum Complex, which includes the Holocaust History Museum, Museum of Holocaust Art, Synagogue and Exhibitions Pavilion, is climate-controlled 24 hours a day, seven days a week, by an advanced cooling system that maintains constant temperature

and humidity levels inside the museum halls throughout the year. The necessity of this is clearly dictated by the unique nature of the exhibits – personal effects, documents and artworks dating back to the Holocaust period. The temperature inside the museums is constant, regardless of the weather outside. This calls for a special air conditioning system, utilizing and discharging sizeable amounts of water. In the past, this water was simply wasted.

One of the most important processes that enabled Yad Vashem to recycle its cooling system water was the removal of lime scale, rendering water fit for irrigation. The process was closely supervised by agronomists and chemists, and helped achieve the necessary water quality.

At the heart of the new system are eight large tanks that collect water from the air-conditioning network and channel it toward the irrigation system. In an added measure of forward-thinking, the tanks double as water reserves for fire emergencies.



### 74 Years since *Kristallnacht*

■ “Not setting fire *per se* – but the dignity of the people, the dignity of various people within the family was the main target of the Nazi regime; damaging that dignity was the chief means of making Jews do what they were told, in order to separate and single them out from German society.”

These words were spoken by Prof. Moshe Zimmerman, Director of the Koebner Center for German History at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, at the annual gathering held at



Yad Vashem on 8 November to mark the 74<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the *Kristallnacht* Pogrom. The event was attended by (pictured front, left to right): First Secretary at the German Embassy in Israel Matthias Lotenberg; Director of the Association of Israelis of Central European Origin Devorah Haberefeld; the Association's Chairman Reuven Merhav; and Deputy Head

of Mission at the Austrian Embassy in Israel Hans Almoslechner; as well as some 250 Holocaust survivors and their families and representatives of the “Action Reconciliation Service for Peace” (ASF). Fascinating lectures on the topic of women during the war years were delivered by Director of Yad Vashem's Righteous Among the Nations Department Irena Steinfeldt, Director of the Guiding Department at the Commemoration and Public Relations Division Naama Galil and Academic Advisor to Beit Terezin Dr. Margalit Shlain.

An educational seminar to mark the day was attended by students visiting Yad Vashem. The seminar culminated with a service in the Yad Vashem Synagogue and a lecture by Holocaust survivor Dr. Ehud Loeb, who shared with the students some of his childhood memories of *Kristallnacht* in his hometown of Bühl, Germany.

### Remembering Eli Zborowski, z"l

■ On 28 November, a memorial gathering was held at the Yad Vashem Auditorium honoring Holocaust survivor Eliezer (Eli) Zborowski, z"l, founder and Chairman of the American Society for Yad Vashem. Eli's far-reaching and impressive legacy is his tireless efforts for the cause of Holocaust remembrance and



supporting Yad Vashem. The gathering was held in the presence of Eli Zborowski's children, Dr. Lilly Zborowski Naveh and Murry Zborowski; his sister, Tzila Listenberg; relatives, friends and Yad Vashem staff. Speeches were delivered by Chairman of the Yad Vashem Council Rabbi Israel Meir Lau, Chairman of the Yad Vashem Directorate Avner Shalev, Deputy Chairman of the Yad Vashem Council Dr. Yitzhak Arad and Murry Zborowski (pictured).

*The author assists production in the Events Department, Commemoration and Public Relations Division.*

### New on [www.yadvashem.org](http://www.yadvashem.org) Dana Porath

#### WebiAward 2012

■ Once again, the Yad Vashem website has won the *People and Computers Magazine* Special Category WebiAward. Dana Porath, Director of Yad Vashem's Internet Department (left), and Effi Neumann, Outreach Technology Coordinator (center), accepted the 2012 prize from WebiAward Chairman Ido Levy (right). Judges commented that the Yad Vashem website is “an outstanding example of websites in Israel, which contains a vast amount of content, is



organized in an exemplary manner and serves a multitude of visitors from many dozens of countries around the world.”

### From Hope to Despair: The Story of the Horonczyk Family

■ The Horonczyk family moved from Poland to Paris in 1926 with hopes and dreams of a better life. They adjusted well to life in France, creating a thriving business and expanding their family. The war put an end to their acclimation and prosperity. In the space of a few terrible years, the extended Horonczyk family faced destruction beyond their imagination. The end of the war found the family's few survivors broken and dispersed. The photographs, documents, testimonies and artifacts in this new online exhibition tell their tragic story.

Six chapters chronicling the Holocaust in France were especially written to accompany



the exhibition, including dozens of photos, documents, letters, video testimonies, written testimonies, artworks and artifacts. This custom-written mini-narrative provides the historical context to the fate of the Horonczyk family members.

Initial research on the Horonczyk family was undertaken by the Artifacts Department of Yad Vashem's Museums Division.

*This exhibition was created with the support of the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany.*

## News from the Archives

### Yad Vashem Leads in the Field of Digitization

Giora Zwilling

■ In recent years, Yad Vashem has been operating one of the largest and most advanced digitization operations to scan documents from its vast historical archives. Within the framework of the project, millions of Pages of Testimony and documents from the Yad Vashem collections are scanned every year, creating backup digital copies that can then be accessed by the public – both in person, during visits to the campus, and virtually, via the Internet.

The knowledge and experience accumulated by Yad Vashem in this field has now led to the establishment of working ties with various archives in Israel and abroad that hold documentary material from the Holocaust period. Over the past year, for example, Yad Vashem has scanned documents from the Beit Terezin Archives at Kibbutz Giv'at Haim, and over half a million pages of archival documents belonging to the Yad Yaari Archives of the Shomer Hatzair movement at Kibbutz Lehavot Haviva. The latter include the personal archive of Mordechai Shenhavi, one of the founding fathers of Yad Vashem; the personal archive of Lithuanian partisan and Hebrew poet Abba Kovner; and the photo archive of the sculptor Natan Rappaport, creator of the Warsaw Ghetto Monument.

In addition to its own digitization work, Yad Vashem assists other museums and archival collectors seeking to carry out similar projects by providing them with expert instruction and advanced digitization services. Through this cooperation, Yad Vashem has built extensive working ties with the Central Zionist Archives, Beit Hatfutsot - The Museum of the Jewish People, The Ben-Zvi Institute for the Study of Jewish Communities of the East and others, facilitating public access to even more documentary collections.

“The digitization project constitutes an important part of our commitment to preserving all of the Holocaust-related documentation

available in the world,” explains Dr. Haim Gertner, Director of the Yad Vashem Archives. “Yad Vashem intends to continue rendering similar services to additional collections in the coming years.”

*The author is Head of the Digitization Section in the Archives Division.*

### Nuremberg Trial Collection from Survivor/Reporter

Zvi Bernhardt

■ On 19 April, 1946, an article appeared in the major German newspaper *Frankfurter Rundschau* describing the testimony about Auschwitz during the Nuremberg trials. This article was proudly signed “Ernst Michel, former Auschwitz inmate.” An American newspaper took interest in the survivor/reporter covering the trials, and subsequently ran an article which eventually reached Michel's sister in Kibbutz Ein Hanatziv. Convinced that her brother had perished, she had arrived in *Eretz Israel* after having hidden in a French convent during the war. The article was the catalyst for the siblings' joyful reunion.



Ernst Michel was born in Mannheim, Germany. He survived a number of camps – among them Auschwitz and Buchenwald – and went on to become one of the major organizers of the 1981 World Gathering of Jewish Holocaust Survivors in Jerusalem. He kindly donated his important collection from his time as a reporter at the Nuremberg trials to the Yad Vashem Archives. The material, in a number of media, augments Yad Vashem's extensive collection of

material from and about the Nuremberg trials with the unique contemporary perspective of a survivor attending the trials of his persecutors, and reporting to the nation they led.

*The author is Assistant to the Director of the Hall of Names and Deputy Director of the Reference and Research Department, Archives Division.*

### Yaffa Eliach Collection Deposited at Yad Vashem

■ More than 500 archival containers weighing over a ton arrived at Yad Vashem in August-October 2012, containing the complete personal archives of renowned historian Prof. Yaffa Eliach. Prof. Eliach, who contributed significantly to the establishment of the United States' Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington DC, is a pioneer in Holocaust research and teaching via oral history, as well



■ Safira Rapoport (left), Head of the Testimonies Collection Section in the Archives Division, examines the material received from the collection of Prof. Yaffa Eliach.

as the compilation of survivor documentation. Her carefully organized collection spans a half century of recorded evidence, transcripts, diaries, authentic memoirs and original documents in English, German, Yiddish, Hebrew and Russian; individual photographs and photo albums; and articles she composed regarding the history of Eastern European Jews in general, and Eišiškės, her native town in Lithuania, in particular.

The arrival of the comprehensive collection fulfills Prof. Eliach's desire for her lifetime's work to be preserved in a safe haven at Yad Vashem, and her archives will take an honored place among Yad Vashem's other archival collections for future generations.

### Vladka Meed: Resistance Fighter and Holocaust Educator

■ Yad Vashem mourns the passing of Vladka Meed, one of the leaders of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, who passed away in Arizona in November 2012 at the age of 90.

Born Feyge Peltel in Praga (a suburb of Warsaw, Poland), Vladka joined the ZOB (Jewish Fighting Organization) as a fearless courier, smuggling arms and information in and out of the ghetto, and helping Jewish children escape to the “Aryan” side.

In 1943, Vladka married Benjamin Miedzyrzecki (Meed), a fellow Jew also passing as an Aryan. After the war the couple immigrated to the US, where Vladka traveled and spoke widely as a living witness to the horrors she encountered during the war.

Together with her devoted husband, Vladka dedicated the rest of her life both to Holocaust remembrance and to the commemoration of a world destroyed – in particular, Yiddish culture

and the legacy of those who were murdered, as well as the survivors. The Meeds organized Holocaust survivor conferences and a teacher-training program that over a decade brought hundreds of American public school teachers to Poland and Yad Vashem. The program always emphasized the theme of resistance and placed survivor testimony – including Vladka's own incredible life story – at its core.

During October–December 2012, Yad Vashem conducted 230 guided tours for more than 2,600 official visitors from Israel and abroad. These guests included heads of government and ambassadors, members of royalty, NGO, military and religious leaders, and sports personalities. Following is a small selection of our honored guests over these three months:

■ **President of Bulgaria H.E. Mr. Rosen Plevneliev** (left) was accompanied by Yad Vashem Chairman Avner Shalev during his visit to Yad Vashem on 22 October.



■ On 30 October, **Foreign Minister of Latvia Edgars Rinkevics** toured the Holocaust History Museum.



■ **General Biagio Abrate, Chief of Defence General Staff of Italy** (center), participated in a memorial ceremony in the Hall of Remembrance on 17 October. On 26 October, Italian Justice Minister Paola Severino also toured Yad Vashem.



■ **Ben Shelly, President of the Navajo Nation, and First Lady Martha Shelly** toured the Holocaust History Museum on 12 December.



■ On 27 November, **President of Togo H.E. Mr. Faure Essozimna Gnassingbé** toured the Holocaust History Museum.



■ **Foreign Minister of Brazil Antonio de Aguiar Patriota** visited the Hall of Names during his tour of Yad Vashem on 14 October.



■ **Patriarch Kirill I of Russia** (front, center) toured Yad Vashem on 12 November.



■ During his visit to Yad Vashem on 9 October, **Romanian Foreign Minister Titus Corlăţean** (left) met with Romanian Holocaust survivors Dr. Lustig and Israeli film director Andrei Călărăşu.



■ **Prime Minister of Estonia Andrus Ansip** visited Yad Vashem on 18 December.



■ **Serbian Foreign Minister Ivan Mrkic** visited Yad Vashem on 13 November.



■ On 13 November, **20 imams from France** toured Yad Vashem. At the end of the visit, Drancy's imam Hassen Chalgoumi, head of the delegation, proclaimed that “human lives are more important than holy books” and “no religion justifies killing.”



■ **The German youth football team** toured the Holocaust History Museum on 16 December.



## Leonard Wilf: New Chairman of the American Society for Yad Vashem

■ Following the sad passing of Eli Zborowski, z"l, Leonard (Lenny) Wilf has assumed the position of Chairman of the American Society for Yad Vashem.

Lenny's commitment to Holocaust remembrance and education began at an early age. He was born in Göggingen, Germany and at the age of nine moved to New Jersey. His parents, Holocaust survivors Harry and Judith Wilf, z"l, lived by the notion never to forget

### Lenny's commitment to Holocaust remembrance and education began at an early age

what happened to the Jews during the Holocaust, and to educate all future generations likewise. Lenny naturally developed a strong commitment to the American Society for Yad Vashem; he has also served a term on the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Council.

The Wilf family's partnership with Yad Vashem began almost from the onset of the organization. Joe Wilf, Lenny's uncle, was Chairman of the "Yad Vashem 2001" Campaign that included the development of Yad Vashem's Holocaust History Museum, which the Wilf family endowed. Joe spoke at the groundbreaking ceremony, bearing testimony, along with his extended family, to the heroism and tenacity of the Jewish people.

After Harry passed away, Lenny began working closely with American Society founder and longstanding chairman Eli Zborowski, a relationship that continued until Eli's passing



■ Leonard Wilf (right), new Chairman of the American Society for Yad Vashem, with Yad Vashem Chairman Avner Shalev at the 2012 American Society Annual Tribute Dinner

"I have taken hold of the torch that has been passed to me, and will work to ensure that we continue to pass the memory and meanings of the Holocaust to future generations"

Leonard Wilf

just before Rosh Hashanah 2012. Eli was a powerhouse in his commitment for Holocaust remembrance and education and all that Yad

Vashem has come to stand for today in Israel and throughout the world. The closeness that Lenny and Eli shared gave Lenny tremendous insight into Eli's driving force and has secured his commitment to continuing Eli's legacy.

"In these tenuous times, as the world faces increased terrorism and antisemitism, it is particularly important to renew our pledge to educate our children, our grandchildren and the entire world about the dangers of the *Shoah*," says Lenny. "Through the strength and ideals of the survivor generation the concept of Holocaust remembrance was born - this led to the enactment of the Law of Remembrance and, by extension, the establishment of Yad Vashem. Today, I have taken hold of the torch that has been passed to me, and will work to ensure that we continue to pass the memory and meanings of the Holocaust to future generations."

## New Benefactor: Jona Goldrich

■ Jona Goldrich has never forgotten where he came from: born near the city of Lvov, Poland in 1927, he and his brother Avram were smuggled out of Europe in 1942 and eventually made it to *Eretz Israel*. Jona's parents Alexander and Elka and his brother Isaac were murdered in the Sambor ghetto in 1943. Many other family members were also slaughtered during the Holocaust.

Jona received his mechanical engineering degree at the Technion in Haifa and worked as an auto mechanic and taxi driver. He served as a mechanical engineer in the Israeli navy and participated in Israel's War of Independence.



When he arrived in the US in 1953, Jona had fifty dollars in his pocket. In Los Angeles, he opened a business cleaning new construction sites; he later became a real estate developer

and formed G & K Industries with his partner, Sol Kest.

Now one of the most successful developers in California, Jona Goldrich is a champion of Israeli and Jewish causes, including, naturally, Holocaust remembrance. He built the Holocaust Memorial in Los Angeles, the site of an annual Holocaust Remembrance Day program, and sponsored it for many years. He is also a major supporter of the city's new Holocaust Museum.

Jona Goldrich and his wife Doretta are proud parents to Melinda and Andrea, and grandparents to Garrett, Lindsay and Derek.

# Friends Worldwide

## USA

■ This year's **American Society for Yad Vashem** Annual Tribute Dinner was held on 11 November at the Sheraton New York Hotel and Towers. Attendees included members of the Diplomatic Corps, WWII veterans of the Red Army and members of the Young Leadership Associates.

Dinner Chairs **Marilyn Rubenstein, Ira Drukier, Mark Wilf** and **Jeremy Halpern** worked hard to make this year's event a great success. The American Society's founding Chairman, **Eli Zborowski, z"l**, was greatly missed. His commitment to Holocaust remembrance and education was recognized by each of the speakers, and a moving video of Eli discussing the importance of Holocaust education was shown. The theme of the event was "Celebrating Resistance: Armed Resistance, Ghetto Fighters and Spiritual Resistance." Dinner honorees were **Cesia** and **Frank Blaichman**, who fought as partisans during the Holocaust. In addition, actor **Liev Schreiber** was honored for his work on behalf of Holocaust remembrance.

The guest speaker at the dinner was **Major General Amir Eshel**, Commander-in-Chief of the Israel Air Force (IAF). A child of Holocaust survivors, Major General Eshel fulfilled a dream when he led the historic IAF flight over the Auschwitz concentration and extermination camps in September 2003.

In 2013, the American Society for Yad Vashem will be dedicated to honoring the memory and contributions of **Eli Zborowski, z"l**. The Dinner will be held on 10 November 2013.



■ Left to right: **Mark Moskowitz, David Halpern, Barry Rubenstein, Marilyn Rubenstein, Cesia and Frank Blaichman, Liev Schreiber, American Society Chairman Leonard Wilf**



■ Guest Speaker Major General Amir Eshel



■ Front row, left to right: **Rose Holm, Cesia Blaichman, Frank Blaichman**. Back row, left to right: **Debrah Charatan, Ann Zygelman, Charles Blaichman, Bella Sekons, Noah Blaichman, Aviva Blaichman, Micah Blaichman**



■ Four generations of the Halpern Family. Front row: **Sam and Gladys Halpern, Sharon Halpern, Brianna Halpern**. Back row: **Jeremy and Abbi Halpern**

■ On 21 November **Barbara** and **David Blumenthal** (second and third from the right), along with their daughter **Shira**, family members and friends, toured Yad Vashem and saw in action their 'Dorothy's Hope' project for Holocaust education for individuals with special needs, named after Barbara's late sister.



■ **Jim** and **Liz Breslau** visited Yad Vashem on 5 November with friends from Long Beach, CA, during which they were given a presentation on the project they support to map the names of the Righteous Among the Nations on the Mount of Remembrance. They also unveiled a plaque in their honor with Managing Director of the International Relations Division **Shaya Ben Yehuda** (right).



■ Yad Vashem Benefactor **Fanya Gottesfeld Heller** (center) was accompanied by family member **Dr. Bradley Warren** (left) and Deputy Managing Director of the International Relations Division **Sari Granitza** (right) on a visit during Sukkot. The plaque honoring Fanya tells of her courage and inspiration.



■ **Murray and Bat-Sheva Halpern** brought two of their children to Yad Vashem on 2 October. During their visit, they walked along the Avenue of the Righteous Among the Nations, endowed by Murray's parents **Sam and Gladys Halpern** and his aunt and uncle **Eva and Arie Halpern**, z"l.



■ **Harlan** (second from right) and **Kathy Crow** (left) brought their children to Yad Vashem on 19 November and took a special behind-the-scenes tour of the Archives, accompanied by Managing Director of the International Relations Division **Shaya Ben Yehuda** (right).



■ **Alon Kaufman** from Detroit (center) and his brother **Ronen** from Tel Aviv toured Yad Vashem's Holocaust History Museum with members of their family on 13 September. The Kaufman family supports Yad Vashem's seminars for IDF soldiers.



■ On 19 October, **Robert Beren** and his partner **June** came to visit Yad Vashem's Holocaust History Museum.



■ During their visit to Yad Vashem on 28 October, **Sandy Ackerman** (left) and **David and Barbi Shames** (right) toured the Yad Vashem Synagogue, dedicated by **Marilyn and Barry Rubenstein**.



■ **Dr. Theodore A. and Cora Feintuch** visited Yad Vashem on 28 October and took a special behind-the-scenes tour of the Archives, accompanied by Deputy Managing Director of the International Relations Division **Sari Granitza** (left).



■ The American Society for Yad Vashem's Young Leadership Associates (YLA) engaged in warm-spirited conversation at their inaugural Dinner Event on 16 November in New York City. Over 150 people attended the event, which was chaired by **Erica and Michael Distenfeld** and **Laurie Kolin**, YLA Co-Chairs **Abbi Halpern**

and **Jeffrey Wilf**, and YLA Founding Chair **Caroline Massel**.



■ On 30 October, **Martin and Paula Domansky**, **Philip and Barbara Alheim** and **Carol and Noel Hecht** visited Yad Vashem's History Museum, Hall of Remembrance, Children's Memorial, Synagogue and "No Child's Play" exhibition.



■ On 15 November **Sam and Cheryn Delug** toured Yad Vashem's Holocaust History Museum, including the Hall of Names.



■ On 7 December **Randy Kertesz** (right) visited Yad Vashem's Holocaust History Museum with his daughter **Heather** (center) and further explored their family's roots in Hungary.



# Friends Worldwide

## CANADA

■ **David and Bonnie Goldstein** (right) and **Mary and Fred Litwin** (center), prominent members of the Toronto Jewish community, visited Yad Vashem on 2 November with their friends **Barbara Weller** and **Dean Ambrose** from the United States (left).



■ The BC Chapter of the Young Presidents' Organization, sponsored by the Jewish Federation of Vancouver, visited Yad Vashem on 21 October.



■ During the **Canadian Society for Yad Vashem's** annual *Yizkor* ceremony at Earl Bales Park in Toronto on 23 September, National Chair **Fran Sonshine** (right) shared an emotional moment with a Holocaust survivor.



■ The Canadian Society presented tokens of appreciation to the current Chair of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA, formerly the ITF), **Ambassador Jan**

**Deboutte**, and the incoming Chair, **Dr. Mario Silva**, at a "Meet and Greet" on 8 November. Pictured, left to right: Canadian Society Executive Director **Yaron Ashkenazi**, Dr. Silva, Consul General of Israel to Toronto **DJ Schneeweiss**, Chair and Executive Director of the Azrieli Foundation and Canadian Society Benefactor and Board Member **Dr. Naomi Azrieli**, Ambassador **Deboutte**



■ Director of the Yad Vashem Libraries **Dr. Robert Rozett** delivered insightful lectures to Canadian librarians, educators and members of the Canadian Society's Young Professionals' Division at the Society's office on 8 November. Pictured, left to right: **Yaron Ashkenazi**, **Dr. Naomi Azrieli**, Dr. Robert Rozett, Deputy Consul General of Israel in Toronto **Hadas Wittenberg Silberstein**



## AUSTRALIA

■ **Brian Schwartz** (left) visited Yad Vashem's Holocaust History Museum and Children's Memorial on 13 November, accompanied by his wife, **Arlene** (center), and future daughter-in-law, **Samantha Prada Carrascal** (right).



■ **Brendon Gale** (left), CEO of Richmond Football Club in the Australian Football League, visited Yad Vashem's Holocaust History Museum and the Children's Memorial on 1 November. During his visit, Mr. Gale laid a wreath at the Janus Korczak Square.



## AUSTRIA

■ Yad Vashem mourns the passing of **Finni Steindling, z"l**, long-time supporter and Yad Vashem Trustee. To those who had the privilege of knowing her, Finni Steindling was a warm, generous, elegant and highly respected woman – and a valued friend. Many people sought her counsel and help, and she was always open to these requests. Professional distance and titles had no meaning in her world.



Finni loved Israel and was deeply committed to supporting its development. Health institutions, social projects, schools and universities profited from this support. Her generosity was crucial to Yad Vashem's efforts in research, remembrance and education. Finni's commitment was shared by her husband Dolly Steindling, a survivor of the Holocaust, who was forced to flee from Vienna in 1938 and later fought against the Nazis in the French Resistance. Dolly passed away in 1983 and Finni raised their daughter, Susi, on her own. Finni chose to perpetuate the memory of Dolly through a program at Yad Vashem that represented her ties and involvement with Israeli society. This Holocaust education program brings senior IDF, police and security service officers to Yad Vashem for special seminars.

Yad Vashem will remember Finni as a great friend of its cause, and extends its deepest condolences to Susi Steindling.



## GERMANY

■ On 12 November, Yad Vashem's traveling exhibition "With Me Here Are Six Million Accusers: Marking the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Eichmann Trial" opened at the Ministry of Justice in Munich. In attendance were 300 guests, including Minister of Justice **Dr. Beate Merk**, Chairwoman of the Jewish Community of Munich and Upper Bavaria **Charlotte Knobloch**, judges and other leading figures.

■ On 7 November the "BESA" exhibition opened in the Church of the Three Kings in Dresden, Saxony. Present at the opening were 250 guests, including the exhibition's main supporter, the Prime Minister of Saxony **Stanislaw Tillich** (front row, second from left) and members of parliament. Speeches were delivered by Prime Minister Tillich, Chairperson of the Society of Friends of Yad Vashem in Germany **Hildegard Müller** (left), Pastor of the Church **Margit Klatte** (second from right) and Director of the German-Speaking Countries and Switzerland Desk in Yad Vashem's International Relations Division **Arik Rav-On** (right).



■ On 8 November, Yad Vashem's "No Child's Play" traveling exhibition opened in the Concert Hall in Frankfurt an der Oder. In attendance with Director of the German-Speaking Countries and Switzerland Desk in Yad Vashem's International Relations Division **Arik Rav-On** were 300 guests. Speakers included the State Secretary in the Ministry of Science, Research and Culture **Martin Gorholt**; Member of the City Council **Dr. Claudia Possard**; Secretary General of the Central Council of Jews in Germany **Stephan J. Kramer**; and Professor **Samuel Adler**, a composer (now living in New York) and surviving witness of the *Kristallnacht* Pogrom on 9 November 1938. The event was accompanied by a concert performed by the Philharmonic Orchestra of Brandenburg.

■ On 11 November, **Dr. Martin Salm** (right), Chairman of the "Remembrance, Responsibility and Future" Foundation, visited Yad Vashem. Dr. Salm met with Special Advisor to the Chairman of the Directorate **Arie Zuckerman** and Director of the Righteous Among the Nations Department **Irena Steinfeldt** (left), and discussed progress in "The Righteous Among the Nations Online Resource Center - Germany and Poland" project, which the Foundation is supporting.



## UK

■ **Jeremy Collier** (third from left), CEO of Collier Capital, visited Yad Vashem's Holocaust History Museum and Children's Memorial on 5 September with his colleagues: **Tim Jones**, Deputy CIO and Head of Origination (not pictured); **Axel Hansing**, German partner of Collier Capital; **Berber Krop**, whose great-uncle was honored as a Righteous Among the Nations; **Gerald Carton**; **Yonatan Puterman**; and **Brian Markeson**, former chairman of the **British Friends of Yad Vashem**.



■ The 1000 Club UK, under the leadership of **Brian Anderson**, visited Yad Vashem on 12 November and took part in a wreath-laying ceremony in the Hall of Remembrance.



■ **Sir William Castell** (second from right), Chairman of Wellcome Trust, visited Yad Vashem's Holocaust History Museum and Children's Memorial on 13 November, accompanied by his wife, **Lady Renice** (center), and **Frances Kirsh** (far left), wife of **Natie Kirsh** of the Kirsh Group.



■ **Sir Trevor Chinn CVO** (fifth from right), Chair of the Political Oversight Group of the Jewish Leadership Council, visited Yad Vashem's Holocaust History Museum and Children's Memorial on 5 October and was joined by delegates of the Labour Friends of Israel, **the Rt Hon Liam Byrne MP**, **the Rt Hon David Lammy MP**, **Chuka Umunna MP**, **Lord Maurice Glasman**, **Peter Starkings**, **Jake Sumner**, **Pier Barrett**, **Ben Garratt** and **Tali Halpin**.



# Friends Worldwide

■ British film producer **Lord Puttnam** (center) visited Yad Vashem on 30 October, accompanied by his wife, **Patsy** (right). In addition to seeing the Holocaust History Museum and Children's Memorial, they were also given a tour of the Visual Center by **Dr. Robert Rozett** (left), Director of the Yad Vashem Libraries.



## FRANCE

■ A prestigious dinner was held on 13 November at Le Pavillon Dauphine in Paris, organized by the **French Committee for Yad Vashem** for the benefit of the International School for Holocaust Studies at Yad Vashem. A film presenting the diversity of the School's programs was screened at the evening in order to raise further awareness and support. Pictured, left to right: Minister Plenipotentiary to France **Zvi Tal**, Chairman of the French Committee for Yad Vashem **Jean Raphael Hirsch**, UNESCO Ambassador for Holocaust Affairs and Founder of the French Committee for Yad Vashem **Samuel Pissar**, Director of the French and Benelux Desk in Yad Vashem's International Relations Division **Miry Gross**, Holocaust survivor **Georges Loinger**, **Maxi Librati** and **Colonel Hudy Lahav**. The dinner was conducted by **Jean Pierre Levy** (inset).



## CHRISTIAN DESK in partnership with ICEJ

■ A historic Amish leadership delegation from Ohio, Pennsylvania and Switzerland visited Yad Vashem to express the apology for the Holocaust issued by leaders **Bishop Ben Girod** and **Pastor Micah Smith**. The group was received by Yad Vashem Senior Historian **Dr. David Silberklang** and Managing Director of the International Relations Division **Shaya Ben Yehuda**.



■ On 28 October, Yad Vashem received a donation from the John Hagee Ministries of Pastor **John** and **Diana Hagee** to educate needy youth in the periphery of Israel. The donation was made at the 31<sup>st</sup> annual Night to Honor Israel at Cornerstone Church in San Antonio, Texas. The Hagees are known supporters of Israeli causes and have regularly visited Yad Vashem with important delegations. The annual Night to Honor Israel, a tradition began by Pastor Hagee, has now spread to churches across the USA. Pictured: Pastor John Hagee (left) with Managing Director of Yad Vashem's International Relations Division **Shaya Ben Yehuda** at the ceremony



■ During the annual Feast of Tabernacles organized by the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem (ICEJ), thousands of Christian pilgrims came to visit Israel. ICEJ national directors from all over the world came to Yad Vashem for a special wreath-laying ceremony and to present a donation for Yad Vashem's important work. Pictured front, left to right: Director of the Christian Friends of Yad Vashem **Dr. Susanna Kokkonen**, ICEJ International Director **Rev. Juha Ketola**, ICEJ Executive Director **Dr. Juergen Buehler**



■ Yad Vashem's traveling exhibition "No Child's Play" was brought to Finland with the support of several pro-Israel Christian groups under a common umbrella of the Israel Ystävyystoimikunta Board. The exhibition was opened in Helsinki on 8 November in the presence of Israel's Ambassador to Finland **H.E. Mr. Dan Ashbel**, Director of the Christian Friends of Yad Vashem **Dr. Susanna Kokkonen** and honored guests. Violinist **Päivyt Meller** performed at the opening.



## MEXICO

■ **Toby and Ruben Mischne** (center) were joined by Director of the Latin America, Spain, Portugal and Miami Spanish-Speaking Friends Desk **Perla Hazan** (left) and Managing Director of the International Relations Division **Shaya Ben Yehuda** (right) for the unveiling of a plaque in their honor at the Holocaust History Museum.



## SPAIN

■ **Florentino Portero**, Director of the Sefarad-Israel Center, recently visited Yad Vashem.



## VENEZUELA

■ The Weiss family of Venezuela and Canada was joined by Director of the Latin America, Spain, Portugal and Miami Spanish-Speaking Friends Desk **Perla Hazan** (third from right) during their recent visit to Yad Vashem.



## Perla Hazan Awarded Spain's 'Order of Civil Merit'

■ In the fall of 2012, Director of the Latin America, Spain, Portugal and Miami Spanish-Speaking Friends Desk of Yad Vashem's International Relations Division **Perla Hazan** was awarded the Order of Civil Merit (**Orden del Mérito Civil**) by His Majesty King **Juan Carlos I of Spain**. The Order recognizes civic virtue in the service of the nation, as well as extraordinary service by Spanish and foreign citizens for the benefit of Spain.

Thanks to the tireless work of Perla Hazan, relations between Spain and Israel have been strengthened, and activities with Spain on Holocaust commemoration and remembrance increased. Alongside her devoted husband **Moshe Hazan Frances**, a Holocaust survivor from Salonika, Perla has spent many years increasing awareness of Yad Vashem throughout Spain. Perla and Moshe have also become a significant influence on the building of

bridges between Spanish-speaking countries, Yad Vashem and Israel. Yad Vashem wholeheartedly wishes Perla and Moshe continued success in their vital work.



## Your Support Helps Make a Difference

All of the activities, projects and events which you have just read about are made possible thanks to the generous support of our donors. In these difficult times of financial uncertainty and a worrying rise in antisemitism around the world, Yad Vashem is doubling its efforts to commemorate the Holocaust, disseminate its universal implications and strengthen Jewish continuity. Yad Vashem is deeply grateful for your generosity in supporting its vital work and welcomes both new friends and established supporters as partners in our shared mission.

### ■ To make tax-deductible donations:

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### ■ Donations may also be sent to:

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### ■ For information on societies in other countries,

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# “As If by Magic”

Dr. David Silberklang

## Yiddish Theater in the DP Camps



■ As WWII and the *Shoah* ended in Europe in May 1945 and survivors began to emerge, recovering and slowly rebuilding their shattered lives, one of the earliest activities they engaged in was theater. By the late summer of 1945, the first Yiddish theaters in the Displaced Persons (DP) camps were already putting on performances, with survivors both on stage and in the audience. This early postwar theater activity quickly grew into a multi-faceted and widespread phenomenon across the DP camp landscape in Germany. Indeed,

between 1945 and 1949 some 60 Yiddish theater troupes performed across the American and British zones in Germany.

Why was it theater that many survivors had on their minds so soon after liberation?

This is the subject of a new article in *Yad Vashem Studies* 40:2 (Fall 2012) by Ella Florsheim, who is currently completing her doctoral dissertation at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. She has uncovered a little-known and perhaps unexpected aspect of Jewish life in the DP camps in Germany after the war – their varied, widespread and vital Yiddish theater activity.

Yiddish theater in the DP camps began “as if by magic,” according to actor Norbert Horowitz, in Bergen-Belsen and elsewhere in the late summer of 1945. Survivors began performing when they had no stage or stage sets, no costumes and no texts. It was part of a broader Yiddish-language cultural awakening that included literature, newspapers and more. The survivors created a vibrant cultural activity out of nothing.

In Bergen-Belsen it was actor-director Zami Feder who took the initiative. Before long, a Jew who had survived years of hell could once again hear a Yiddish phrase spoken or song sung by a Jewish actor on a Jewish stage. Yiddish theater grew and spread, reaching beyond the DP camps. By June 1947, Feder’s Katzet Teater (Katzet Theater) had staged seven plays and ten musicals. Within just a few years, the Minchener Yiddisher Teater (Munich Yiddish Theater) in Munich performed before 400,000 people.

This theater phenomenon across the American and British zones in Germany was a singular social and cultural awakening that served several very important purposes for the survivors. The theaters performed both Yiddish classics and new plays relating to the horrors that survivors had just experienced in the *Shoah*. Yiddish theater in the DP camps reflected both a reassertion of life and vitality, and served as a kind of therapy. Survivors were reclaiming and reasserting their language and culture, while also working through their traumatic experiences.

Contrary to prewar trends in Europe, Yiddish theater in the DP camps was immensely popular among broad audiences. At the same time that

Yiddish theater helped revitalize prewar culture for many survivors and assisted them in working through their traumatic experiences by tackling difficult *Shoah* themes on stage, the theater also touched a chord in responding to survivors’ postwar anguish, helping many to alleviate loneliness – indeed many of them were all alone in the world – and create new companionship and new communities.

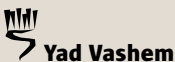
Many of the fledgling theater troupes that arose became quite professional, such as the Yiddishe Folks-Teater (Yiddish Folk Theater) in the Feldafing DP camp, BaMidbar (In the Desert) in the Föhrenwald DP camp, and the above-mentioned Katzet Teater and Minchener Yiddisher Teater. A few of these troupes also performed outside the DP camp networks, and even outside Germany.



■ Photo of the play “What the Moon Tells,” Bergen Belsen, Germany

For many survivors there was something soothing and reassuring in Yiddish cultural activity, particularly on the stage. It co-existed with the difficult memories, the wounds, the scars and the scenes of the horrors still around them in Germany. As Norbert Horowitz noted in his memoirs about the Yiddish theater in Bergen-Belsen, he wrote while looking at photos on his desk of the performances, as well as at a photo of the actors at a mass grave in Bergen-Belsen. Yiddish theater reflected rehabilitation and healing amidst the scars, and it remains one of the remarkable aspects of the survivors’ lives in the postwar years.

*The author is Senior Historian, International Institute for Holocaust Research, and Editor-in-Chief of Yad Vashem Studies.*



The Holocaust Martyrs’ and Heroes’  
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