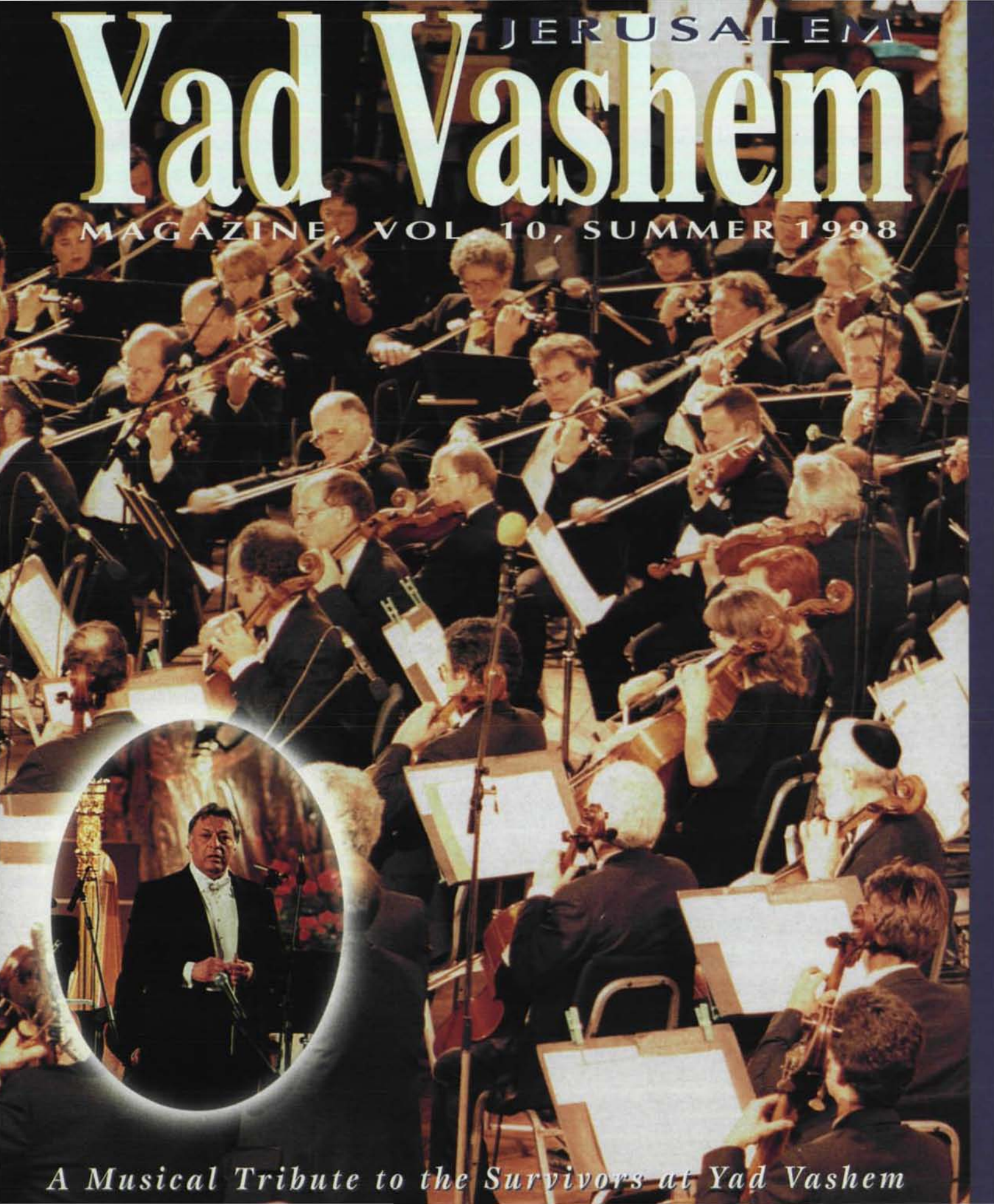


JERUSALEM

Yad Vashem

MAGAZINE, VOL. 10, SUMMER 1998



A Musical Tribute to the Survivors at Yad Vashem

Commemoration is a multifaceted word. It involves research, tuition, study, tradition, ritual, ceremony, reflection and communication.

It is both a private and public act. Those involved in perpetuating the memory are committed to the task and consider it a personal responsibility. These are the people of Yad Vashem who toil day in and day out to ensure that the memory of the Holocaust will not diminish as time passes. The staff of Yad Vashem -- researchers, scholars, educators, archivists, museologists, public relations officers, technicians, secretaries, and many many others are committed to this sacred task of remembering the six million Jews who perished in the Holocaust.

Over the past three months, the staff of Yad Vashem have been involved in the preparations for the national days commemorating the Holocaust and marking the victory of the Allied forces over the forces of Nazi evil; the organization of a major concert of the Israel Philharmonic conducted by Maestro Zubin Mehta in honor of Israel's jubilee year; the hosting of a unique delegation of 50 Righteous Among the Nations; the opening of two exhibitions; the welcoming of major state leaders and dignitaries; the publishing of numerous works of research; the holding of scholarly seminars and individual lectures, and much more.

The Yad Vashem Directorate would like to take this opportunity, with the publication of this issue, to thank the dedicated and hard-working staff of Yad Vashem who were especially busy over the past few months, for the investment of time, care and personal commitment to the mission of commemoration and perpetuation.

Yad Vashem Contents

2-4: Righteous • 5: Papon • 6-7: Memoirs
8-9: Education • 10-11: Art • 12-13: Vatican
14: Kliger • 15-17: News • 18-19: Friends
20: Books & Events

Cover: Israel Philharmonic Orchestra and Conductor Zubin Mehta pay tribute to the Holocaust survivors in a special concert held at Yad Vashem in Israel's jubilee year.

by Michal Morris Kamil

A collage of languages, generations and biographies splashed its colorful presence throughout Israel. The vibrant tourists empathized with the people of Israel on Remembrance Day in their long hours of mourning and pain over the loss of their loved ones who fell defending the Jewish state; then, as is customary in this country, together with the local populace, they eased their way into the celebrations of Israel's jubilee year. They drank cocktails with the mayors of Jerusalem, Tel Aviv and Haifa, shared their thoughts with the Speaker of the Knesset, laughed

with the President of the State of Israel and were warmly welcomed by the Israeli Prime Minister. They climbed Masada, were the guests of a large airforce base and its commander, stayed on Kibbutz Lohamei Hagetaot, visited museums, prayed in the holiest of Christian sites, and were the guests of honor of a unique concert in honor of Israel's fiftieth birthday given by the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra and conducted by Zubin Mehta at Yad Vashem, marking the return to life of the Holocaust survivors.

50 representatives of the 15,670 Righteous Among the Nations, from 24 countries, speaking 20 languages spent 10 days as the guests of the State of Israel, of Yad Vashem and of a people who wanted to express their thanks to this commendable group of

courageous people whose brave actions resulted in the saving of Jewish lives, over 53 years ago, during the Holocaust. As retired Supreme Court Judge Dr. Moshe Bejski, who headed the Commission for the Designation of the Righteous for over 25 years, eloquently said

in the meeting of the Righteous with Prime Minister Netanyahu in Yad Vashem's Valley of the Communities, "Each file, each tree, each inscribed name of an individual Righteous person has a history, but it is not a history of him or herself alone; it is a history of a child, a mother, or a father who was rescued by this outstanding person...to save the

6 million who perished, we needed a few hundreds of thousands of Righteous throughout Europe, people with courage, and they simply weren't there...We, the Jewish people, can't pay the debt. We can do our maximum to ensure that it will never happen again. By your coming to Israel, and seeing for yourselves how the survivors reestablished their lives, raised their families, built their homes and their nation, I hope you will reap your reward, dear Righteous Among the Nations!"

The delegates repeatedly expressed their amazement at the warmth and hospitality with which they were received, not only by survivors, but by the general Israeli public throughout Israel. Zora Sebek-Krajina, a Righteous from Sarajevo, who during the



Austrian Dr. Ella Lingens-Reiner, who as a result of aiding Jews was arrested and sent to Auschwitz, is greeted by President Weizman at a festive ceremony at Beit Hanassi.



Supreme Court Judge Dr. Moshe Bejski thanks the Righteous in a ceremony that took place in the Valley of the Communities.

Tree of Life

Jubilee Year Salutes the Righteous Among the Nations.

most dangerous period for the Jews and for those who helped them in Yugoslavia in 1941, in two separate incidents saved the lives of three Jews, comments: "I have never seen such a nice people, really, everybody. You have always said thank you. But I want to say thank you to you a 100 times over for being who you are...we have been welcomed here by everybody, young and old...I want everybody to know what Israel really is." Zora, who is a refugee from bloodbathed Sarajevo living in exile in England shared her vision of humanity, "I like people, they are basically good. One can't explain why one chooses to act as I did, something in the air. It is normal to want to save a life. My family was very poor, but we helped everybody. That is pure wealth. We must educate youngsters so that they do what they can to help others; by this they will help themselves."

Dr. Henrik Pelsler, a world expert on bronchial ailments, from Holland, was awarded the title of Righteous Among the Nations for his actions as a medical student in Amsterdam. In the beginning of the deportation of Dutch Jewry to their deaths, Henrik sought hiding places for his Jewish friends and colleagues and organized false documentation for them. He established an underground network which smuggled Jews over the Swiss border, and personally led them to safety. He comments, "We are completely overwhelmed with the warmth and sincerity. The Dutch tend to be suspicious of anything extraordinary, so we ask, 'Why is this all for us? Why do you treat us as special? We saved the lives of fellow human beings. It's only natural. Every mother does so instinctively every day. The only thing that makes it exceptional is the fact that we saved the lives of exceptional people. We have learned from our trip to Israel that the Jews are remarkable in that for 2000 years they survived by remembering. Every year on the eve of Passover you recite the prayer, 'Next year in Jerusalem' - yours is an entire culture of remembrance. You remember through learning - that is how you survived and that is special."

Having toured the country extensively from north to south, many members of the delegation expressed their wonder at the State of Israel's development in only 50 years.

Henriette Pinck, a Righteous from France, who as a fifteen-year old helped her father establish an underground network which hid Jews who jumped off the trains on their way to the death camps and who led them to hiding places and provided them with false documents, expressed her astonishment at Israel's



Ukrainian Fiodor Kondratiuk and his brother Stefan, cared for the Kloiznik brothers for a year-and-a-half, when they hid in a self-dug trench in the middle of a forest.

development: "I'm amazed at what you have built in so few years. You have made a green country from a desert...You must ensure that young people in Israel will follow in their parents' footsteps, and that they don't give up. They must continue the hard work and



Dr. Henrik Pelsler from Holland is warmly commended by Prime Minister Netanyahu during the ceremony in the Valley of the Communities.

cultivate the patriotism and ways of their parents. You must continue to plant trees..."

Director of the Department for the Righteous Among the Nations, Dr. Mordecai

Paldiel, focussed on the contribution of the delegates. "Their presence and the close contact with them gave those who met them, especially the younger generations of Israelis, the unique opportunity to view them, not as mythical, heroic figures, but as fellow flesh-and-blood human beings with whom one could identify and from whom one could learn some valuable lessons about our moral obligations."



Belgian Robert Maistriau, as a member of the underground attacked a train loaded with 1400 Belgian Jews sent from Bergen-Belsen to Auschwitz. 208 prisoners succeeded in escaping. This courageous act is unique in the history of the Shoah.

The potential language barrier posed no major problems thanks to the organizational skills of the tour operator and his staff's translation skills. The group, extremely varied in social class, education, profession and cultural background, had in common more than just a shared affinity and good will towards one another. Avner Shalev, Chairman of the Yad Vashem Directorate described it as "a language that crossed all barriers - it is the language of humanity and human goodness, which wherever it is present, will ultimately overcome evil."

50



R to L: Stanislawa Pikula, Eli Zborowski and his sister Tsila.

An Opportunity to Return Good

One very moving moment during the Righteous delegation visit involved the meeting between Chairman of the American Society for Yad Vashem, Eli Zborowski and the woman who saved him and his family 55 years ago, Stanislawa Pikula (formerly Kolacz) in Cracow and then continuing together to Yad Vashem where she was awarded the title Righteous Among the Nations.

Zborowski, his mother, brother, sister and uncle's family, 12 in all, hid in a chicken-coop in the Polish village of Babalice for more than a year. Stanislawa, a young Polish girl, risking her life, brought them food and water during this entire period. But this was not the only reunion Zborowski was to have. Another member of the delegation was Jadwiga Placzek, who as a ten-year-old, was witness to her parents' efforts to save the Zborowski family, who were their neighbors. Eli, who was 16, and his family, were hidden in the attic of the Placzek family for 18 months following a German order of eviction of all the Jews in the town. Eli recalls, "My father turned to many people begging them to hide us, but to no avail. The Placzeks did." The Zborowskis got word that they had been discovered and within a night left the hideout. The Germans broke in but discovered nothing.

Over the years the two families maintained contact and met in Israel during the delegation's visit. The day before her departure, Jadwiga complained to Zborowski about her failing eyesight. Zborowski's daughter, Dr. Lili Naveh, who is a senior eye specialist at the Wolfson Hospital in Holon examined her and discovered that she was suffering from a developed state of cataract in both eyes. The medical staff of the Eye Department of Wolfson Hospital and Dr. Naveh took it upon themselves to save Jadwiga's eyesight and operate immediately. The operation was successful. Dr. Lili Naveh commented, "I grew up with the wonderful story of my father and his family being saved by this woman and her family. What they did for my family, risking their lives, was miraculous. For me this operation was an opportunity to return good."



L to R: Yoel Guillatt, Minister Plenipotentiary; Lazare Pitkowicz; Etienne Moulin; François Haut; and Avner Shalev

"As if he were her own son"

This is the story of the late Henri Haut, his wife Georgette and her brother, Etienne Moulin. During the terrible years of the French occupation, Georgette and Henri Haut took in their son's Jewish friend, Lazare Pitkowicz. Georgette lavished warmth and kindness on him and treated him as if he were her own son. After a couple of weeks, when Pitkowicz realized that he was endangering their family, he fled to a children's home but later on escaped back to the Haut family. Etienne Moulin provided Lazare with forged papers and smuggled him to Lyon. Moulin, an active member of the Resistance, was arrested by the Gestapo and was sent to Buchenwald. Before his arrest, Moulin entrusted the boy to another member of the Resistance. Moulin escaped from Buchenwald but was arrested a number of times. He was able, however, to get word of Lazare Pitkowicz's whereabouts to the Haut family and they sent him food and clothes parcels. Pitkowicz was caught by the Gestapo but he managed to survive and returned to the Haut family where he hid until the end of the war. This May, Yad Vashem awarded the title of Righteous Among the Nations to the late Henri Haut, his wife Georgette and her brother, Etienne Moulin in a ceremony that took place in France in the presence of the Haut and Moulin families, the survivor and his family, a representative from the Israel Embassy in France and Avner Shalev, Chairman of the Yad Vashem Directorate.

MEMBERS OF THE IDF GENERAL STAFF VISIT YAD VASHEM

With the approach of Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Day, the Chief of Staff, Amnon Lipkin-Shahak, decided to convey an educational message to soldiers and commanders, to Israelis all over and to the world at large. In a step that aroused enormous media attention, the Chief of Staff brought the generals of the Israel Defence Forces to Yad Vashem, to hold their weekly meeting there.

The message was clear: to give tangible expression to the importance that the IDF attaches to the memory of the Holocaust, and to salute the Holocaust survivors, on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the State of Israel. "The General Staff Forum visited the Mt. of Remembrance so as to remember, to see again and to understand - not the incomprehensible hatred within the human brain, but our own task, here in this country, as the descendants of those who all but perished. To understand how important it is to have a secure Jewish national home and to understand the enormous responsibility shouldered by us as the General Staff of the Israel Defence Forces," wrote the Chief of Staff in the guest book of Yad Vashem. These words were written before the generals left the Children's Memorial and after they had visited the Lodz Ghetto exhibition, where they were shown around by Chairman of the Yad Vashem Directorate, Brig. Gen. (Res.) Avner Shalev.

After the visit, the members of the General Staff held their weekly meeting in the Valley of the Communities and had a discussion on "The State of Israel and the Holocaust," led by the Director of the International School for Holocaust Studies at Yad Vashem, Dr. Motti Shalem. Avner Shalev, Prof. Yehuda Bauer and Prof. Avi Ravitzky spoke about the place of the Holocaust within present-day Jewish-Israeli identity, 55 years after the end of World War II and 50 years after the establishment of the State of Israel.

General Gideon Shefer, head of the Manpower Division, and General Shlomo Yana'i, head of the Planning Division are both second-generation Holocaust survivors. Said Shefer: "When my children came back from a visit to Poland, they posed difficult questions to me, as to whether such an atrocious thing could ever happen again. I replied that our very existence here today will not allow such an event to occur again." "One thing is certain, that today we have someone to ensure the existence of the Jewish people and we are not at the mercy of the goodwill of other nations," Yana'i added. After five hours, the members of the General Staff of the IDF dispersed and returned to their command posts.



SHATTERED MYTHS

by Shimon Erlanger

It was the longest trial in French history. It took six months to reach a verdict against the 87 year old former Vichy official, Maurice Papon. Nevertheless the jury came to a light sentence. Though his deeds were deemed to be a "crime against humanity," Papon was sentenced to a mere ten years in prison for his role in the arrest and deportation of 1,560 Jews between 1942 and 1944, when he served as Secretary General of the Prefect's office of Bordeaux and headed its Office of Jewish Affairs. Many judged the sentence to be inadequate. Avner Shalev, Chairman of Yad Vashem Directorate, expressed mixed feelings: "The verdict does not reflect the scope and the responsibilities of the crimes committed."

For 54 years, France ignored the record of its collaborationist Vichy regime. Denial and silence were almost universal. Instead the myth of the Resistance movement was cherished. The fact that most arrests of Jews in France were not done by the Germans but by French officials, police and militia was simply forgotten. This myth was shattered in the aftermath of the Cold War. Only recently did French President Chirac officially accept France's responsibility for the acts of Vichy. This was a turning point. Several war crime trials were crucial in this process.

With the liberation of France, Papon went on to have an illustrious government career. From 1958 to 1967 he served as police chief of Paris. In this capacity he was responsible for the violent suppression of anti-government protest in Paris during the Algerian War. Papon was never held accountable. He became budget minister in Giscard d'Estaing's government. Only after 1981 was legal action taken against him because of his wartime record. However, it took another 16 years for his trial to begin.

Serge Klarsfeld, whose work as lawyer and historian has been essential in documenting the fate of French Jewry during the Shoah, sees the Papon trial in a positive light. Klarsfeld says that this probably was the last war crime trial in France, although there is talk of a trial in absentia against Eichmann's deputy, Alois Brunner, whose present whereabouts are unknown. Papon's rather light punishment is not the key issue for Klarsfeld. What is important are the historical facts which were established by the court. "What is important,

is, that three-quarters of the French learned through these trials what Vichy did and that it acted in the name of France, that all this madness was committed in the name of the French state." The trial thus restructured the memory of French society. "Our task is fulfilled," says Klarsfeld. Michel Zaoui, who represented some of the victims, agrees. "It had an enormous political effect," states Zaoui. "The whole political class was troubled by it. The Gaullist mythology was shattered and collaboration now must be admitted. All this has been hidden for decades. And now the public had to hear and recognise that France wasn't just occupied by the Germans but that it shared a common enemy with the invader, namely the Jews, Communists and Freemasons and that it participated actively in their segregation, arrest and deportation."

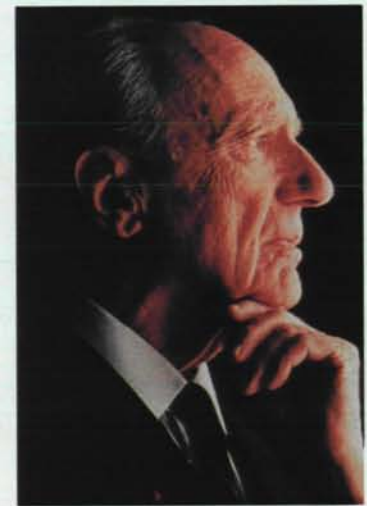
Samuel Pisar, Holocaust survivor, international lawyer, founding president of the French Yad Vashem Committee, and witness at the trial believes, "It is true that the punishment is too light for crimes against humanity. The sentence cannot be quite enough but it is nevertheless a relief for the victims and their families. It is also very important as a pedagogical tool. For 54 years political

authorities did not want this, the old did not want this but the youngsters now wanted to know the truth. The court opened the dark and shameful chapter of Vichy and caused a national psychodrama. All this has an enormous impact on French society, which now has to come to grips with its history."

Pisar chose to tell the story of three Frenchmen who have been honoured as Righteous Among the Nations. Edmond Dauphin, Camille Ernst and Paul Corazzi held similar positions as Papon but chose to act differently and saved Jews. They allowed their moral conscience to permeate the psyche of the civil servant.

Samuel Pisar remembers how reluctant the jury seemed to be to send a very old man to jail. "There was the danger that he would be acquitted," says Pisar. Leniency by the court had already been displayed by allowing Papon to be at liberty during the trial. The Papon trial served as a tool to establish the historical truth. "But," as Klarsfeld reminds, "one is never safe. Every generation has to defend memory."

*Reflections on the
aftermath of the
longest war trial
in French history*



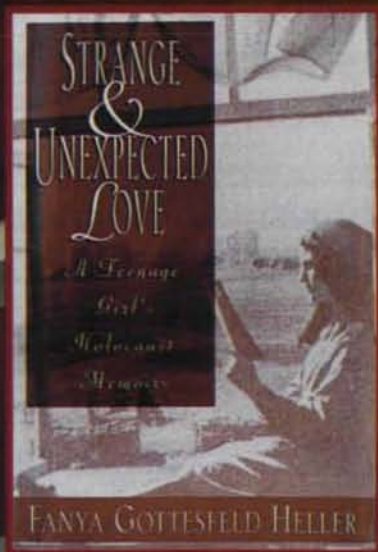
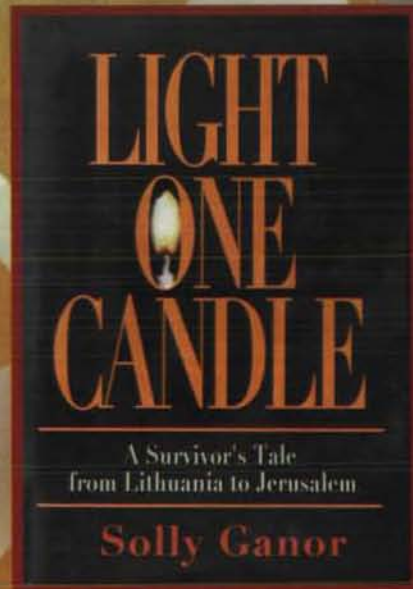
Maurice Papon

A. Gyori-Sigma from Flammarion, 1997

The author is Yad Vashem's
European correspondent.

The Scribes

by Dr. Robert Rozett



Published survivor memoirs by Holocaust survivors are clearly of great significance to students and scholars of the Holocaust alike.

Some of them contain the only published information about a specific community, event or occurrence before, during or after the Holocaust. Every historian is aware of the problems of learning about the events of the Holocaust through personal testimony alone - diaries, oral testimony, testimony given in court, written affidavits and published memoirs. These documents are limited in their ability to instruct scholars about broad concepts and complex processes. Names and dates may be confused in such accounts, especially in those rendered long after the events occurred. Eyewitnesses see unfolding events from their own perspective, which makes their rendition both narrow and subjective by definition. First-hand accounts are seldom pure; they are often spiced with second-hand evidence; distinguishing between actual witnessed events and such second-hand evidence is no simple task for the reader or scholar. More than one personal account of the same event may contain conflicting information which confuses more than clarifies the course of events. More than other eyewitness accounts, published memoirs, because of the editing involved in writing and publishing, are also prone to self-censorship, as Elie Wiesel so eloquently points out in the introduction to his memoirs, *All Rivers Run to the Sea*. He writes:

"...I must warn you that certain events will be omitted, especially those episodes that might embarrass friends and, of course, those that might damage the Jewish people. Call it prudence or cowardice, whatever you like. No witness is capable of recounting everything from start to finish anyway. God alone knows the whole story."

In many respects, it is the weakness of survivor memoirs that is their strength. Along with other personal eyewitness accounts, survivor memoirs are one of the few sources we have for trying to understand the motivations, thoughts and feelings of people as they suffered the tumultuous events of the Holocaust. Memoirs, like other personal testimony, often breathe life into descriptions of Jewish communities and families on the eve of the Holocaust, and thereby help us better appreciate the world that was destroyed. It is primarily

of Memory

through personal accounts that we may approach the sights, sounds and smells that people experienced throughout their ordeals. They also contribute greatly to our understanding of how survivors coped with the terrible personal loss the Holocaust inflicted upon them, and how they struggled to rebuild their lives in the wake of the destruction of that which was dear to them.

Published memoirs tell us something else about the Holocaust and how we relate to it. The facts surrounding their publication - where and when they were published - provide an important prism through which we may seek to understand survivor attempts to transmit their stories to those who were not there, and thereby preserve the history and memory of the events surrounding the destruction of European Jewry. Over the last few years, the Yad Vashem Library has constructed a database about published survivor memoirs, based almost exclusively on the library's computerized holdings. With a grant from the Israel Ministry of Education, we have tried to plot the publication of memoirs by date and language, the two most salient kinds of data that could be imported from our central computer system into the spreadsheet program, Excel, where they could be analyzed with the help of that program.

The publishing of memoirs began immediately with the end of the Holocaust. In the first five years, after the cessation of the murder, from 1945 until 1949, 75 memoirs were published. It should come as no surprise that among them 15 were published in Yiddish, 13 in Hebrew and 12 in Polish, the main languages written and spoken by survivors. Seven more came to light in French and six in Hungarian during those first years. Perhaps somewhat more surprising is that five were published in English, a language which essentially none of the survivors spoke as a mother tongue. Yet from the creation of the State of Israel throughout the years leading up to the Eichmann Trial, in 1961-1962, the number of memoirs published yearly never surpassed 16, and in 1951, comprised only five books. Throughout the 1950s, only seven memoirs were published in Hebrew, whereas three times as many were

published in English, the language with the most publications during that decade. It is common wisdom that most survivors in these years were involved in rebuilding their shattered lives, and sought to stifle memories of their suffering and losses. The smattering of publications of memoirs in this period seems to bear this out.

The capture and subsequent trial, conviction and execution of Adolf Eichmann are seen as a watershed for Israeli Jewry in particular and many of the Jews of the Diaspora regarding public discussion of the Holocaust. In 1961, the year the trial began, 28 memoirs were published - five in Hebrew, seven in German and three in English - whereas only 11 had been published the previous year. From the

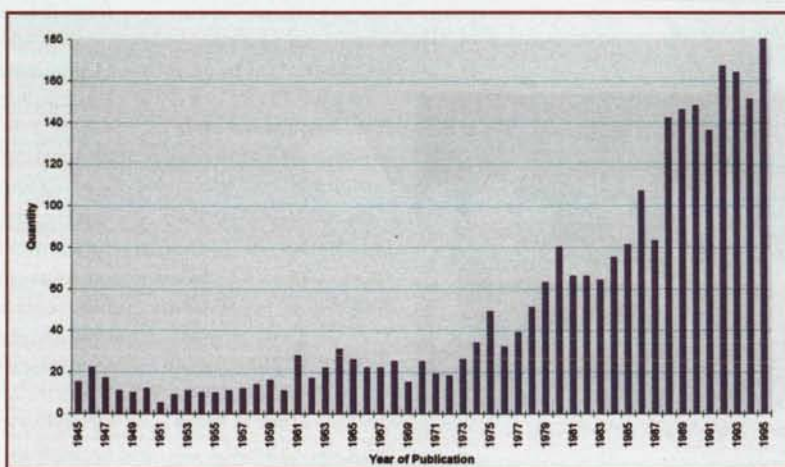
preoccupation with the Holocaust, and may well account for the flurry of publications by survivors after the war. The year after the war, 34 memoirs were published. In 1975, which would have given more survivors time to digest the events they had just experienced, to set down their memoirs in paper and go through the process of publication, 49 memoirs were published out of which 11 were in Hebrew, nine were in English and eight were in Yiddish (the largest number in that language since 1959). Throughout the late 1970s and into the mid 1980s, the number of memoirs published fluctuated between 63 in 1979 to 81 in 1985. From there on in, the number began to climb significantly. In 1986, 107 survivors published their memoirs, in 1988,

142, in 1992, 167 and in 1995, 180. Although the lion's share of these books are in Hebrew, English, and German, by the late 1980s, with the changes beginning to take place in the former Communist block, more and more memoirs began to appear in Polish, Russian and Hungarian. Especially in the 1990s, as we witness the impact of the trials of the Nazi war criminals Klaus Barbie and Maurice Papon on French society, the number of published memoirs in French is also growing.

In a recent telephone interview on the Jerusalem radio station,

Radio West, the author Leesha Rose articulated an idea that seems clear to all who have observed the steady and significant increase in published survivor memoirs world-wide.

When asked by David Silberklang, editor of the Yad Vashem Studies and myself, why she published her memoirs, *The Tulips Are Red*, in 1978, Mrs. Rose responded that she wrote them for her grandchildren. From my own anecdotal experience upon receiving many memoirs presented by survivors to the Yad Vashem Library, it is clear that many survivors have been writing during the last two decades so that their children, grandchildren and the young generation in general will understand some of what they suffered during the Holocaust, and something about their communities, families and lives that were destroyed.



Memoirs of the Holocaust, Publication by Year

start of the trial, until the outbreak of the Yom Kippur War, the number of memoirs ranged from a low of 15 to a peak of 31 about one third of which were in Hebrew. In 1964, of the 31 memoirs published, 10 were in Hebrew. Throughout that period, the average number published was over 22 memoirs per year. This general increase apparently confirms the notion that the Eichmann Trial led to greater public discussion of the Holocaust and contributed to stimulating some survivors to put their experiences in writing. The outbreak of the Yom Kippur War in 1973 is generally regarded as another event that greatly impressed the community of survivors; many felt another national tragedy was in the making when the Israel Defense Forces absorbed painful blows during the first part of the fighting. At least in part, this fear seems to have been translated into even greater

The author is Director of the
Yad Vashem Library

TEACHING OF THE HOLOCAUST
IN THE ARAB SECTOR

by Dr. Irit Abramski-Bligh

In recent years, there has been a significant increase in the number of Arab intellectuals in Israel and abroad who express interest in the Holocaust. Among the prominent names from abroad, one can list Eduard Said (USA) and Hazzam Saria (Great Britain). In Israel one can list Azmi Bashara and Salaam Jubran. Similarly, there has been a sharp increase in the number of Arab educators and students visiting Yad Vashem. In view of these visits, Yad Vashem decided to create an organized educational curriculum in Arabic.

The emphasis was placed on teachers, teachers-in-training, and pupils. Particular stress was placed on work with the Bedouin population. Other than the Bedouins who serve in the Israel Defense Forces, many Bedouin teachers have not had the opportunity for in-depth study of Jewish history in general or of the history of the Holocaust in particular.

Yad Vashem's activities in the Arab sector is characterized by the open dialogue which has been established with the students within teachers' seminars and colleges. The colleges are attended by young Arabs from all parts of the country who find the Holocaust a fascinating topic. For some of them, it is the first time they have studied the Holocaust outside of a framework of propaganda. The questions exchanged by students and teachers often assist in breaking down cultural barriers and existing prejudices based on vicious Jewish stereotypes.

The topic is relevant from a number of perspectives: in terms of the universal and humanistic lessons to be drawn from the Holocaust; its status as a chapter in human history; teaching the Holocaust irrespective of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

The universal-humanistic aspects of the Holocaust are apparent. Within a few lessons, the students themselves raise questions pertaining to the values of equality, compassion and love of one's fellow human beings – all of which the Nazi regime sought to obliterate. The ability to empathize with the suffering of others is an educational challenge of the



Dr. Abramski-Bligh guides Arab teachers-in-training in Yad Vashem.

first degree.

A further aspect of the relevance of Holocaust studies to the Arab sector is in the discussion which arises regarding the trauma which stands at the root of their Jewish neighbors' experience. In my opinion, many Arabs may find it difficult to empathize with the concept of "Holocaust and Revival," but they can certainly identify with the human significance of "Holocaust and Courage,"

where human beings fought first and foremost for the right to live or at least to die honorably.

An example of the relevance of these topics can be gleaned from the words of one very religious student: "In the beginning of the course, the topic did not interest me at all. I thought that I am a Moslem Arab in this country, and I was

unwilling to hear what had happened to the Jews. I said to myself, 'God forbid, that they deserve it!' But today I know that it is a terrible and painful matter that such a thing could have happened to human beings – the death machinery was aimed not only at Jews (as Jews - Ed.) but at human beings...I am a



The Yad Vashem Mobile Education Unit. The unit is dedicated by the Griessmann and Lissauer families to the memory of Baron Friedrich Carl von Oppenheim, one of the Righteous Among the Nations



The Minister of Education, Culture and Sport Rabbi Yitzhak Levi, is shown educational material produced by Yad Vashem on his visit in March this year.

human being with a sense of honor and I have the right to live honorably." (February 1998).

The students are most impressed by documents from the period. Words from "that place and time" have great power – whether it is an excerpt from a diary, testimony by a victim or an eyewitness, or Nazi documentation. Learning is much more effective when the facts themselves are presented.

I believe it is important to teach the Holocaust not only as a chapter in Zionist history or in the history of the Middle Eastern conflict. It must be looked at primarily as a chapter in European history, and must be studied for its universalistic and humanistic significance. Few of the students knew of the fundamental tenets of Nazi ideology, based on social Darwinism. They had not heard of the Nazis' cruelty to the Slavic peoples, for example – toward the Czechs, Poles, Russians, Gypsies, or others. Prior to the course, the majority of the Arab participants – teachers as well as teachers-in-training – had a narrower view of the Holocaust.

YAD VASHEM PRIZES

Students and teachers alike attended the Yad Vashem prize-giving ceremony in May. The Chuno and Blima Najmann prizes for teaching units on the Holocaust (see Friends), the Bruno Brandt prize for a children's book on the Holocaust and the late Mark Uveeler and Luba Uveeler prize for end-of-year papers, were awarded in the presence of the Chief Rabbi of Israel, Rabbi Israel Meir Lau, the Najmann family, Luba Uveeler and Tirza Lev Zion, Director of the Uveeler Fund. Rabbi Lau spoke at the ceremony and marked the increasing interest of the younger generation in the Holocaust, noting that distance from the horrific events has created a perspective that allows one to study the subject in a way that could never have been done before.

TO STUDY AT YAD VASHEM

"Every Pupil in Israel Must Visit Yad Vashem by the End of the 12th Grade"

The Ministry of Education, under its Director General Ben-Zion Dell, occasionally meets outside its central office in Jerusalem. The venue is significant as it emphasizes and marks an important educational aspect area which must be developed and expanded -- Holocaust studies. It might sound strange, but in the past, the study of the Holocaust was not part of the regular school curriculum. The late Minister of Education Zevulun Hammer, of blessed memory, was the first to decide that annual ceremonies and events, generally held around Holocaust Remembrance Day, were insufficient. On the late minister's initiative, the study of the Holocaust was included as an obligatory part of high school studies in Israel.

Since then, a definite change has occurred in how educators and pupils relate to the Holocaust. The fact that more than sixty thousand pupils visited the death camps and the remnants of the destroyed Jewish communities abroad during the past decade has aroused an unprecedented wave of curiosity and educational initiatives in schools on the subject of the Holocaust. "During the past years, an increasing interest and a growing curiosity on the part of children and youngsters with regard to the Holocaust has been noticeable. We feel that the Holocaust has become a substantial part of the young Israelis' Jewish identity and this is primarily expressed in an increased desire to visit Yad Vashem and study and research Holocaust subjects," says Chairman of the Yad Vashem Directorate, Avner Shalev, in addressing the senior officials of the Ministry of Education. After visiting the Lodz Ghetto exhibition and the "No Child's Play" exhibition, the heads of the Ministry of Education attended a lecture at the International School for Holocaust Studies at Yad Vashem, within whose different frameworks over 100,000 pupils study annually. The school's principal, Dr. Motti Shalem, presented new programs that were developed by the school's staff, and demonstrated the study program of the Mobile Education Unit.

At the end of the visit, the Ministry of Education staff members expressed their appreciation at the increase in the range of Yad Vashem's educational activity. Director General Ben-Zion Dell, summed up as follows: "The visit to Yad Vashem and the use of Yad Vashem's educational facilities must be a permanent and obligatory part in the education of the young generation raised in Israel, as a means of strengthening that generation's awareness of its identity with the Jewish people and its identification with the Jewish state. Every pupil must visit Yad Vashem at least once before completing his or her 12th grade studies."

The Director General announced his decision to acquire and distribute Yad Vashem's multimedia kit "Return to Life" to all educational establishments throughout Israel. The kit won a first prize at a multimedia competition in Israel and a second prize at an international multimedia competition in France.

SWEDISH EDUCATIONAL PROJECT ON THE HOLOCAUST

In May, a meeting was held in Stockholm, under the motto, "And you shall tell your children!" of representatives of the governments of Sweden, the United States and Great Britain, as well as of apolitical organizations, including Yad Vashem, involved in teaching the Holocaust. Prof. Yehuda Bauer stressed "the importance of cooperation between states on so important and essential a subject in the history of mankind." Following that meeting, the Swedish Government announced a state project, the first of its kind, intended to increase the knowledge of students, teachers and the public at large on the subject of the Holocaust. Swedish Prime Minister Göran Persson appointed a special minister in his cabinet to be responsible for the project. It was agreed that Prof. Bauer would serve as scientific advisor for this international project.

Thage G. Peterson, a minister in the Prime Minister's Office, visited Yad Vashem in June with a delegation of senior educators and met with the Chairman of the Yad Vashem Directorate, Avner Shalev.

The unique Swedish project started a few months ago when a survey disclosed that children in Sweden did not know about the Holocaust or did not believe it ever occurred. The Prime Minister immediately announced preparation of a state-sponsored program for the Swedish public, aimed at increasing knowledge of the Holocaust. A team of historians, educators and media personnel produced a special study program which included, inter alia, books and films. The program was offered free-of-charge to schools and to the public and within less than three months, approximately a million kits were printed. This amount took even the Swedish government by surprise.

The Chairman of the Yad Vashem Directorate, Avner Shalev, lauded the Swedish Government's initiative as the correct way to fight European youth's ignorance of the Holocaust. He expressed the hope that other governments will follow suit. At the meeting in Yad Vashem, it was agreed that representatives of the Swedish project and of the International School for Holocaust Studies at Yad Vashem will maintain ongoing contacts and will assist one another in promoting the project.

The Swedish minister reported that following Sweden's experience, negotiations are currently being held with the governments of the United States and Great Britain, for the expansion of the project. Israel is represented at the negotiations by Prof. Yehuda Bauer, head of the International Center for Holocaust Studies at Yad Vashem.

INTERNATIONAL FORUM JULY 20-22, 1998

by Dr. Motti Shalem

At the conclusion of the International Conference on Holocaust Education that was held in October 1996, Avner Shalev, Chairman of the Directorate, announced that Yad Vashem is very interested in forming an ongoing international forum to grapple with the myriad of questions and issues related to Holocaust education on the threshold of the twenty-first century. In light of the numerous concerns surrounding the teaching of this difficult and most sensitive subject, it is believed that a gathering of experts from throughout the world is needed to discuss the use of internet and multimedia in Holocaust education, the growing need for quality teacher-training programs, as well as other practical problems.

This international forum, to take place at Yad Vashem on July 20-22, 1998, will be headed by Avner Shalev. The participants of the forum include some of the most respected leaders in the field today: Franklin and Marcia Littell, Philadelphia Center on the Holocaust, Genocide, and Human Rights, USA; Stephen Smith, Beth Shalom, England; Aya Ben Naftali, Massua, Israel; Joan Ringelheim, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum,

USA; Annegret Ehmman, Haus Der Wannsee-Konferenz; Michael Yaron, Israeli Ministry of Education, Israel; Nili Keren, State Teachers College Seminar Hakibbutzim, Israel; William Shulman, Association of Holocaust Organizations, USA; Jacqueline Giere, Fritz Bauer Institute, Germany; Simcha Stein, Ghetto Fighters House, Israel; Jan Darsa, Facing History and Ourselves, USA; Robin and Nitza Spiro, Spiro Institute, England and members of the Yad Vashem staff including Professors Yehuda Bauer and Yisrael Gutman.

This distinguished group will discuss some of the following questions: Multimedia and the Teaching of the Holocaust: Does the Educator Have a Role? State Mandates and Teacher Training: How Do We Proceed? The Shoah: A Universal Lesson? What Needs to Be Taught and When? Discussion About Content and Age-Appropriateness of Holocaust Curricula; Teaching the Holocaust in the Twenty-first Century: How Do We Cooperate on an International Level?

The author is Director of the International School for Holocaust Studies

Holocaust When Words

By Yehudit Shendar



Aharon Gluska (b. 1951)
Shem Adam, 1995
 Mixed media



Felix Nussbaum (1904-1944)
Camp Synagogue, 1941,
 Oil on canvas

The Yad Vashem Law, enacted by Israel's Knesset in 1953, assigned the task to Yad Vashem "to collect, investigate and publish all evidence regarding the Holocaust and its heroic aspects, and to inculcate its lesson upon our people." The legislator's comprehensive perception laid the foundations for establishing the Art Museum as an integral part of the conceptual agenda of the Yad Vashem Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Authority. This categorical obligation to study, conserve and exhibit a historically and geographically extensive Holocaust art collection has no equal. The inclusion of art in the study of the Holocaust does not stem from its documentary or archival character, inherent in its reliance on real events. Rather, this art contributes a different and unique perspective to the study of the Holocaust. Art enables the viewer to approach the inconceivable, through the interpretation of reality expressed in the artist's personal language - each in his own individual way. The witnesses - those who perished and those who survived - describe what they saw. The second and third generation Holocaust survivors - describe a memory which is not their own, but which nevertheless is an authentic feeling of living in the shadow



Leon Engelsberg (b. 1921)
Treblinka, 1967
 Oil on canvas

of their family members' hinted-at experiences of those dark years. The contemporary artists have no family ties to the horrors of the Holocaust, but have a moral obligation to humanity which prompts an artistic response to what happened to millions of Jews and non-Jews under Nazi occupation. Each and every generation of artists and its modes of



Moshe Kupferman (b. 1936)
Rifts, 1995
 Oil on canvas

expression.

The Holocaust art in the Yad Vashem Art Museum was predominantly created by Jewish artists who during World War II lived in the shadow of the Nazi occupier - in towns, ghettos, labor and concentration camps. Their authentic, courageous and stirring testimony enables us - albeit briefly - to

Art : Is Inadequate



Pavel Fantele (1903-1944)
Metamorphosis, Theresienstadt Ghetto, 1944
Watercolor on paper



Elsa Pollak
All That Remained, 1985-89
Fired clay



Yehuda Bacon, (b. 1929)
In Memory of the Czech Transport to the Gas Chambers, 1945
Charcoal on paper



Marcel Janco (1895-1984)
Ghetto Warriors, c. 1944
Oil on canvas

approximate a reality that has so often been termed as indescribable. These sketches and drawings are neither a documentary account nor an indictment; rather, they are a manifestation of a noble form of defiance of the Nazi's aspiration to eradicate the artist's personal identity. These works are an affirmation to the creative impetus' power

and the genius to ascertain the creative impulse, even in places lacking the minimal conditions of daily life.

These artists found the spiritual resources for artistic expression at a time when innate resources were first and foremost used to survive. The courage to create in the face of the existential threat cost many of these artists

their life. Moreover, the very fact that many of the works were preserved against tremendous odds, often hidden within beams or bricks of structures, in jars or in boxes deeply buried in the ground or sewn in the folds of clothes, is an added aspect of miraculous proportions.

The praiseworthy commitment of survivors and others to rescue the works of art against all odds enabled the art to reach our collection. Through the artists' rendering, we and future generations are capable of entering the place coined a "different planet."

In recent years, our collection is expanding in a new and significant direction. Contemporary artists are applying their artistic skills and imagination to confront, via contemporary techniques, the Holocaust, the shadow of which darkened the advance of the twentieth century. Current artistic techniques are used to illuminate the historic events, which even after fifty years permeate our contemporary existence, eliciting a here-and-now response.

When words are inadequate, the artist's tools - the pencil, the brush, the camera - attain enhanced relevance. They allow the current and future generations to engage in an honest dialogue with the Holocaust, an event of the past which we are committed to remembering.

*The author is Senior Curator
Yad Vashem Art Museum*

By Daniella Sloane and Yael Orbietto

“ It is my fervent hope that the document, “We Remember: A Reflection on the Shoah”...will indeed help to heal the wounds of past misunderstandings and injustices. May it enable memory to play its necessary part in the process of shaping a future in which the unspeakable iniquity of the Shoah will never again be possible.”

So writes Pope John Paul II in his correspondence to Cardinal Edward Cassidy, President of the Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews, responsible for preparing the 14-page document on the Vatican's role in the Holocaust. The document, which has taken 11 years to produce, has engendered strong reactions by both Catholics and Jews. Many commentators have praised the document as a positive first step for its message of repentance and remembrance. Others have criticized it for not taking direct responsibility for the Church's failure to intervene on behalf of the Jewish people. The document has also been condemned on other grounds such its failure to take responsibility for the Church's promulgation of anti-Judaism throughout the ages, for its insistence on ignoring the relationship between anti-Judaism and antisemitism, and for its positive appraisal of the role of Pope Pius XII during the Holocaust.

A peculiar feature of the document is that it falls short of other pronouncements made by Pope John Paul II and representatives of the church the world over. Eight years ago, Pope John Paul II, using the Hebrew word *teshuvah*, said the Church itself had to repent. The Pope has also undertaken many public acts to announce the Church's positive sentiments towards the Jews, such as a visit to the central synagogue in Rome, the establishment of diplomatic relations with Israel, and statements condemning antisemitism as a sin and recognizing the legitimacy of the Jewish religion. Moreover, he organized an international conference of Catholic scholars to reflect on the Church's role in teaching anti-Judaism. As recently as Good Friday this year, he made the unprecedented statement that the Jewish people "...has been crucified by us for too long," and that not the Jews, "... but we, each and every one of us is responsible for Christ's crucifixion, because we are all murderers of love."

Similarly, over the last few years, bishops from Germany, Poland, France, Hungary and the Netherlands have acknowledged the Church's guilt, expressed repentance and apologized to the Jews. The "French Bishop's Declaration of Repentance" states that the French Church "failed in its mission as a teacher of conscience" in not acting against the Nazis. The German Church's document recognizes that "Christians did not offer due resistance to racial antisemitism" which lead to the genocide of the Jewish people. Many scholars believe that the Vatican document fails to reflect this trend of the Church and its representatives towards admission and acknowledgement of past misdeeds towards the Jews.

Professor Yehuda Bauer, head of the International Center of Holocaust Studies at Yad Vashem and Dr. Dina Porat, head of the Institute for the Study of Contemporary Antisemitism and Racism at Tel Aviv University, agree that there may be a large gap between Pope John Paul II's recent pronouncements and the document itself. Bauer refers to the "revolutionary" letter written in October 1997 by the Pope to the Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews. In the letter, the Pope states that the covenant between God and the Jews still exists and that Jesus' identity as a Jew was part of God's

design to link the coming of the messiah to the Jewish nation. "These statements," says Bauer, "are an important development in Catholic thought." Bauer also emphasizes Cardinal Cassidy's statement that the document is not a closure, but rather an opening towards further dialogue.

Professor Yisrael Gutman, Chief Historian of Yad Vashem, believes that it is important to place the document in its correct context. He asserts that the document fails to reach expectations in unequivocally admitting the Church's position in the Holocaust, but he regards the document as representing the positive fruits of inter-Catholic discussion and dialogue between Christians and Jews. The document is also

The Two

“The Vatican Document is not a closure, but rather an opening towards further dialogue.”

valuable in that it is intended for a very wide Catholic audience, and all religious leaders. It is therefore a powerful educational tool that will be used in sermons and discussions, thereby bringing about a gradual change in the attitudes and beliefs of Christians throughout the world. Extreme examples of these negative attitudes were reflected occasionally in the Catholic press during the 1980s whereby, for example, traditional antisemitic images were used, from *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*.

Gutman recognizes the difficulty of change in institutions encapsulated in their particular religious perspectives, exemplified within the Catholic Church, and therefore he appreciates the document as a positive step towards change. The preamble to the document, written by the Pope, expresses sincerity and willingness to change the attitude of Catholics towards the Jews. Gutman asserts that the most positive feature in the document is its condemnation of antisemitism as a sin. However, he believes that the document is essentially a compromise between those elements in the Church desiring a clear admission of responsibility and other conservative elements opposed to a radical retreat from doctrinaire principles (which resulted in the portrayal of a negative image of a Jew).

Gutman, Bauer and Porat find additional positive elements in the document including its condemnation of all forms of discrimination, its reference to the Shoah as a tragedy defying description, its confirmation of the Jews as God's Chosen People and its description of the Jews as the "elder brothers" of Christians. Porat emphasizes

the educational value of the document, especially as a means of silencing Holocaust deniers.

One of the harshest criticisms of the document regards its assessment of the role of Pope Pius XII during the Holocaust and the attempt to absolve the church from all complicity. The document states, "Pope Pius XII did personally or through his representatives...save hundreds of thousands of Jewish lives." Attached to the quote is a long footnote that attempts to substantiate this claim. Bauer and Porat agree that Pius XII saved thousands of Jews but reject the notion that he rescued "hundreds of thousands." Gutman comments that the silence of Pius XII during the Holocaust and the fact that he was not known to have

there would have been no Nazi antisemitism." Indeed, Nazi propaganda was a compilation of centuries of Church antisemitism. To emphasize his view, Bauer quotes his American colleague, Professor Franklin H. Littell:

"We are left with the interpretation that "the long-standing sentiments of mistrust and hostility that we call anti-Judaism" arrived from outer space. The truth is that without centuries of theological antisemitism, taught and preached by Christians and confirmed as dogma by church officials, the tragedy of the Shoah would never have befallen us."

Porat and Bauer both comment on the statement in the chapter entitled "Looking together to a common future" in which the hope



Faces of Regret

even mentioned the word "Jew" during these critical years cannot be ignored and is justifiably criticized sharply with regards to the document. Gutman interprets the praise of Pius XII as another compromise between different elements in the Church. The controversy over Pius XII has heralded the call from many quarters for the Vatican to open its archives so that his role can be properly and objectively investigated. Bauer criticizes the fact that the Vatican Archives is the only remaining major archives to remain closed regarding documents on the Second World War. Bauer notes however, that irrespective of the Pope's personal actions in saving Jews within his immediate environment, he provided no directive *specifically* to save Jews. Regardless of this fact, a number of individual church leaders did try to save lives as an act of personal conscience.

As to the Papacy in general, the document stipulates that, "The Shoah was the work of a thoroughly modern neo-pagan regime. Its antisemitism had its roots outside Christianity and, in pursuing its aims, it did not hesitate to oppose the Church and persecute her members also." Instead of admitting the Church's role in the Holocaust and in the persecutions preceding it, the document blames individuals. Bauer believes that the Church's failure was a failure of leadership and authority.

Bauer reiterates that the claim that Nazi antisemitism "had its roots outside Christianity," indicates a denial of the relationship between the Church's history of teaching and preaching anti-Judaism and antisemitism. As Bauer asserts, "Without Christian antisemitism

is expressed that a new future will exist wherein "...there will be no more anti-Judaism among Christians or anti-Christian sentiment among Jews," which suggests that the latter is equal to the anti-Judaism of the Church. Bauer again quotes Littell who insists that the centuries of theological and cultural antisemitism in Christendom are not comparable and therefore the statement is inappropriate.

Both Bauer and Littell stress the undeniable connection between the Church and the Nazis. Adolf Hitler, himself a Roman Catholic, received his first diplomatic victory from the Church with the signing of the Concordat between the Vatican and the Fuhrerstaat on July 20, 1933. Not once during the war did the Church condemn the Nazi crimes against the Jews. Moreover, when Hitler committed suicide, the presiding officer, Cardinal Bertram of Breslau, of the German Bishops' Conference instructed that a mass be said in his memory (May 5, 1945). Ironically, the very same Cardinal Bertam is mentioned in a very positive light in the document.

Bauer also quotes Littell, who writes that attributing the Shoah to a "neo-pagan regime" is "nothing more than a cop-out" and summarizes the document as "too little to represent 11 years of committee work...too late to resolve much of the damage of Christianity."

However, in summation, Bauer, Gutman and Porat recognize the document as a major step in paving the way for dialogue and cooperation toward a more comprehensive understanding and grasp of these salient issues which will be at the crossroads of future relations between the Jews and Christians for years to come.

NOAH KLIGER:

Living in the Present

By Michal Morris Kamil

“142345,” he casually replied. “But, dear lady, you can’t and never will be able to understand the world behind these numbers on my arm, it is an inconceivable world.” Noah Kliger, the renowned senior journalist and columnist of one of Israel’s largest selling newspaper, *Yediot Achronot* is a survivor of a universe which is humanly unfathomable. Auschwitz-Birkenau. Kliger’s horrific two years in Auschwitz 3- the “Buna” camp - are sparingly recorded in his book, *12 Rolls for Breakfast*, in the Yad Vashem video testimonies, and in the hearts and memories of thousands of youngsters whom he has spoken to and guided on trips to Poland since the mid-seventies.

Kliger, a fatalist, credits his survival to a number of elements: miraculous luck, the ability to make crucial decisions on the spur of the moment, and an inherent attitude of taking each day as it comes, neither looking backward nor forward.

In order to survive, Kliger used every possible human resource and encountered imminent death repeatedly. In Auschwitz, by his own description, he was a boxer, a bicycle thief, a blackmarketeer, a smuggler, a human convoy belt of backbreaking materials, an electrician, and a builder. In this same Auschwitz, he was a protector, a savior, and a friend. Within this abysmal universe, Kliger survived. In retrospect, he sees this entire period as surrealistic. After a year in the camp, he fell ill with pneumonia and serious dysentery and consequently was up for “selection” in the infirmary in front of the infamous Mengele.

He comments, “I didn’t have a chance. It was obvious that my registration card was to be destroyed. Sure enough, upon seeing me, Mengele waved his hand to the left and I automatically turned, knowing it was the end. I can’t explain it, but all of a sudden, I turned around and returned to the table. All I remember of the following ten seconds was delivering a desperate speech on how I could still be useful for work and that my father

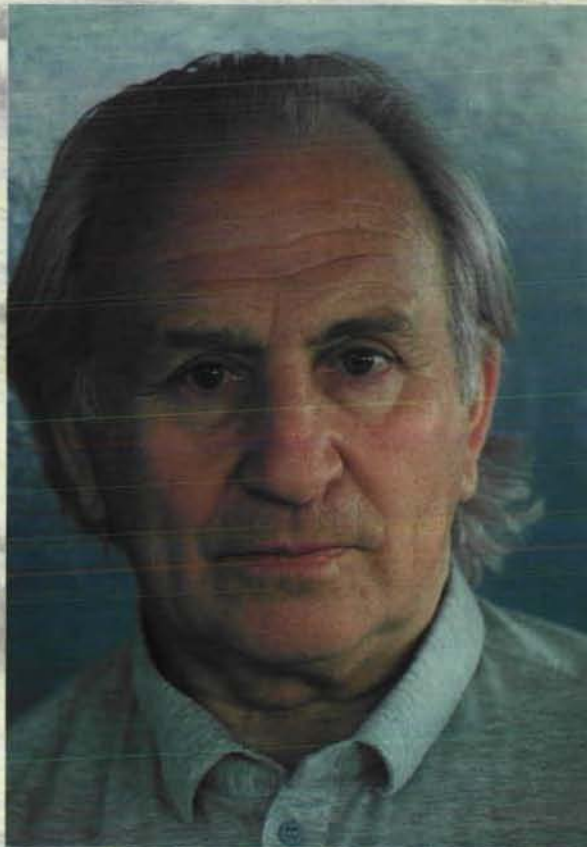
was a famous journalist from Strasbourg. Recalling this scene now -- there I was, this naked, skeletal figure, standing at attention and making a speech. It was bizarre.” As in other situations, the combination of immediate response and luck saved his life. The doctor accompanying Mengele was from Strasbourg and confirmed

place, in Belgium. Overnight, his coverage hit the front pages and this instant success was to establish him as an internationally reputed journalist. Kliger proceeded to cover Nazi war trials throughout Europe and the Eichmann and Demanjuk trials in Israel for both local and foreign press.

Kliger, a fanatic sports fan, has throughout the years also served as a sports journalist and within this capacity he closed his own personal circle with Auschwitz. In 1959, the Israeli National Football Team played against Poland in Wroclaw in a pre-world cup game. Noah, who accompanied the team, took a taxi to Auschwitz and asked the taxi to wait for a few hours so that he could be driven back to Warsaw at the visit’s end. After that visit, Kliger published a series of four stirring articles in *Yediot Achronot* called “To Hell and Back,” the first of many articles he wrote over the years dealing with the Holocaust.

Kliger states, “Since that visit, I have returned to Auschwitz nearly every year, and each time I ask the taxi to wait. The act of taking a taxi to the campsite, knowing the taxi awaits me at the visit’s end, no matter how long, having a bite to eat and then returning to Warsaw, serves as proof that I’m free and that Auschwitz is over. On the other hand, for me it is a personal pilgrimage for those who didn’t make it. This is how I face my own personal trauma.”

Although Kliger, who immigrated to Israel in 1948, stipulates that he lives for the present, he is heavily involved in preparing youth for the future. “I’m aware that there is a certain skepticism concerning the visits to Poland. If the youth consequently strengthen their identity as Jews, and Israelis, what’s wrong with that? A nation who doesn’t learn about its past has no chance for a future. This nation has to avoid behaving foolishly, as it did in the past. The only solution for the Diaspora is to live in Israel. Most importantly, by visiting Poland, I want the Israeli youth to understand that they *must* stay here. By leaving Israel, they would leave the Jewish nation.”



Kliger’s story. When asked by Mengele if Kliger would be useful alive, the doctor answered affirmatively and thus Kliger was spared. Years later, a very emotional meeting was to take place between Noah Kliger and the doctor from Strasbourg.

Closing circles has been significant for Kliger both personally and careerwise. Kliger’s break in journalism came immediately following VE day when, as a newly employed reporter for the Belgian paper, *La Cité Nouvelle*, he covered the first Nazi war crime trial to take

NEW STAMP MARKING COURAGE

Israel Postal Authority's Philatelic Service, in association with Yad Vashem, issued a first-day cover and stamp honoring five Righteous Among the Nations diplomats - Aristides de Sousa Mendes (Portugal); Sempo Sugihara (Japan); Selahattin Ulkumen (Turkey); Giorgio Perlasca (Spain); and Charles Lutz (Switzerland). Limor Livnat, Minister of Communications, presented the stamp to Avner Shalev, Chairman of the Yad Vashem Directorate, at a ceremony held at Yad Vashem last April, in honor of the Righteous Among the Nations. "It is truly fitting that Israel salute these 'unsung heroes' with a commemorative stamp," remarked Livnat, "so that their sacrifice receives the public recognition it so very much deserves." After the ceremony, a new exhibition, "Visas for Life: Diplomats who saved Jews during the Holocaust," opened in the Valley of the Communities. Many of the diplomats' family members attended the opening ceremony, including Aristides de Sousa Mendes' son, John Paul Abranches, who explained: "My father believed in both God and his country, but when the moment of truth came, he said that he would rather be with God against his country than the other way around."



The first day cover of the stamp honoring the diplomats

NEWS



Communications Minister Limor Livnat presents the stamp to the widow of Sempo Sugihara whose face appears on the stamp.

SCENES FROM EICHMANN'S TRIAL

Yad Vashem, the Steven Spielberg Jewish Film Archive and the Israel State Archives have produced a video cassette showing a collection of testimonies from the Eichmann trial in 1961. Adolf Eichmann, the SS general, one of those responsible for bringing the Jews of Europe to the Nazi extermination camps, was tried in a Jerusalem courtroom for "crimes against humanity". The trial, which lasted for ten weeks, enabled Holocaust survivors, many for the first time, to tell their stories and recount the horrors of the Shoah. The cassette makes selected scenes from the Eichmann trial available to the public who, over the years, has requested these materials.



In May, a special evening was held in honor of Israel Prize recipient Prof. Yehuda Bauer. The evening was attended by over 130 researchers, pupils and friends, including Avner Shalev, Prof. Shmuel Almog, Dr. Jean Ancel, Prof. Dalia Ofer, Prof. Shlomo Avineri and Dr. Dina Porat.

In association with the Institute for Contemporary Jewry in Hebrew University, Yad Vashem organized a symposium at Yad Vashem and at the Van Leer Institute in honor of Prof. Yisrael Gutman's 75th birthday. In addition to the 200 researchers, pupils and friends, Prof. Jerzy Tomaszewski from Warsaw and Prof. Steven T. Katz from Boston came from abroad for the event.

ISRAEL PHILHARMONIC AT YAD VASHEM



Three thousand guests, including hundreds of survivors, the delegation of Righteous Among the Nations, public figures and friends of Yad Vashem, attended a special outdoor concert performed by the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, the Ramat Gan Chamber Choir and the Ankor Children's Choir. The concert was held in the Warsaw Ghetto Square, Yad Vashem, in May, in honor of the Holocaust survivors and marking the fiftieth anniversary of the State of Israel. The Jerusalem Municipality, many organizations and private individuals from Israel and abroad showed their unwavering support to Yad Vashem's sacred task of perpetuating the legacy of the Holocaust, and assisted in producing this unique concert.

The concert was held in the presence of the Speaker of the Knesset, Dan Tichon MK and under the auspices of the Mayor of Jerusalem Ehud Olmert MK. In his opening remarks, Dan Tichon warned of the rise and success of the Fascist party in the early elections held in one of the districts in Germany. Ehud Olmert cited the invaluable contribution made by the survivors to the establishment of the State of Israel. Special mention must be made to the American Society for Yad Vashem, in particular the Zborowski, Wilf, Skura, Halpern, Zandman, Shapell, Palmer and Gottestein families, for their generous support to the concert.

One of the highlights of the evening was Zubin Mehta's emotional address to the audience which emphasized the significance of performing *Revival of the Dead* at Yad Vashem. In addition to Noam Sheriff's masterpiece, the Brahms's *Concerto for Violin and Orchestra in D Major Opus 77*, was performed.

NEWS

IMPRESSIONS FROM THE YAD VASHEM DELEGATION TO POLAND

by Nehama Gal



Nehama Gal and Meira Edelstein next to the mass grave of Tykocin's Jews

Of late, I have fulfilled an oppressive moral obligation which has burdened me for years, when I set out on a trip in trail of the destroyed Polish Jewish communities. As the daughter of Holocaust survivors who had rebuilt their lives, I had always been afraid of the encounter with the gruesome reality. Indeed, I had had a reason to!

Poland. A country of endless expanses, green fields, dense forests and a multitude of sparkling brooks covering millions of men, women and children murdered in cold blood by all forms of extermination. The eye observes and the heart weeps. The mind is unable to digest. A whole Jewish world throbbing with life turned into a huge graveyard. Warsaw, Krakow, Lodz, Bialystok, Lublin, Tykocin – all that is left (if anything has been left at all) of a Jewish world that once was are the cold gravestones, tale-telling silent witnesses of what had been and had ceased to exist. In the former Jewish quarters, in the former ghettos, some door frames still divulge traces of open wounds or mezuzot brutally slashed out.

The oppressive silence of the old dilapidated cemeteries, their gravestones crying out to the (empty) skies. In Poland, it is the dead who speak for the living, for there are no longer any living to tell the story. Thus we went, from one cemetery to another, one place of extermination to another. "Here, eight hundred Jewish children from Tarnow were murdered on one single day," is the outcry of a plaque in the Zwilitovska Gora forest. Everywhere we recited the *Kaddish*, the commemorative prayer for the dead. Silently

JUBILEE VISITS AT YAD VASHEM

In honor of Israel's jubilee anniversary, foreign heads of state from all over the world came to salute the State of Israel and show their support. Amidst the celebrations, all the dignitaries took time to pay their respects to the victims of the Holocaust and to visit many of the Yad Vashem exhibitions. Amongst the visitors were: Vice President of the United States of America, Al Gore; Prime Minister of the United Kingdom of Great Britain, Tony Blair; President of the Swiss Confederation, Flavio Cotti; President of Uruguay, Julio Maria Sanguinetti; Federal Chancellor of Austria, Viktor Klima; U.N. Secretary General, Kofi Annan; US Defense Secretary, William Cohen; Croatian Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Mate Granic; Chiefs of Staff from all over the world; Governors of New York and Pennsylvania and many others.

The visitors expressed their appreciation and gratitude for the opportunity to visit Yad Vashem and emphasized their commitment to preserving the legacy of the Holocaust and ensuring that it would never happen again. As Tony Blair, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom of Great Britain, wrote:

"This is my second visit here. I have never forgotten the first time. I shall never forget this. The torment and the anguish of the Jewish people in the Holocaust are the most vivid expressions of suffering humanity has ever known. But, [your] courage, determination and essential dignity through this agony and since, also describes humanity's best chance of hope for the future."

we uttered the *El Male Rahamim* and lit candles for the salvation of the souls of those who perished just because they happened to be born as Jews. It was the very least we could do for them.

There are no words to describe what I saw and felt in the extermination camps of Auschwitz, Majdanek, Chelmo and Treblinka. Any description will do injustice to reality.



Vice President of the United States, Al Gore greets Chairman of the American Society for Yad Vashem, Eli Zborowski, Diana Zborowski and Joseph Wilf



Prime Minister of the United Kingdom of Great Britain, Tony Blair and his wife Cherie



U.N. Secretary General, Kofi Annan and his wife Nane, niece of Raoul Wallenberg



President of the Swiss Confederation, Flavio Cotti with Yad Vashem's Avner Shalev

The poet Bialik's words come to mind: "The sun shone, the acacia tree flourished and the slaughterer slaughtered."

Poland. One big graveyard. Only on leaving that country did I rinse my hands. In answer to the question posed by many as to where God was during the Holocaust, I cannot but reply with a question, "Where was Man?"

A NEW EXHIBITION FOR THE STATE OF ISRAEL'S FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY

In honor of the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of the State of Israel, Yad Vashem will be initiating a new exhibition.

The exhibition tells the story of the absorption of hundred of thousands of Holocaust survivors who arrived in Palestine – and later in Israel – after the war in Europe, and during the first years of the state's existence. Although they were new immigrants, and had experienced great trauma, these immigrants were able to find their way into all areas of activity in Israeli society, and to leave their stamp on the shaping

of Israeli identity.

One of the most salient topics addressed in the exhibition is the survivors' participation in Israel's War of Independence. The War of Independence is depicted in Israeli mythology as a war fought by the "sabras". Some fifty percent of the fighting force was composed of Holocaust survivors, who also constituted approximately one-third of the fallen soldiers – at times, the last remaining remnants of their murdered families. These survivors saw immigration to Israel and the fight for its existence as an expression of their powerful

NEWS

desire to contribute to the establishment of a state in which they might be able to live an honorable life, with a sense of belonging.

The exhibition will present general facts as well as personal stories. The approximately 1,000 names of the fallen soldiers who were Holocaust survivors will be displayed.

HOLOCAUST MARTYRS' AND HEROES' REMEMBRANCE DAY 1998

Every year the Jewish nation, all over the world and in particular Israel, commemorates the tragic events that befell our people during the abysmal period of the Holocaust. On Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Day this year, one could feel a marked increase of visitors to Yad Vashem. 60,000 people visited Yad Vashem during the week of Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Day.

The official evening opening ceremony took place at Yad Vashem and was attended by the President of the State of Israel, the Prime Minister, the diplomatic corps, local and foreign dignitaries, survivors, youth and the general public. This year, international and local media extensively covered the events, as the State of Israel, on her jubilee anniversary, saluted the Holocaust survivors and marked their contribution to the establishment of the State and their integration into Israeli society.

The next morning, following the two-minute siren, representatives of the political, religious and social establishment, as well as the survivors groups, participated in the official wreath-laying ceremony. Afterwards, thousands of people walked round the museums and the monuments, each taking time to reflect on the horrors. Films were screened throughout the entire day and memorial ceremonies for individual communities were held. Many survivors and families also set aside time to read out the names of their murdered kin in the official "Unto Every Person there is a Name" ceremony at Yad Vashem and in the Knesset.

The international "Unto Every Person there is a Name" project commemorates each Holocaust victim individually. In keeping with tradition for the last 8 years, Yad Vashem prepares lists of Holocaust victims' names to be read out in Jewish and non-Jewish communities all over the world on Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Day. As in every year, thousands of communities organized

readings of the names in special ceremonies attended by local dignitaries -- in Berlin, over 50,00 names were read out.

In the final main event at Yad Vashem, over 2500 members of different youth groups and 600 soldiers commemorated the Holocaust in their unique way. This was the first time that the Israel Defense Forces joined in the ceremony. Deputy Education Minister, Moshe Peled, commended the youth for their awareness of the Holocaust's centrality in Jewish and Israeli identity.



The March of the Living held by the Hungarian community of survivors who walked down to the Valley of the Communities.



Israeli paratroopers light candles in memory of the millions murdered in the Shoah.



L to R: Professor Annon Rubinstein, journalist Dan Margalit, Dr. Motti Shalem, Professor Avi Ravitzky and Professor Yisrael Gutman speak about the State of Israel and the Holocaust on the eve of Remembrance Day at Yad Vashem.



U.S.A.

The **American Society** led by **Eli Zborowski** marked Israel's jubilee year by launching "Yad Vashem 2001" in a festive reception at the end of May in New York City honoring the American leadership for their role in building Yad Vashem. **Zborowski** introduced the guest speaker, **Shmuel Ben Shmuel**, Israel's Deputy Consul General, who commended the Society for their commitment. Following the screening of a ten-minute video displaying aerial photos of Yad Vashem, **Joseph Wilf**, the "Yad Vashem 2001" Campaign Chairman made a passionate appeal to the guests to increase their support of this vital project. To the list of the generous benefactors including **Joseph Wilf**, **David Shapell**, **Sheldon Adelson**, **Ira Drukier**, **Sam Skura**, **Dr. Felix Zandman**, **Sam Halpern** and **Eli Zborowski**, new supporters were added, in particular **Mark Honigsfeld** who pledged a welcome gift for the cause. The Pillars Awards were bestowed on the **American Society's** leaders for their dedication and commitment.



Elisabeth and Joseph Wilf accepting Pillars of Stone presented by American Society Vice Chairman Mark Palmer

Additionally, a hundred and fifty **Young Leadership Associates** headed by **Caroline Arfa**, turned out for the spring event, a theater benefit at the *Diary of Anne Frank*. Survivors including **Julia and Isidore Karten** and Young Leadership board members **Danielle and Harry Karten** and **Jane and Mark Wilf** were also in attendance. Further plans of the **Young Leadership** for 1998 include sponsoring a one-day seminar for New York City educators and a Fall/Winter event.

A very close friend and member of the **American Society**, **Ira Drukier** and his family recently paid a visit to Yad Vashem and were briefed by **Avner Shalev**, Chairman of the Directorate as to the progress of "Yad Vashem 2001". **Drukier** expressed his satisfaction with the developments and reconfirmed his commitment to the project.

Fela and David Shapell, extremely close friends from Los Angeles, were recently at Yad Vashem to hear about the building schedule of the project they have generously supported, The Visitors' Center, which will commence construction in August.

Vidal Sassoon visited the exhibition "No Child's Play" and the museum's collection room. At his estate in California, **Sassoon** hosted a large reception of Yad Vashem friends, with guest speaker Professor **Yehuda Bauer**. Similar events are planned for Seattle and Miami to launch new branches of Yad Vashem friends.

Ronald Lauder, a loyal friend of Yad Vashem, brought a group of his professional colleagues who were shown around the sites in Yad Vashem. **Lauder**, when speaking to the group at the end of the tour, stressed Yad Vashem's centrality in Holocaust commemoration and commented that "Yad Vashem ensured that the Holocaust would never be forgotten."



Ronald Lauder and Avner Shalev

A large delegation of key figures of the **American Society** visited Israel in its jubilee year and took part, amongst many others, in the Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Day events that took

place at Yad Vashem. Highlights of their visit were the concert given by the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra at Yad Vashem and the delegation of the Righteous Among the Nations which held special significance for the **Zborowski** and **Halpern** families, whose rescuers were among the participants. The **American** delegation received a progress report of the early completion of the detailed planning of the Visitors' Center. The **Americans** reaffirmed their commitment to raise a third of the funds needed and presented Yad Vashem with its first installment.



Britain

Yad Vashem was deeply saddened by the tragic loss of one of its dearest friends, the late **John Najmann**. He, his wife **Hertha**, his brothers **Herbert** and **Jochi**, his sister **Hanna**, and friends had all been associated with Yad Vashem's educational work and had especially come to Yad Vashem to take part in the educational award ceremony in the name of his late parents, **Chuno and Blima Najmann**, when he suddenly took ill. In his prepared speech he noted, "Let us heal our own wounds, and by ourselves correct the terrible wrong that has been done to us, by building a strong and powerful, but above all, a peaceful and united Israel and Jewish people." He will be sorely missed by all who knew him.

The **National Charitable Trust of Yad Vashem in England**, are organizing a joint educational weekend with Beth Shalom in August. At the conference, Yad Vashem's **Ephraim Kaye**, Beth Shalom's **Stephen Smith** and **Dr. Ronnie Landau** will be addressing survivors and educators about the problems and dilemmas facing teachers dealing with the Holocaust.

A delegation from the '45 Aid Society', including **Ben Helfgott**, Chairman of the **National Charitable Trust** of Yad Vashem in England, held a reunion in Israel attended by 300 survivors from all over the world. This delegation also attended events at Yad Vashem including the Israel Philharmonic concert.



France

The **French Society**, led by **Dr. Richard Prasquier**, following the increasing activity and strengthening of the Paris branch, is in full gear to open up a new branch in Nice.



Brazil

In August, **Sao Paulo** will see the revival of its Yad Vashem society's activities. **Avner Shalev**, **Simcha Salach**, Director of the Yad Vashem Foundation, **Daniel Gater**, Head of the Latin American Desk of Yad Vashem and architect **Moshe Safdie**, designer of the Yad Vashem's new museum and Visitors' Center will launch the opening event. At the event, numerous important personalities, leaders of the Jewish community and architects, including the renowned **Julio Neve**, President of the Museum of Modern Art in Sao Paulo, will attend and "Yad Vashem 2001" will be presented.

A second major event to take place is a celebratory evening to be held at the Hebraic Jewish Community Center, with the participation of leading community figures.

The events have been organized by **Jayme Frankel**, **Israel Isser Levin**, **Ernesto Strauss** and **Jayme Milson**, and with the cooperation and support of **Edmundo Safdie**.



Mexico

David and Malka Gorodzinsky have recently renewed and upgraded the audio-visual equipment which they donated 7 years ago to the historical museum. The equipment is used to present Jewish life in Europe before the Holocaust.



Belgium

The **Belgium Society**, headed by **Maurice Piore**, has recently renewed its activities and has committed its support to the construction of the foyer in the new Archives Building. With the help of **Dr. Cynthia Haft**, Head of the French Speaking Desk at Yad Vashem, the society plans to raise the funds from the Jewish Community.



Canada

Anna Dan, **Helen Rosenbaum** and other central activists of the women's chapter of the **Canadian Society**, led by **Hank Rosenbaum** are organizing a Ladies' dinner in November honoring women Holocaust survivors, with guest speaker **Dr. Ruth Westheimer**.

More news includes the visit of the **Canadian Society** Director, **Marilyn Somers** who visited Yad Vashem, where she was briefed about "Yad Vashem 2001".



Holland

In July, brothers **Jan and Paul Baan** signed a Memorandum of Understanding between the **Oikonomos Foundation** and Yad Vashem to mark the first stage of the establishment of a data management and retrieval system and an administrative management system. Present at the ceremony were Israeli Finance Minister Professor **Yaakov Neeman**, the Mayor of Jerusalem **Ehud Olmert** and the Ambassador of the Netherlands **Como Van Hellenberg Hubar**. Representing the **Oikonomos Foundation** was **Jenny Floor**. Professor **Arnold Heertje**, a Dutch Holocaust survivor and **Baan's** General Advisor, recited *Kaddish* at the ceremony in the Hall of Remembrance.



Jan and Paul Baan lay a wreath in the Hall of Remembrance.



Germany

Simcha Salach, director of the Yad Vashem Foundation was in **Germany** to help organize the many activities held by the **German Society** for Yad Vashem led by **Henry Faktor**. A major event attended by an array of personalities took place in the University of Munich, organized by **Charlotte Knobloch**, the President of the Jewish community in Munich. Professor **Michael Brenner** and **Ernst Holthaus**, who on the same evening was nominated as head of the Yad Vashem Branch of Munich and Upper Bavaria. Professor **Yehuda Bauer** was the guest speaker of the event.

Other news from Germany includes the pledge of Prof. **Jan Philipp Reemtsma** supporting two out of the three conferences planned to take place in Yad Vashem, the Brandeis University and Warsaw. Yad Vashem, in association with the **Institut Fur Sozial Forschung**, headed by Prof. **Reemtsma**, is organizing these conferences.



Israel

The municipalities of **Jerusalem** and **Ramat Gan**, the **Philharmonic Orchestra** and the **Israeli National Lottery** generously supported the Philharmonic concert at Yad Vashem last May which was attended by nearly 3000 people. In addition, the concert was under the auspices of many Israeli commercial companies such as: **Orek Golden Pages**, **Bank Leumi**, **Bank Yerushalaim**, **First International Bank**, **Bank Hapoalim**, **The Caesarea Edmond de Rothschild Development Corp.Ltd**, **Telrad**, **Williger Co.**, **Egged Tlalim**, **Iscar Ltd**, **Fedex Israel**, **Clal Corp**, **Koor Corp**, along with many other private individuals and organizations.

Yoram Berger and **Michael Bar Natan** were instrumental in supporting the filming of the Righteous Among the Nations delegation's visit. This film is being produced by Yad Vashem, Israel Education Television and the Film Service.

Yad Vashem

MAGAZINE, VOL. 10, TAMMUZ 5758, JULY 1998

Published by:



Yad Vashem יד ושם

The Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Authority

Chairman of the International Council: Dr. Josef Burg

Vice Chairmen of the International Council: Dr. Yitzhak Arad
Prof. Elie Wiesel

Chairman of the Directorate: Avner Shalev

Vice Chairman of the Directorate: Johanan Bein

Director General: Ishai Amrami

Head of the International Center: Professor Yehuda Bauer

Chief Historian: Professor Yisrael Gutman

Members of the Yad Vashem Directorate: Dr. Joel Barroni,
Dr. Avi Beker,

Ben-Zion Dell, Abraham Duvdevani, Noach Flug, Stefan Grayek, Prof. Yisrael Gutman, Dr. Nili Keren, Chaim Klein, Linda Olmert, Yossi Peled, Dov Puder, Raoul Saporta, Sara Stern-Katan, Szymonowicz Szamai, Eli Zborowski

THE MAGAZINE

Editor-in-Chief: Iris Rosenberg

Managing Editor & Senior Writer: Michal Morris Kamil

Editorial Board: Israel Cohen
Alisa Lehrer

Editorial Coordinator: Lilach Cohen
Ayala Mizrachy

Language Editor: Felice Kahn Zisken

Translated by: Haim Mass
Aryeh Spoznick
Margo Stroumsa-Uzan

Assisted by: Esther Aran
Yaron Ashkenazy
Alexander Avraham
Rachel Barkai
Richelle Budd Kaplan
Dr. Tikva Fatal-Knaani
Yehudit Inbar
Ephraim Kaye
Michael Lieber
Dr. Mordecai Paldiel
Simcha Salach

Photography: Isaac Harari
Neil Folberg
Zev Radovan

Production: Ariela Shani

Design: Mina Portnov-Mishan

Jerusalem Yad Vashem Magazine
P.O. Box 3477, Jerusalem 91034, Israel
Tel: 972-2-6751666, Fax: 972-2-6411849
ISSN 0793-7199

© Articles appearing in this issue may be reprinted with proper acknowledgement.

NEW PUBLICATIONS

by Alisa Lehrer



Denes, Magda, *Castles Burning, A Child's Life in War.* New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1997, 384 pp.

A moving personal memoir, by renowned psychiatrist Magda Denes, recounts her childhood experiences in Budapest during the Second World War. Denes powerfully evokes her story from a child's perspective, in a witty, ironic and comical manner. The reader is left convinced that Magda's sense of humor provided her with the resilience so badly needed in those horrific times.



Feldhay Brenner, Rachel, *Writing as Resistance—Four Women Confronting the Holocaust.* Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997, 216 pp.

Rachel Feldhay Brenner's thorough critique explores the autobiographical writings of four Jewish women whose lives were cut short in their prime. Their different approaches and beliefs in the face of Nazi tyranny reveal the personal crises they faced and the contentions they held with a world which refused to accept them. Brenner examines their literary activities as a means of resistance and discusses the significance of their intellectual and spiritual quest for the moral redemption of the world.

EVENTS August-October

5.8.98 – Memorial ceremony marking 56 years since the deportation of Janusz Korczak and the children to the Treblinka death camp.

28.9.98 – Memorial ceremony for the victims of the slaughter at Babi-Yar.

13-15.10.98 – International conference for the Holocaust survivors.

20.10.98 – Memorial ceremony for the Jews of the Baltic States who perished in the Holocaust.

For further information, please contact tel 02-6751614.

NEW EXHIBITION

"AND I STILL SEE THEIR FACES"

by Elly Dlin

Why did the Poles save thousands of old photographs of Jews? Almost all of the Jews are gone from Poland, deported from their homes and murdered in the Holocaust. Their photographs remain behind, kept by Poles for nearly sixty years. Why? And why give them in now to be displayed? These are some of the questions that will spring to mind while viewing the new exhibition "And I Still See their Faces" that opens on July 1 in the Valley of the Communities at Yad Vashem.



"My mother became friendly with Mrs. Pejsakowa," wrote one woman in a letter that accompanied the photo. "When they had to take the family out of Opatow, she gave Mother these pictures so that she could keep them in case someone survives... The photos survived, but I don't remember the names."

Photos isolate and preserve one single instance but omit all that went before or came after. In some we see the sun but never feel its heat; we see clouds but we never hear the wind. And we see Jewish faces radiating joy, optimism, pride and strength at wedding celebrations, in studio poses, in routine work and happy play - vignettes of innocent lives before they were brutally victimized in the Holocaust.

The photographs were collected by the American-Israeli-Polish SHALOM Foundation, headed by Golda Tencer, a Warsaw based organization dedicated to preserving the memory of Polish Jewry. The exhibition is being brought to Israel for the first time.

The author is Director of the Valley of the Communities.

VE DAY 1998

Thousands of Second World War veterans who fought in the Allied forces, Jewish partisans and volunteers from the Jewish Brigade, as well as representatives from 23 different embassies in Israel, attended the official VE day ceremony at Yad Vashem, marking the 53rd anniversary of the Allied victory over the Nazis. Yitzhak Mordechai, Minister of Defense, Yuli Edelstein, Minister of Immigrant Absorption and Avner Shalev, Chairman of the Yad Vashem Directorate, spoke at the ceremony and praised the veterans for their invaluable contribution in the war effort. Additionally, Avraham Cohen and Yitzhak Rozovski spoke on behalf of the veterans and fighters. Over 40 wreaths were laid in memory of the fighters. The IDF orchestra played medleys of English, American and Russian songs from the same period. Mordechai, attending the ceremony for the first time, noted that the veterans brought freedom and independence to the Jewish people, who were doomed to destruction by the Nazi beast.

