

# JERUSALEM Yad Vashem

QUARTERLY MAGAZINE, VOL. 36, WINTER 2005

## The Voice of the Individual

**The New Holocaust History Museum** (pp. 4-7)

**Millions Reconnect @ [yadvashem.org](http://yadvashem.org)** (pp. 2-3)



# YAD VASHEM JERUSALEM

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Yad Vashem

## Contents

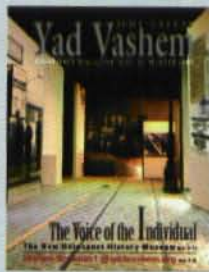
Millions Reconnect @ yadvashem.org	2-3
The Voice of the Individual	4-7
The New Holocaust History Museum	
Education	8-9
Searching for Answers	
The New Learning Center	
At the Gates of Hell	10-11
60 Years Since the Evacuation and Liberation of Auschwitz	
The Many Faces of Holocaust Research	12
New Publications	13
In Their Words	
Last Letters from the Shoah	
News	14-16
Friends Worldwide	17-19



## Editors' Remarks

Since Yad Vashem uploaded the Central Database of Shoah Victims' Names to the Internet in November (see pp. 2-3), we have been inundated with thousands of responses from survivors and their families, educators and ordinary "surfers" from all over the world. "Looking at the individual photographs and stories," wrote one person, "I am constantly saddened and sickened by what happened. To see these is far more meaningful than to think of 'six million.' [By uploading the Names Database] you are creating an identity for all the victims." A teacher commented: "I am overwhelmed by the resource that is now available to everyone... I know I'll make use of it as an educator and I'm sure it will also be a great impetus to survivors to add missing victims to the Pages of Testimony." "Quite a memorial," remarked someone who lost relatives in the Shoah. "I am amazed at what can be researched with the click of a mouse... Reading the information and their documents gives them humanity once again."

In just a few weeks, Yad Vashem will open the doors of the new Holocaust History Museum at an historic state ceremony (see pp. 4-7). Some four times the size of the current Historical Museum, the new Museum will present the story of the Shoah from a unique Jewish perspective, emphasizing the experiences of the individual victims through original artifacts, survivor testimonies, film, photographs and artwork. Using state-of-the-art exhibits and the best of Yad Vashem's expertise and resources, the new Museum will allow the legacy and implications of Holocaust remembrance to be passed on to the next generations.



Cover:  
Symbolic reconstruction of the Warsaw Ghetto's Leszno Street in the new Holocaust History Museum (pp. 4-7)  
Photo: Sasson Tiram

by Leah Goldstein

"Today I became a grandson. Today I became a nephew. Across time and history, www.yadvashem.org reminds us... how an attempt at mass murder and genocide can be undone by the collaborative power of memory."

Tom Teicholz, film producer, author and journalist, *The Jewish Journal of Greater Los Angeles*

Now available anywhere in the world at www.yadvashem.org, Yad Vashem's Central Database of Shoah Victims' Names has generated an overwhelming response. Of the millions who have visited the website—from 162 countries—since the Database was launched, thousands of people have written to Yad Vashem to express their admiration and appreciation for this vital step in Holocaust remembrance. Some, with personal connections to the Shoah, have reconnected with the past; others have discovered a part of their history they did not know. Many have simply been overwhelmed by the experience of "meeting the victims" and, in the words of one newspaper editorial, "seeing them look back at us."

Launching the Database at an international press conference on 22 November 2004, Chairman of the Yad Vashem Directorate Avner Shalev announced the start of an International 11<sup>th</sup> Hour Campaign aimed at garnering more names of victims. "This is a race against time," he explained. "We must record as many

# Millions

names as possible before the generation that best remembers them is no longer with us. We call on families around the globe to help honor the memories of their ancestors by recording their names."

Simone Veil, Holocaust survivor, former President of the European Parliament and current President of the Fondation Pour la Memoire de la Shoah (France), explained the importance of the Database in a special taped message: "For the first time, this Database is accessible to everybody... this is really wonderful since people will be able to find out about relatives who disappeared, and also—most importantly—the memory of those millions of assassinated Jews will be immortalized."

The Names Database has three main functions: it enables visitors to search for any of the close to three million names of Shoah victims digitized to date; it allows users to submit new Pages of Testimony—forms containing biographical details of individual victims—as well as photographs for those victims as yet unrecorded; and it provides educational material about the Holocaust through the "Stories Behind the Names" feature.

Two-thirds of the names in the Database were obtained from the more than two million Pages of Testimony submitted to Yad Vashem over the past 50 years, nearly all of which have now been digitized. Other names have been gleaned from additional computerized lists, including deportation, camp and ghetto records. Every name in the Database is accompanied by a short biography of the victim, as





Prime Minister Ariel Sharon (left) searches Yad Vashem's online Central Database of Shoah Victims' Names in the Prime Minister's Bureau, accompanied by Chairman of the Yad Vashem Directorate Avner Shalev

# Reconnect yadvashem.org

well as links to further information about the places and events connected to his/her life and death. Users can also conduct further research about that particular family, or access other Pages of Testimony completed by the same submitter.

**"I have found a part of my life that was lost"**

Response to uploading of Shoah Victims' Names Database

Marking the uploading of the Names Database to the Internet, Nobel Laureate Professor Elie Wiesel completed a Page of Testimony for his father, Shlomo Wiesel, and said: "This Database creates a link not only with the dead but also among the living... It can only bring a heightened awareness and a deepened sense of remembrance."

After speaking during the conference, Minister of Education, Culture and Sport Limor Livnat conducted a search for her relatives. Also present at the conference were: Serge Klarsfeld, a pioneer in the effort to document names of Holocaust victims and whose groundbreaking lists have been incorporated into the Database; Yossie Hollander, the son of

Holocaust survivors, hi-tech entrepreneur and supporter of the project; and representatives of Yad Vashem's strategic technological partners in the project, Strauss Strategy, IBM Global Services, Netvision and IDEA. The uploading of the Database was made possible by the generous support of the Victim List Project of the Swiss Banks Settlement, under the supervision of the Honorable Edward R. Korman, Chief Judge of the United States District Court for the Eastern District of New York, and Yossie Hollander. At the conference, Hollander recalled how he was named after his grandfather who perished in the Holocaust: "Helping Yad Vashem create the Names project has been my personal way of remembering him," he said. "For the past 60 years the memory of the Holocaust has been carried by the survivors. They are not getting any younger. It is now time for the next generation to carry this load."

In a specially-recorded message, Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon urged Jews around the world to join the effort to document the names of victims: "We should use this technology in the service of memory to plant their images in our own hearts, and in the hearts of our children and grandchildren. This is the least we can do for them."

## Partners in Promotion

An unprecedented number of media outlets, businesses and organizations in Israel and around the world have joined Yad Vashem in promoting the Names Database and assisting in the International 11<sup>th</sup> Hour Campaign aimed at garnering as many names of Shoah victims as possible. Among these are: the United Jewish Communities, the Jewish Education Service of North America, the Orthodox Union, the World Union of Jewish Students, the National Fund of the Republic of Austria and Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation.

In Great Britain, Yad Vashem and Tribe (Young United Synagogue) are partnering on the innovative "Sixty Days for Sixty Years" educational project, marking 60 years since the end of the Holocaust. From 25 January to 25 March 2005 (60 days), participants—teenagers, students and adults—will study various topics about Jewish identity in the modern age, including the Holocaust, each in the memory of a specific Shoah victim. Each participant will receive a special book comprising contributions from leading Jewish thinkers, including Holocaust survivor and Nobel Laureate Professor Elie Wiesel, the Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth Dr. Jonathan Sacks, and renowned Holocaust historian Sir Martin Gilbert.

In addition, various communities from around the world will be "twinned" with European Jewish communities that were obliterated in the Shoah, in an effort to "rebuild and reclaim" them from the Nazi destruction.

Participants will be encouraged to access the Central Database of Shoah Victims' Names on the Yad Vashem website to investigate the lives of those individuals whose memories they will be commemorating. For more information, and to participate in this groundbreaking project, please e-mail: 60for60@tribeuk.com

Yad Vashem is grateful to all those organizations and individuals who have offered their assistance in promoting the Database and the campaign to gather more names. To join this vital international effort, please e-mail: names.outreach@yadvashem.org.il





# The Voice of the Individual

by Leah Goldstein

At an historic ceremony in the presence of heads of state, survivors, leaders in Holocaust remembrance and supporters, Yad Vashem's new Holocaust History Museum will be inaugurated on 15-16 March, under the patronage and in the presence of H.E. Mr. Moshe Katsav, President of the State of Israel. The pinnacle of Yad Vashem's Multiyear Development Plan, the new Museum has been a decade in the making, and combines the best of Yad Vashem's expertise, resources and state-of-the-art exhibits to take Holocaust remembrance into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The new Holocaust History Museum occupies some 4,200 square meters, mainly underground. Both multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary, it tells the story of the Holocaust using original artifacts, documentation, testimonies, film, literature, diaries, letters, and works of art. The synthesis of all these channels of personal expression enables the visitor to absorb the wealth of information through a multi-sensory and multidimensional experience.

In advance of the inaugural events, Chairman of the Yad Vashem Directorate and Chief Curator of the new Holocaust History Museum Avner Shalev and Director of the Museums Division and Curator in Charge of the new Museum Yehudit Inbar reflected on the creation of this unique Museum and its role in imparting the memory of the *Shoah*:

## A Unique Jewish Perspective

As a museum of the Jewish people and the State of Israel, the new Holocaust History Museum presents the events—though not exclusively—from the Jewish point of view. “It is impossible to understand the Holocaust and absorb its meaning without learning about those who were most directly affected: the victims and



Shirt belonging to Helen Ryba, prisoner in a slave labor camp near Leipzig, Germany. Helen tied an orange bead onto the collar as an “ornament.” Gift of Helen (Ryba) Katz-Lichtbroun, Miami, Florida, USA: Yad Vashem Artifacts Collection

Ring given to Greta Furst by her beloved Harry Knopf, whom she met in the SS offices in Auschwitz where both were slave laborers. The initials of the couple are inscribed on the ring. Greta and Harry were taken out of the camp on 18 January 1945 on a death march. Despite her best efforts to find him, Greta never saw Harry again: he is presumed to have perished during the march. Gift of Greta (Furst) Gutmann, Naharia, Israel: Yad Vashem Artifacts Collection

the survivors,” says Avner Shalev. From the opening chapter—dedicated to the pre-war European Jewish world—until the epilogue—portraying original manuscripts written by Jews during the Holocaust period—the artifacts, writings and artwork of the victims tell the story of the Holocaust from a unique Jewish perspective, emphasizing the Jews as subjects, rather than objects upon whom the Nazis conducted their genocidal policy.

Yehudit Inbar explains: “Most of the documentation and film footage of the time came from official German sources, portraying Jews through the eyes of the murderer as vile and humiliated—sub-human—creatures. The way Jews experienced these events cannot possibly be understood using these materials alone. We decided to use these photographs and film clips as the framework narrative of what happened, but also to search for ways to tell the Jewish story. This search was assisted by the expert and devoted team in the Museums Division, which contributed greatly to the establishment of the exhibition in the new Museum.”

## The Voice of the Individual

Shalev explains how this idea was developed, by using personal artifacts, testimonies, diaries and artwork to present the experiences of the individual victims. “The perspective of the individual is another keystone of the Museum,” he explains. “As the visitor proceeds through the narrative, the displays emphasize the unique human stories of the Jewish population in Europe during those terrible years.”

Inbar continues: “Since the Jew was the victim and most of the Jews were murdered, materials conveying their story are difficult to find. Most of their property was confiscated, and what remained

was considered “anti-material”—unsuitable for display, because it doesn't make an impact. This is especially true when compared to the plentiful material left by the Nazis.”

The most important and unique way to give voice to the individual was through symbolic means. That was the idea behind locating the Hall of Names—which houses the Pages of Testimony and photographs of individual victims—inside the museum exhibit, as part of the narrative.

“In addition,” says Inbar, “we included personal stories throughout the museum. Some 90 brief accounts of specific individuals are woven into the narrative using whatever means available—personal belongings (sometimes only a button or a broken toy), photographs, recorded testimonies, drawings or quotes from diaries or letters that survived.”

Haviva Peled-Carmeli, Senior Artifacts Curator, and Nina Springer Aharoni, Photograph and Film Curator collected any material that could build a more complete picture of the people involved. Their experiences are written in a more intimate, human style, and portray not only leaders and famous figures, but also the ordinary men, women and children from different places and diverse backgrounds, most of whom perished. These displays effectively convey their impression and understanding of what was happening and the appalling events they experienced. Inbar points out that even in the model of Auschwitz, which is used to explain how the Jews were murdered, the artist gave individual expression to the 3,000 figures contained in the display.

The Museum uses genuine artifacts to give visitors an impression of the world that existed at the time. Near the beginning of the narrative, for example, visitors can walk around inside a typical living room of a Jewish family in Germany during the 1930s, recreated from belongings donated by a number of different families.



Original bunks from  
prisoner barracks in  
Auschwitz and  
Majdanek camps.  
Loaned by Państwowe  
Muzeum Auschwitz-  
Birkenau, Oswiecim,  
Poland, and  
Państwowe Muzeum  
na Majdanku,  
Lublin, Poland

## History Museum

last surviving camp inmates on forced "death marches." These difficult journeys resulted in the deaths of many thousands of prisoners, often

"One of the main principles in planning the new Museum was to incorporate multimedia presentations into the exhibits," adds Shalev. The Museum has some one hundred video screens showing original film clips from before and during the *Shoah*, survivor testimonies, maps, and short movies produced especially for the Museum.

### Understanding the events

"In addition to helping the visitor internalize the human suffering caused by the events," says Shalev, "individual accounts also deepen the understanding of what occurred and contend with its astounding, almost inconceivable components." As such, general phenomena are highlighted through single-story examples.

Inbar explains: "At the end of the war, as the Nazi armies were retreating, the Germans led the

only weeks or days before liberation. To help visitors comprehend these terrible ordeals, the new Museum will focus on one such death march—which began with some one thousand women. During their harrowing journey, they encountered a few locals who helped them, but many more who watched in silence or worse, actively participated in the murder of hundreds. The display will include the names of these women, the places they passed through, their photographs affixed to survivor testimonies, and remaining objects from the march. Thus the narrative will move from the individual story to the general phenomenon and back to the particular, allowing visitors to gain knowledge of the historical event, while relating to the victims' appalling personal experiences."

"This is the strength of the Museum," adds Shalev, "to elicit visitor's empathy,



Israel Alfred Glück (b. 1921), *The Death March, 1945*, charcoal on paper, exhibited in the new Holocaust History Museum. Gift of Dr. K. Passer, London; Yad Vashem Art Museum Collection



understanding and compassion for the victims of the Shoah.”

### Architecture and Design

In keeping with the challenge outlined in Yad Vashem’s Multiyear Development Plan—to maintain the character of the surrounding natural landscape, as well as the prominence of the Hall of Remembrance, the focus of commemoration at the site since its early years—world-renowned architect Moshe Safdie designed a prism-like triangular structure that penetrates the mountain from one side to the other, with both ends dramatically cantilevering into the open air. “The triangular form of the structure was chosen to support the pressure of the earth above the prism while bringing in daylight from above through a 200 meter-long glass skylight,” explains Safdie.

Another basic guideline for the museum’s design was to create a visitor’s route dictated by the evolving narrative—with a beginning, middle and end. As such, Safdie devised a central walkway (prism) with underground exhibition galleries on either side. The visitor is guided into the adjacent galleries by a series of impassable gaps, created by Museum designer Dorit Harel, of Dorit Harel Design Inc., extending along the breadth of the prism floor. Displaying items from different events, the gaps symbolize turning points in the Holocaust, and serve as chapter headings for the evolving narrative of the exhibition.

The building of the new Museum presented a challenge answered by many different bodies, including Tafnit Wind and Minrav. Coordinating the building project was Yad Vashem Director General Ishai Amrami, assisted by the volunteer Building Committee headed by Chaim Alon.

### A Multi-Sensory Experience

Aside from providing information, Harel integrated an experiential dimension, giving visitors an overall impression of the time, place and atmosphere. Unique settings, spaces with varying heights, and different degrees of light accentuate focal points of the unfolding narrative. For example, together with the Museum curators’ perception of how to present the Warsaw Ghetto, one exhibition gallery is a symbolic reconstruction of the ghetto’s Leszno Street (see cover). Visitors walk through the gallery on original cobblestones, surrounded by sights and sounds of the street produced by personal artifacts, original streetlamps, film footage and enlarged photographs of that period.

The design of the building itself also took into account the multi-sensory exhibition within. Safdie explains: “The museum’s planners requested the building not be immersed in

### Art and Video Art

“Art can be an important medium, reflecting the multidimensional, inner world of the victims, while helping to depict historical events,” says Shalev. “Using art in the new Museum mirrors Yad Vashem’s multidisciplinary approach in perpetuating the memory of, and teaching about, the Holocaust,” he adds. Senior Art Curator Yehudit Shendar led the challenge of integrating works of art into the new Museum’s displays. Explains Inbar: “Art generates an emotional response, and that is why, in this historical museum, works of art not only document and illustrate the subject matter, but also increase the visitor’s emotional involvement.”

When designing the opening chapter of the Museum, portraying the Jewish world before the Holocaust, Museum designer Dorit Harel proposed using an audio-visual presentation to be projected on the 13-meter high triangular southern wall of the Museum. Boris Mafzir, media consultant for the new Museum, took this idea one step further by suggesting that the presentation be commissioned to an artist. Thus, at the Museum’s entrance, world-renowned artist Michal Rovner has created a video art display, using original materials alone, which takes the visitor on a journey into the world of ordinary people within their communities; a world now vanished. The shortage of good quality footage documenting Jewish life before the Holocaust made the video’s creation difficult. “The challenge was to recreate the atmosphere of Jewish life,” explains Rovner. “I took different film clips and blended them into one background, just as the Jews blended into the fabric of life in the countries where they lived.”

The Museum’s epilogue is also a video art display, this time created by acclaimed artist Uri Tzaig, using original manuscripts—diaries, letters and notes—written by Jews during the Holocaust period and by survivors afterwards. In one corner of the gallery, a “virtual” album with turning pages displays the manuscripts in their original handwriting, while another wall shows floating letters that occasionally combine to form words and sentences—thoughts and reflections written by Jews during the Shoah. The letters seem to dart through a moving spotlight—echoing the spotlights used in the camps—highlighting the written texts. “This work symbolizes the human spirit that survived even in the inferno,” explains Tzaig.

Headscarf made by Yehudit Aufrichtig, a prisoner at Ravensbrück, from remnants of a Nazi flag. Shortly before liberation, her fellow women prisoners embroidered the headscarf with their names as well as sayings and illustrations from camp life. Gift of Yehudit (Aufrichtig) Taube, Rehovot, Israel: Yad Vashem Artifacts Collection



Original soup vat from Gross-Rosen concentration camp. Donated by Muzeum Gross-Rosen, Walbrzych, Poland

darkness. The skylight allows gleams of daylight to contrast with darker areas required for multimedia presentations.” Within the galleries, light enters through localized skylights varying from diffused to clear glass, depending on the requirements of each exhibit.



## The New Hall of Names

At the end of the Museum's historical narrative is the Hall of Names—the repository for the Pages of Testimony of millions of Holocaust victims and a memorial to those who perished—and, in a separate room, a place where visitors can conduct searches of the digitized Central Database of *Shoah* Victims' Names. The main Hall is composed of two cones: one extending ten meters skywards, echoed by a reciprocal well-like cone excavated into the natural underground rock, its base filled with water. Visitors enter the Hall in the circular space between the two cones onto an elevated ring-shaped platform. From here they can view the upper cone, where a display, designed by Dorit Harel, features some 600 photographs of Holocaust victims and fragments of Pages of Testimony reflected in the water at the bottom of the lower cone. Surrounding the platform is the circular repository, housing the Pages of Testimony collected so far, with empty spaces for those yet to be submitted—room for six million Pages in total.

From the Hall of Names, visitors will continue on to the epilogue and from there to the balcony opening to a panoramic view of Jerusalem.

"It is Yad Vashem's hope that the compassion generated by the new Holocaust History Museum will give visitors a more meaningful experience, raising their personal commitment to higher moral values today and in the future," says Shalev. "The Holocaust is not a closed chapter in human history, but rather an integral component in the development of our culture and the fashioning of our existence. From the Mount of Remembrance (*Har Hazikaron*) in Jerusalem, Yad Vashem is both a warning beacon against repetition of the extreme evil of the past, and a light of hope for the future."

*Major donors to the Holocaust History Museum include: The Harry and Judith Wilf family (USA), the Joseph and Elizabeth Wilf family (USA), Franz Karl Hess (Switzerland), Arie and Jacqueline Becker (Mexico), the Braman Family Foundation (USA), the Clore Israel Foundation (UK), the Crown family (USA), Fondation pour la Memoire de la Shoah (France), Gianna and Max Glassman (Canada), David and Malka Bashe Gorodzinsky (Mexico), Zofia, Rachel and Miriam Landau (Venezuela), the Archie Sherman Charitable Trust (UK), Sol and Gloria Silberzweig (USA), and the Wolfson Family Charitable Trust (UK). The new Hall of Names was built through the support of the Caesarea Edmond Benjamin de Rothschild Foundation.*



The new Hall of Names:  
room for six million  
Pages of Testimony

# Straight to the Heart

## The New Holocaust Art Museum

Yad Vashem's collection of Holocaust art is the largest and most wide-ranging collection in the world. It comprises some 10,000 works, most of them from the Holocaust period. In order to properly display this collection, focusing only on the works created during the *Shoah*, a new Holocaust Art Museum has been built through the generous support of Miri and Sheldon Adelson (USA). The art displayed in the new Museum allows a different view of the Holocaust—based on the experience of the individual—using a medium that appeals not just to the intellect, but also penetrates straight to the heart.

On entering the Museum, the visitor will encounter a diagonal wall displaying a range of works from different artists. The rest of the spaces are dedicated to exhibits according to subject, focusing on the human image as well as views of ghettos and camps, inside and outside. In addition, three artists have areas dedicated solely to their works: Charlotte Salomon, Bruno Schultz and Carol Deutsch. Adjacent to the exhibition hall is the world's first computerized archive and information center regarding *Shoah* art and artists. The center is meant for the occasional visitor who wishes to learn more about a particular artist viewed in the exhibit, as well as for researchers wishing to utilize the information for their academic work.



Charlotte Salomon (1917-1943), *Self Portrait*, 1939-1941, oil crayon on paper, exhibited in the new Holocaust Art Museum.  
Gift of Otilie Gobel Bourne

Creating art during the Holocaust meant risking one's life at a time when the materials needed were almost non-existent, and many of the artists were on the verge of collapse—physically and mentally—without access to even the most minimal essentials of daily life. In spite of all this, the piece was created, and sometimes managed to survive even when—as was mostly the case—the artist did not.

Most of the works were fashioned on thin scraps of paper, which demand care and periodical rotation, so as to best ensure their preservation. The Museum's display will therefore be changed every few months so that the works can "rest" in optimal dark conditions. This rotation will also allow the display of more pieces from the collection.

There is no doubt that the visitor's experience will be unique, both in terms of the subject matter and from an artistic viewpoint. The works displayed are not just testimonial; they express an awesome creative power. The artists who produced them knew that this was a once-in-a-lifetime chance to express all they wished to say in a few lines etched on paper.





# Searching for Answers

## The New

by Aviya Salomon-Hovav

“It is now clear that this challenging job of preserving memory and passing it on to future generations cannot be accomplished through historiography alone. Other means are necessary to achieve this monumental task... In addition to historical questions such as ‘What happened?’ and ‘How did it happen?’ we must now add another question: ‘How should it have been?’ We must not allow the Holocaust to remain in the realm of large numbers and generalized statements.”

Professor Aharon Appelfeld, author and Holocaust survivor, Yad Vashem, Holocaust Remembrance Day Eve, 1997

Visitors to the new Holocaust History Museum will likely encounter ethical, educational, theological and philosophical dilemmas, as well as troubling issues that go beyond the mere

description of historical events: How did a cultured nation in 20<sup>th</sup> century central Europe become the perpetrator of mass murder? What makes the Holocaust a unique event? What happened to the concepts of “good” and “evil” after the Holocaust? How has the trauma of the Holocaust shaped world, Jewish and Israeli identity? How can we inculcate the memory of the Holocaust in future generations? The new Learning Center—presently under construction as part of the new Museum Complex at Yad Vashem and built through the generosity of Stella and Sam Skura (USA)—will help visitors confront such questions and concerns, by guiding them in examining the various aspects of these issues.

The Learning Center, otherwise known as

the “Center for Major Questions Arising from the Holocaust,” is no standard computerized information center; it was designed for visitors to embark on a journey of personal inquiry. Upon entering the Center, a shaft of light gradually projects questions, like drops of water, towards the middle of the floor, which then come together and circle the room like waves of water. This reflects the idea that one question is merely a drop in the ocean, but can generate waves upon waves of additional questions in its wake.

The Center will include between 10 and 20 basic questions that demand thorough and serious study. The central area in the middle of the room will enable groups to view and discuss some of these questions through multimedia presentations,



guided by trained educators from the International School for Holocaust Studies. The outer circle surrounding the central conference area will be fitted with computer terminals and earphones enabling individual or paired study. Here, visitors will see, hear and read opinions on the "major questions" expressed by Holocaust survivors, religious leaders and thinkers, writers, artists, historians and prominent researchers. The researchers include Yad Vashem's leading historians—Professor Israel Gutman, Professor Yehuda Bauer, Professor David Bankier and Professor Dan Michman—as well as Professor Christopher Browning, Professor Raul Hilberg, Professor Omer Bartov, Professor David Engel, Professor Eberhard Jaeckel, Professor Steven Aschheim, Professor George Ben-Shoshan, and others. This type of encounter will be the key to productive discussion and consideration. For those who wish to study the questions in greater depth, Yad Vashem's databases and learning tools will also be available at the Learning Center.

The Learning Center, established as a joint project by the Departments for Teacher Training, Instruction and Curricular Development of the International School for Holocaust Studies, was designed by the Mulli Ben Sasson Studio.

*The author works in the Curricular Development Division of the International School for Holocaust Studies, and is coordinating the project.*



## Multiyear Holocaust teacher training program to be launched

by Arie Zuckerman

**Y**ad Vashem is to open a Europe-wide teacher training program on the Holocaust, with an emphasis on the dangers of renewed antisemitism in Europe.

The program, set to run for 10 years, will train a leading core of educators and public opinion makers in some 22 European countries, who will then coordinate and influence Holocaust education in their respective countries. At an advanced training stage, program graduates will train additional teachers and assist in setting

up local education centers.

Yad Vashem is running the program on behalf of the International Commission on Holocaust Era Insurance Claims (ICHEIC), headed by former US Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger. Mr. Eagleburger and the ICHEIC members decided to establish the program in light of the great importance they attribute to education in Holocaust commemoration and combating antisemitism.

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

## Recent Highlights at the International School for Holocaust Studies

**A**t the beginning of the 2004-2005 academic year, 20 teacher training courses were opened throughout the country, on "The History of the Holocaust and How to Teach It." These courses included three seminars on "The Holocaust in Films" presented at the Cinematheques in Sderot, Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, and an Internet course on the fate of the Stanislavov community.

During October, Yad Vashem held a seminar for educators from Romania, a seminar for educators from Germany, and a study day for German volunteers from the *Ot Hapapara* organization. At the end of the month, the Witnesses in Uniform delegation left for Poland and Bucharest, concluding the project for 2004. Also leaving for Poland was the "Green Leaf" delegation—140 pupils from youth villages and residential facilities who had spent the previous six months participating in an extensive educational program. **From Crisis to Hope**—the program to teach some four thousand 11<sup>th</sup> grade pupils from the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Employment's educational facilities about the *Shoah* and its relevance today—began the same month, for the third consecutive year.

In November, groups of young adults began to attend seminars on the subject of "Jewish Identity and the Holocaust" as part of birthright israel. Seminars for teachers from Poland and Austria were also held in November. On 9 November, 350 young people attended a study day commemorating *Kristallnacht* organized in conjunction with the Commemorations and Public Relations Division, with activities focusing on German Jewry before and during the Holocaust. A delegation from the Israel Police participated in two days of seminars at Yad Vashem before leaving for Poland.

In December there was a seminar for Hungarian educators, and representatives from the International School for Holocaust Studies participated in seminars at Terezin in the Czech Republic. The Seminar for Jewish Educators from Abroad began at the end the month.

At the end of December, the School marked the Tenth of Tevet (general day of mourning) on the theme: "Rise Up and Shake off Thy Dust," marking "The Pain of Liberation and the Return to Life," this year's theme at Yad Vashem. The winter course for training guides also opened. Running until March, this course will include lectures and workshops, preparing guides for the opening of the new Holocaust History Museum.



**O**n the afternoon of 27 January 1945, the 60<sup>th</sup> Division of the Red Army entered the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp. The liberating soldiers stumbled upon some 7,000 prisoners—skeletons barely able to lift themselves out of their squalid bunks—ill, weak and trembling with fear that their German overlords would return to finish them off.

Among the prisoners were two hundred children, most of them Jewish twins, victims of SS physician Josef Mengele's "medical experiments." Some of the medical staff of the camp's "hospitals" remained with them, treating them in any way possible.

Sick and infirm prisoners were found throughout the Auschwitz complex: the main camp, Birkenau, Buna-Monowitz, and the 46 sub-camps located mainly in Silesia and Moravia. Unable to join the 56,000 inmates evacuated by the Nazis on a "death march" into the heart of Austria and Germany, they had simply been left to die.

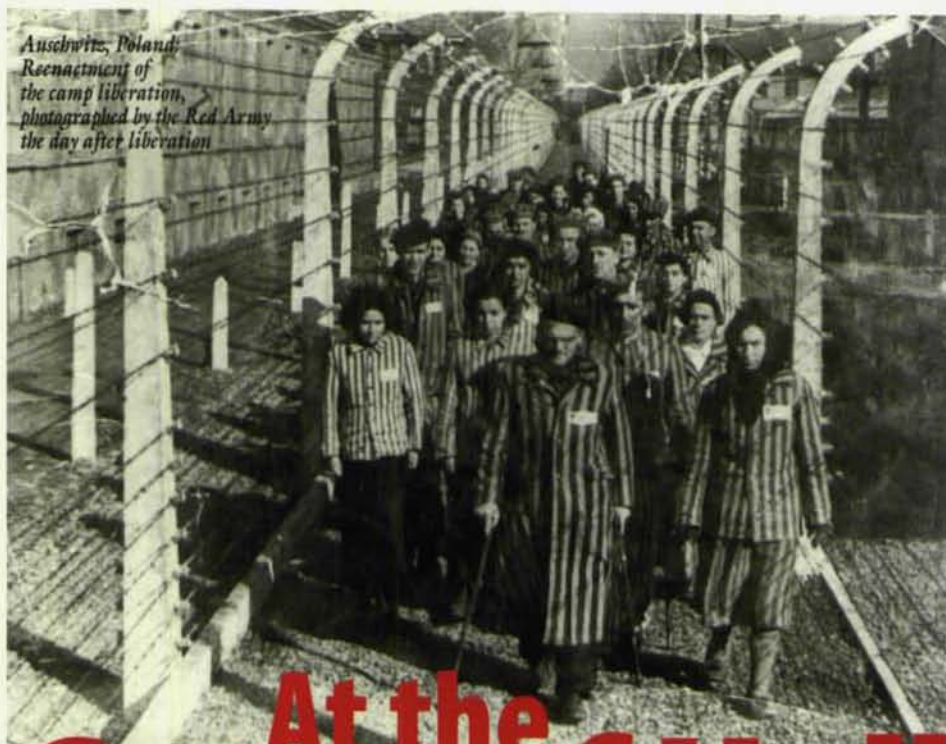
### Leave no traces

The evacuation of Auschwitz-Birkenau was carried out in accordance with SS head Heinrich Himmler's order that no prisoners, documents, items or German property fall into Allied hands.

## 60 Years Since the Evacuation and Liberation

The trauma of the hasty evacuation of Majdanek and its capture by the Red Army in June 1944 was still fresh and painful in the German memory. There the Germans failed to destroy all the evidence in time, and the Soviets thus obtained documents and other incriminating evidence of the gas chambers and crematoria. Worst of all, in German eyes, was that prisoners who remained in the camp were able to give first-person accounts of the atrocities perpetrated there.

Until 17 January 1945, some 67,000 prisoners—most of them Jewish—were living in Auschwitz-Birkenau, working as slave laborers in factories at Buna-Monowitz (IG Farben plants) and the industrial areas of Upper Silesia and Dabrowa. However, already from the latter half of 1944, the Germans began to implement a "scorched earth" policy at the camp, ensuring no traces of what happened there would be discovered. Many documents no longer in use—such as card files and prisoner transport lists—were burned, including lists of Jews who had been sent for immediate murder in the gas chambers. Only a few secret documents were preserved: these later enabled modern historians to reconstruct camp life in detail. In addition, thousands of articles of clothing, building materials and wood from disassembled barracks were transported into the Reich domain for re-use.



# At the Gates of Hell

### The Death March – "Hell on Earth"

The Red Army offensive that began in the latter half of January 1945 had thrown the Germans into a state of panic. In an effort to save their skins, they hastily organized the camp's evacuation. All those able to walk were hurried out of the camp and marched westward. In the freezing cold and snow, thousands of prisoners were forced to walk many kilometers each day until they reached the train stations to be transported to concentration camps within the Third Reich. Between 9,000-15,000 prisoners who were unable to continue were murdered en route, turning the evacuation into a true march of death.

The march was accompanied by acts of cruelty and murder on a scale reminiscent of the atrocities committed at the camp itself: rearguard SS officers opened fire on any prisoner who attempted to escape or sat down on the ground even for a moment. The snowy landscape soon turned red with the victims' blood. Local inhabitants who tried to offer the wretched marchers food and water were warned off by the German guards.

Chaya (Priwes) Rosenbaum, now living in Israel, was a prisoner on the Auschwitz Death March: "We ran in the snow like madmen, without knowing where we were going," she

recalled. "We kept on running until my mother, who was right beside me, reached the end of her strength and said, 'Help me sit.' I didn't let her, because I was afraid the Germans would shoot her... That night, having marched for two days and a night, they let us sleep in a granary. It was truly a death march, hell on earth."

### First aid

The Red Army soldiers who entered the camp on 27 January were horrified by the sight of the corpses piled up beside the barracks, and the half-dead skeletons languishing in their bunks. Immediately they gave the inmates any basic food and medical care they could. Unfortunately, many of the liberated prisoners died from the excess food their stomachs were too shrunken to manage.

In addition, Soviet doctors, nurses and army medics administered first aid to the liberated prisoners. In early February 1945, the Polish Red Cross established a hospital on the site of the liberated camp, which operated through September 1945 alongside Soviet hospitals. Three or four months after liberation, the prisoners who had recovered began to leave.

### Documenting German atrocities

In addition to the humanitarian and medical activities at the newly liberated camp, Soviet and



Polish cinematographers quickly began documenting the atrocities committed by the Germans. The Soviet team, headed by Michael Fyodorovitch Oshurkov, produced a film that was broadcast around the world; an abbreviated version is screened today in various languages (including Hebrew) at the Auschwitz Museum.

A few weeks after liberation, a Soviet government commission began investigating German crimes at Auschwitz. The commission surveyed the campgrounds and buildings, thoroughly studied the ruins of the extermination facilities and examined what remained of the victims' plundered belongings. Over two hundred prisoners testified before them, including two members of the *Sonderkommando* who miraculously survived: Shlomo Dragon and Henryk Tauber. Based on information supplied by Dragon, some of the secret lists hidden by his fellow *Sonderkommando*, Zalman Gradowsky, near Crematorium III were unearthed and submitted to the Soviet commission. These lists constituted one of the rarest and most important documents found at Auschwitz; they documented the mass killing of Jews in the camp's gas chambers, as well as the work of the *Sonderkommando* themselves. The Soviet commission also investigated the German medical atrocities committed at Auschwitz; many prisoners who had been victims of the "medical experiments" gave first-hand testimony.

The Central Commission for the Investigation of German Crimes in Poland and the District

## n of Auschwitz

Commission for the Investigation of German Crimes in Krakow also gathered material, used in 1947 by the Special Court in Poland during the trial of Auschwitz commandant Rudolf Hoess. Approximately 40 additional camp officers were tried with Hoess, who was sentenced to death and hanged next to the entrance to the main camp's crematorium.

It is now known that some 1.5 million people were murdered at Auschwitz. Most of them—over 1.1 million men, women and children—were Jewish.

*The author is an historian and educator in the International School for Holocaust Studies*

## “Auschwitz Exhibit” at the U.N.

by Yehudit Shendar

**O**n 24 January 2005, an exhibit on the Auschwitz-Birkenau extermination camp will open in the lobby of the United Nations Headquarters in New York, marking the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the liberation of the camp. The exhibit, entitled “Auschwitz: The Depth of the Abyss,” will be displayed for six weeks, and comprises two main sections: a selection of photos from the *Auschwitz Album*; and sketches by Zinovii Tolkatchev, drawn at the time of the liberation of the Majdanek and Auschwitz camps.

The *Auschwitz Album* is unique. Using more than two hundred photos, it documents the arrival and processing of an entire transport of Jews from Carpatho-Ruthenia (a region annexed in 1939 to Hungary from Czechoslovakia) at Auschwitz-Birkenau in May 1944. These rare photos provide both moving and painful documentation of the entire

process—arrival, *selektion*, confiscation of property and preparation for the murder—except for the gassing itself. Incredibly, the album eventually came into the possession of one of the few survivors from that very same transport, Lili Jacob. When Lili opened the album, to her astonishment she recognized members of her community who had been sent to Auschwitz-Birkenau, including her rabbi, many relatives—and herself. In August 1980, Lili Jacob donated the original album to Yad Vashem.

Private Zinovii Tolkatchev was born in 1903 in the town of Shchedrin in Belorussia. Before WWII, Tolkatchev was appointed professor at the Institute of Fine Arts in Kiev. In 1944, as the official artist for the Red Army, Tolkatchev was present at Majdanek shortly after the camp was liberated (July 1944). Soon afterwards he joined the troops that arrived at Auschwitz (January 1945). During this period, Tolkatchev produced the “Majdanek,” “Auschwitz” and “The Flowers of Auschwitz” series of drawings. Immediately after the war, Tolkatchev’s drawings were published as albums and exhibited extensively throughout Poland, winning wide public acclaim. The “Auschwitz” series was donated to Yad Vashem in February 2002, by his two children Anel Tolkatcheva and Ilya Tolkatchev (Kiev).

The *Auschwitz Album* and some of Tolkatchev’s drawings will form part of the display in the new Holocaust History Museum at Yad Vashem, due to open in March 2005. The exhibit at the U.N. was curated by the Museums Division of Yad Vashem, in cooperation with the Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and will be opened by U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan, Israel’s Foreign Minister Silvan Shalom, Nobel Laureate Professor Elie Wiesel and Chairman of the Yad Vashem Directorate Avner Shalev.

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



Zinovii Tolkatchev (1903-1977), *The Savior*, 1945, pencil on paper. Gift of Anel Tolkatcheva and Ilya Tolkatchev, Kiev. Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum

## International conference in Krakow to mark 60 years since the liberation of Auschwitz and to launch European Holocaust teacher training program

**O**n 27 January, the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz will be commemorated at an international conference at the Juliusz Słowacki Theatre in Krakow. The conference, entitled “Let My People Live,” will be held in cooperation with the Government of Poland, the European Jewish Congress, and Yad Vashem.

Participants in this multi-faceted event will include heads of state, international dignitaries, survivors, students and youth from around the world, as well as renowned actors and musicians.

Addressing the conference will be the Presidents of Poland, Russia, Germany, France, Ukraine, Latvia and Israel, Nobel Laureate Professor Elie Wiesel, Chief Rabbi of Israel Yona Metzger, President of the World Jewish Congress Edgar R. Bronfman, Chairman of the Board of Governors of the European Jewish Congress Moshe Kantor, Minister of Culture of the Republic of Poland Waldemar Dambrowski, and Chairman of the Yad Vashem Directorate Avner Shalev.

The conference will also mark the launch of an extensive project called “The European

Educational Program on Holocaust Lessons for Teachers.” This program, which will be developed and implemented by Yad Vashem in partnership with governments and institutions across Europe, will train Holocaust teachers throughout the continent. It was initiated by Yad Vashem, the European Jewish Congress, and the Polish Ministry of Culture.

The Conference will precede the official commemoration ceremony to be held on the same day at the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum.



**M**ore than 50 years since the founding of Yad Vashem and nearly 60 years since the end of WWII, where do we now stand in Holocaust research? How has research developed and where is it heading? On 21-24 November 2004, 33 world renowned scholars gathered at Yad Vashem to address these subjects at the International Institute for Holocaust Research's international conference on "Holocaust Research in Context," convened through the generous support of the Gertner Center for Holocaust Conferences. From Gerhard Weinberg's opening keynote lecture challenging historians to address the interrelationships between the historiography

of earlier periods of Jewish history. communist Baltic States and Russia (Itzhak Arad and Pavel Polian), has been greatly influenced by the collapse of communism, leading to a changing understanding of the Holocaust in that part of the world. Since the beginning of the 1990s, all these countries have seen a major shift in attitudes towards a more critical look at the past.

Holocaust research in Western Europe developed differently in each country, influenced by the individual country's social and political outlook. From the general indifference of French historians to the subject (Georges Bensoussan), to the more serious and specialized research that has developed in the Netherlands (Ido de

of earlier periods of Jewish history.

A major highlight of the conference was the session marking the publication of the Hebrew edition of Christopher Browning's new book, *The Origins of the Final Solution*, (part of Yad Vashem's comprehensive *History of the Holocaust* series). Browning articulately and persuasively assessed the development of the "Final Solution"—in the euphoria of victory in September-October 1941—and Hitler's role in the decision-making process alongside the decisive contribution of a broad array of lower echelons in the Nazi state to its implementation. The Nazis' racial war and racial imperialism in the East served as the context for the German

# The Many Faces of Holocaust Research



*Hilberg: "Beyond what I ever imagined"*



*Yablonka: Jewish survivor testimony central at Eichmann Trial*



*Cesarani: "Third Reich didn't share values of Oxford University"*



*Nidam-Orvietto: Challenge to popular myths about Italy*



*Browning: Development of the "Final Solution"*



*Wittmann: Jewish experiences marginalized at German war crimes trials*

of WWII and the Holocaust, to Raul Hilberg's sweeping and moving closing remarks, this conference proved to be a treasure trove of keen insights into the origins, development, and state of research on the Holocaust.

Much of early Holocaust research was conducted in the DP camps through recording survivor testimonies and early postwar documentation, explained Zev Mankowitz, Ada Schein, and Roni Stauber. Dalia Ofer and Robert Rozett examined survivor testimony as a source and its use in research over the years. Yet, survivor testimony played a mixed role in postwar trials and research and in public consciousness of the Holocaust. While the story of the Holocaust and the Jews was marginalized in both the Nuremberg trials and the later court cases in West Germany (Donald Bloxham and Rebecca Wittmann), Jewish survivor testimony was given center stage at the Eichmann trial in Jerusalem (Hanna Yablonka).

In the 1950s, it was still unclear what direction Israeli Holocaust research should take, or who should conduct it (Boaz Cohen). Holocaust research in Poland (Feliks Tych and Israel Gutman), in the USSR, and in the post-

Haan) and the challenge to popular myths about the Italians in the Holocaust posed by the Center for Documentation of Contemporary Jewry in Milan (Iael Nidam-Orvietto), much still needs to be developed in this area.

A highlight of these national and regional overviews was David Cesarani's astute analysis of Holocaust historiography in Great Britain. Cesarani demonstrated how British historians had for decades failed to pay close attention to Nazi ideology and Nazi policies regarding the Jews. One reason early British research did not confront Nazi ideology directly was its liberal-based distaste for Nazism. As Cesarani put it: "This was one of the problems of the Third Reich; it did not share the values of Oxford University."

In contrast, the "Jerusalem School" of Holocaust research, argued Dan Michman, is based on the Jerusalem School of Jewish History, focusing on economic, social, and political factors in the history of the Jews themselves, and the sense of the unity of Jewish history, showing relatively little interest in "perpetrator history." Interestingly, David Engel then illustrated just how little the Holocaust and Holocaust research have influenced the study

consensus on the murder of the Jews. And, if Hitler did not write orders, how can we know what he was planning? "If one wants to know what Hitler was thinking, one should look at what Himmler was doing [in this period]," Browning says.

Having opened with Weinberg's challenge, the conference closed with Raul Hilberg's fascinating review of the development of Holocaust research from the first days of examining Nazi documents used at the Nuremberg trials to the present, reflecting his vast yet intimate knowledge of this material. Dividing the last 60 years of Holocaust research and writing into three periods, Hilberg characterized the current period of "maturity:" "You know what you're dealing with; you know your context." Yet, despite all we know, our picture of the Holocaust will always be only partial. At the same time, Hilberg was pleased at the volume and extent of Holocaust research currently taking place: "It is beyond what I ever imagined," he said. This should be a source of encouragement for us all.

*The author is Editor-in-Chief of Yad Vashem Studies*



by Leah Goldstein

“Two days ago, two boys escaped so we were all lined up and every fifth person was shot. I was not the fifth person, but I know that I will not make it out of here alive. I leave you dear mother, dear father, and dear siblings and I cry...”

This extract from a letter, written by a 14-year-old Holocaust victim, appears in *Last Letters from the Shoah*, edited by Professor

[above]; you read a letter like this and you know it must be included.”

Surprisingly, many of the letters were sent by regular mail. In 1936-1937, letters sent from cities including Berlin and Vienna reached their destinations safely. Later letters sent from within the ghettos such as Westerbork and Lodz, although censored, also arrived by regular post. But as the Holocaust progressed,

the tone of the letters changed: the later the letters, the more desperate their contents. “If you read a letter from the camps in the earlier years,” explains Bacharach, “you don’t get the same horrifying impression of despair that you do when you read later letters from Birkenau, for example.”

What makes the letters unique is their personal style. “These letters were written as very personal texts, although their motives differed. Some wrote of their concern for their children’s welfare, others of their final wishes. The letters use straightforward, down-to-earth language of suffering people. This makes a very deep impression.”

Bacharach recalls one letter that really made him stop and think. “It was from a Jewish man who had been sentenced to death, to his two children: ‘Let me give you some advice for the future,’ he wrote. ‘If you sweat, don’t drink cold water.’ I put down my pencil and almost cried. One would have expected this man to give his children deep, philosophical advice. But, hours before his death, he wrote something that could have been said by any father. He wasn’t trying to be a hero, just a human being.”

Bacharach did not want to dictate to readers any lessons that could be drawn from the letters. Aside from a foreword and an introduction of the book’s main themes, the book’s content is confined to the letters. “I think the importance of these letters is that the Holocaust is presented through the victims’ eyes as they experienced it. They are authentic, untouched by historians, psychiatrists, or philosophers. Readers can draw their own moral conclusions.”

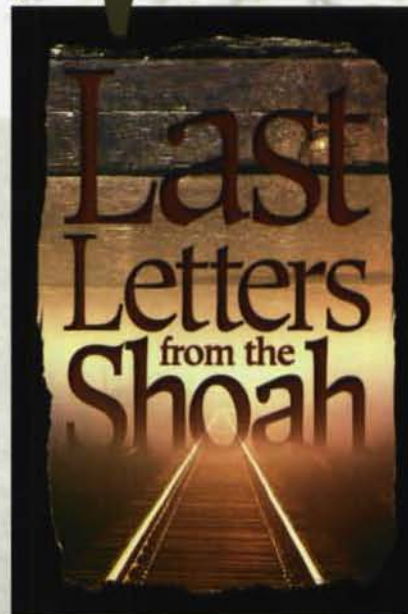
# In Their Words

**Walter Zwi Bacharach,  
*Last Letters from the Shoah***

Yad Vashem, 2004, 400 pp; 104NIS

Walter Zwi Bacharach, the first book to be dedicated solely to personal correspondences of Holocaust victims.

In compiling the book, Professor Bacharach—himself a Holocaust survivor—viewed some 1000 letters from the Yad Vashem Archives, selecting approximately 180 for publication. He arranged the letters and structured the publication according to various recurring ‘themes’ including concern for children, testimony, wills and last requests, and the Underground. On his choice of letters, Bacharach says, “I worked with feeling and intuition, not just rational tools. Take the letter of the boy



## Also New on the Shelf...



*The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations: Rescuers of Jews during the Holocaust – The Netherlands*  
Editor-in-Chief: Israel Gutman. Volume Editor: Jozeph Michman and Bert Jan Flum.

Yad Vashem, 2004, 944 pp. 180NIS

*The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations: Rescuers of Jews during the Holocaust – Poland*  
Editor-in-Chief: Israel Gutman. Volume Editor: Sara Bender and Shmuel Krakowski.

Yad Vashem, 2004, 1018 pp. 180NIS

During WWII, there were many courageous individuals—partisans, members of the underground and rebels—who fought against the German-Nazi occupation. But those heroes who acted in secret to save Jews—in the face of tremendous hostility and risking their own lives—did not enjoy the support of their neighbors and friends. Their deeds were acts of supreme heroism, no less so than those displayed on the battlefield.

By the end of 1999, Yad Vashem had recognized about 17,000 Righteous Among the Nations. A decision was then made to further disseminate their deeds by publishing a comprehensive encyclopedia containing all their stories. The first volume in this series—France—was published last year; 2004 saw the publication of the two-part volume on the Netherlands and, most recently, the two-part volume on Poland. The final two volumes, on Eastern Europe and Western Europe, are due to be published in 2005. All volumes are updated to the end of 1999, and supplementary volumes will be published thereafter.

*The publication of the volumes is supported by a grant from the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany.*



## Event in Berlin marking Yad Vashem's 50<sup>th</sup> year

On 2 December an event marking Yad Vashem's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary was held at the Deutsche Oper in Berlin. The audience included the Chancellor Gerhard Schröder, the Chairman of the Bundestag, government ministers, the Head Mayor of the State of Berlin, some one hundred Members of Parliament, Senators of the Parliament of Berlin, Israel's Ambassador to Germany Shimon Stein and other ambassadors and members of the diplomatic corps, Chairperson of the Freundeskreis Yad Vashem Professor Dr. Rita Süßmuth and members of the Freundeskreis Committee, Representative of the Zentralrat der Juden in Deutschland and presidents and members of the Board of Jewish Communities in Germany, presidents and representatives of Israeli organizations in Germany and other notable figures. The MC was actress Iris Berben.



Left to right: Actress Iris Berben, Director of the International Relations Division's German-speaking Desk Arik Rav-On, Chancellor Gerhard Schröder, Chairman of the Yad Vashem Directorate Avner Shalev, clarinetist Giora Feidman

In his address, Chancellor Schröder praised the efforts of Yad Vashem in preserving the memory of the Shoah: "Holocaust remembrance allows us to live in a world where every person may live in mutual respect, with humanity, and especially in peace." The event featured music performed by the German Symphony Orchestra conducted by Israel Yinon and guest artists, and was broadcast live on Radio Berlin.

## Generation to Generation

Sharing the Legacy

### International and Multi-Generational Gathering of Holocaust Survivors and Their Families

The first international conference of its kind in Israel of Holocaust survivors and their families will take place at Yad Vashem on 8-9 May 2005, under the patronage of the President of Israel, Mr. Moshe Katzav, and his wife Mrs. Gila Katzav.

The conference will comprise group discussions on a range of topics including: "The pain of liberation and the return to life;" "Jews who saved Jews;" "Children with assumed identities;" "Rescue by Righteous Among the Nations;" and "Passing the torch and instilling memory." There will also be meetings with members of different organizations—Landsmanschaft, ghettos, orphanages, etc. from Israel and overseas—as well as discussions with Second Generation artists, writers and filmmakers and guided tours of the new Holocaust History Museum. In addition, participants will observe a special wreath-laying ceremony at the Jewish Fighters' Memorial marking the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Allied victory over Nazi Germany, as well as the official state ceremony at the IDF Armored Corps Memorial Complex at Latrun.

For further information, please e-mail: [gathering@yadvashem.org.il](mailto:gathering@yadvashem.org.il) or visit [www.yadvashem.org](http://www.yadvashem.org)

For registration in Israel only, please contact: Unitours Israel Tel: 03-5209972, Fax: 03-5239099, E-mail: [meeting@unitours.co.il](mailto:meeting@unitours.co.il)

The author is Director of the Commemorations and Public Relations Division

by Rachel Barkai

by Elliot Nidam Orvieto

## News from the Institute

### Italian and Israeli Researchers' Workshop: "Fascism, War, and Memory"

In its sixth annual workshop with researchers from abroad held in October, the International Institute for Holocaust Research hosted a group of leading young Italian researchers led by Professor Enrico Giaccherini and Professor Paolo Pezzino from the University of Pisa.

Over the past 15 years, investigation of the history of Fascist Italy and postwar responses has significantly increased. This research has changed previously held stereotypes, and brought about a better understanding of the events that occurred in Italy before, during and after the war. For example, it is now understood that antisemitic legislation—previously viewed as forced on the Italians by Nazi Germany—had the full collaboration of the country's bureaucratic, social, political, and educational strata. In addition, modern research has rejected postwar generalizations, resulting in a better understanding of collaboration, denunciation, the Italian civil war, and collective postwar memory.

Israeli speakers at the workshop included Professor Sergio Della Pergola (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem) and Professor Yitzhak Minerbi (Emeritus, Ben Gurion University of the Negev) whose elucidating discussion periods contributed to its vibrant atmosphere.

The workshop was organized with the generous support of the Gutwirth Family Fund.

### Gertner Scholarship 2004

On 12 December, the Danek Gertner Yad Vashem Ph.D. Scholarship was granted to Kiril Feferman, a doctoral candidate of the Department of Contemporary Jewry, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem. The scholarship—established in 2002 by Holocaust survivor and philanthropist Danek Gertner—is awarded annually to a young outstanding doctoral candidate completing the final year of research. Mr. Feferman is researching the Holocaust in the Crimea and the Northern Caucasus.



Kiril Feferman

### Buchman Memorial Prize 2004

Le Prix Mémoire de la Shoah de la Fondation Jacob Buchman was established in 1988 in Paris, France by Jacob Buchman in memory of his wife and daughter, Esther and Chanelé Buchman, who were killed in the Holocaust. In Israel, the prize is conveyed through Yad Vashem.

The 2004 prize was awarded to former Chairman of the Yad Vashem Directorate Dr. Yitzhak Arad, for his book *The History of the Holocaust—The Soviet Union and the Annexed Areas*. This two-volume work is part of the critical series *History of the Holocaust* published by Yad Vashem. It covers the fate of Jews under Nazi occupation in the Soviet Union and the annexed areas (including the Baltic States, Bessarabia, and North Bukovina, West Belorussia, and West Ukraine). Dr. Arad received the prize from Ms. Rosine Bron (representing the Buchman family) on 28 December, in a ceremony held at Yad Vashem.

The author is Academic Assistant to the Head of the International Institute for Holocaust Research



# International Commission presents conclusions to Romanian President

by Yifat Bachrach-Ron

On 11 November, members of the International Commission on the Holocaust in Romania, chaired by Nobel Prize Laureate and Vice Chairman of the Yad Vashem Council Professor Elie Wiesel, presented its final report to Romanian President Ion Iliescu at a special ceremony in the Presidential Palace in Bucharest. The 400-page report details the history of the Holocaust in Romania as well as the Commission's recommendations on how the government can foster Holocaust awareness, remembrance, and education in Romania. (The full report may be viewed at: [www.yadvashem.org](http://www.yadvashem.org))

Yad Vashem has been involved in the Commission's work since its establishment by President Iliescu in November 2003. Organized with the assistance of Yad Vashem, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, the American Jewish Committee and B'nai B'rith International, the Commission comprised Holocaust scholars, social scientists, historians and public figures; leaders of international Jewish and Romany organizations; representatives of the Romanian-Jewish community, and representatives of the Romanian Presidency. Commission members came from Romania, Israel, the United States, France and Germany.

In presenting the report to President Iliescu, Commission Chairman Elie Wiesel expressed his hope that it would have a broad and lasting impact on Romanian society. Chairman of the Yad Vashem Directorate Avner Shalev welcomed the report.

"This report is an important step in Romania's confrontation with its past," Shalev said. "I hope that the Commission's conclusions will lead to more awareness among Romanian society of the Holocaust in Romania. It is important to stress, however, that the Commission's work represents only a starting point in an important and meaningful process whereby the Commission's recommendations will be implemented."

## Seminar for Romanian Educators

Yad Vashem's support of the Commission included allowing the Commission access to its research facilities and hosting it in September, when the report was finalized. In addition, Yad Vashem's International School for Holocaust Studies has developed the knowledge, expertise and pedagogical tools necessary to widen and professionalize Holocaust education in Romania. Following the visit of Romanian Minister of Education Alexandru Athanasiu in March, a seminar for Romanian educators was held at the International School this fall, headed by Chief Historical Inspector at the Romanian Ministry of Education, Doru Dumitrescu.

The participants remarked on the high level of academic presentations, organization and personal attention they received during the course. In particular, they valued the educational units and pedagogical aspects presented to them, through which they were able to learn many new teaching methods.



Participants in seminar for future leaders in Romanian Holocaust education. Center (standing): Mina Yanco, Deputy Director, Righteous Among the Nations Department

devise ways in which the subject of the Holocaust may be used during English lessons, as well as history ones."

"I appreciated your open mind and flexibility when dealing with our 'difficult questions,'" said participant Iulia Dumitrachescu, English inspector at the Ministry of Education. "With the information I gained, I hope to

# "No Prayer, No Breakfast"

by Dr. Mordecai Paldiel

In a moving ceremony at Yad Vashem on 23 November, Felicja Sz wajc er received a medal and certificate designating her late mother Aniela (Zawadzka) Sz wajc er as "Righteous Among the Nations."

Aniela's story began over 60 years ago, before the onset of WWII, when she worked as a domestic help in the Merin household, in the town of Bedzin, southwest Poland. After the Germans established a ghetto in the town, Aniela moved to an abandoned house where she awaited news of her former employers. On 3 August 1943, the Merin family was gathered at the train station along with the other Jews of the town for deportation to Auschwitz. At their parents' urgings, their two children—Saul, aged 10 and Dina, 8—fled the ramp and escaped to Aniela's home. There they joined their uncle Wolf Sz wajc er, who was already in hiding.

Aniela managed to keep her three Jewish charges secret—even from her own family—for almost a year and a half, until the Russians liberated the area in January 1945. To feed them, she worked as a cook in a factory producing uniforms for the German army. She also secretly went to the destroyed ghetto where, according to the Merins' instructions, she unearthed hidden jewelry and gold coins, which she used to bribe would-be informers. During the long period of hiding, Aniela acted as a surrogate mother



Left to right: Dina (Merin) Farber, Felicja Sz wajc er and Professor Saul Merin at the ceremony honoring Righteous Among the Nations Aniela (Zawadzka) Sz wajc er

to Saul and Dina, tending to their physical needs as well as lifting their spirits. "Words are not sufficient to describe the humanitarian and noble conduct of Aniela," recalled Dina Farber (née Merin) at the ceremony, "as well as the risks she took to save two Jewish children, as well as her future husband." Indeed, after the war Aniela and Wolf married and moved to Italy, together with their newborn daughter, Felicja. Saul and Dina, now orphans, made their way to Israel.

Professor Saul Merin, today a leading ophthalmologist, was also present at the ceremony. He remembered arriving at Aniela's house: "I was very angry with God for allowing such things to happen. So I threw away my *kippa* (skullcap), and would not touch my cousin's *siddur* (prayer book). Two days after my arrival, Aniela, an observant Polish Catholic, asked me if I had prayed. When I answered 'no,' she told me: 'No prayer, no breakfast.' She made me recite *Modeh Ani* (the prayer said on awakening in the morning) every day I was there."

The author is Director of the Righteous Among the Nations Department



## Events October – December 2004

**10 October Screening of "Nazi Hunter,"** a film by Tuvia Friedman, in the lecture Hall of Yad Vashem's International Institute for Holocaust Research, attended by Chairman of the Directorate Avner Shalev, Academic Advisor Professor Israel Gutman, Director General of the Center of Organizations of Holocaust Survivors in Israel Shai Csillag, Tuvia Friedman, researchers and educators.

**11 October Annual lecture of the John Najmann Chair for Holocaust Studies** by Leonid Rein (Haifa University), in the presence of Head of the International Institute for Holocaust Research and Incumbent of the Chair Professor David Bankier, Chief Historian of Yad Vashem Professor Dan Michman, and representatives of the Najmann family, Herbert and Martha Najmann.

**14 October Ceremony honoring Righteous Among the Nations** the late Alfons and Aurelia Gawlak from Poland, who saved Ola Schary (nee Rotzach). The certificate and medal were presented to their daughter Ewa-Maria Bielaczyc-Gawlak, in the presence of Schary's daughter Helen Schary Motro, and family.

**14 October Memorial ceremony and assembly for the Jews of Italy** and gathering marking the publication of *Shanim Shel Za'am Vetikva* (Years of Rage and Hope) 1938-1949 by Israel Da Benedetti (Yad Vashem, Moreshet and Yad Ya'ari publications); *Mishpachat Ravana* (The Ravana Family) 1943-1945 by Paulo Ravana (Association of Italian Immigrants Publications); and *Lachzor Lesham* (Returning There) by Chana Weiss and Ehud Zin (Zin Publications), in cooperation with the Association of Italian Immigrants and the Italian Museum, and with the participation of the Ambassador of Italy H.E. Mr. Giulio Terzi and hundreds of Italian immigrants.

**25 October Memorial ceremony for the Lithuanian, Latvian and Estonian Jews murdered in the Holocaust,** with the participation of the Chairman of the Association of Lithuanian Immigrants in Israel Joseph Melamed, Chairman of the Association in Jerusalem David Hait, and hundreds of Baltic immigrants.

**2 November General meeting and annual convention of Alumim Association—**children who lived under assumed identities in France during WWII—with the participation of the Chairman of the Association Dr. Israel Lichtenstein, and its members.

**23 November Ceremony honoring Righteous Among the Nations** the late Aniela Zawadzka who saved Saul Merin, his sister Dina Farber and their cousin Wolf Szwajcer (see p. 15), and the late Pelagia Jasinska who saved Hendel and Margolis Kanarek (now Margalit Zoltek). The certificates and medals of honor were presented to the children of the Righteous, Felicja Szwajcer and Andrzej Jasinski, in the presence of the survivors and their families.

## Group Visits to the New Museum

by Vivian Uria

The opening of the new Museum at Yad Vashem on 15-16 March is generating a great deal of interest in Israel and around the world. This significant change to the Yad Vashem site presents an opportunity to improve the content and organization of the millions of visits to the site each year. Recognizing the often unacceptable crowding due to lack of coordination or prior notice of group visits in the past, Yad Vashem has set up a new Central Reservations Office, which will coordinate all future group visits to the site.

From the opening of the new Museum to the public, all organized groups will be required to coordinate their visit in advance with the new Reservations Office on one of two tracks: educational or non-educational organizations. The groups may choose to be taken through the new Museum by one of Yad Vashem's trained tour guides for a fee, or by outside guides once they have undergone training at Yad Vashem. In addition, Yad Vashem will provide audio guides in a variety of languages, with priority given to Museum visitors.

The author is Director of the Visitors Center

## RECENT VISITS TO YAD VASHEM



During his visit to Yad Vashem on 21 November, President of Moldova Vladimir Voronin presented the Archives Division with 61 files from collaborators trials in Moldova, each containing information on the annihilation of Jews.



On 28 September French Foreign Minister Michel Barnier toured Yad Vashem accompanied by Executive Assistant to the Chairman of the Directorate Irena Steinfeldt.



Estonian Prime Minister Juhan Parts visited Yad Vashem on 30 November (pictured with Estonian Ambassador to Israel H.E. Mrs. Marina Kaljurand by the tree of Estonian Righteous Among the Nations Professor Uko and Eha Masing).



On 2 December, Spanish Foreign Minister Miguel Angel Moratinos toured Yad Vashem (pictured in the Historical Museum).



Israel's Minister of Tourism and Minister of Internal Security Gideon Ezra toured the new Holocaust History Museum on 28 November accompanied by Chairman of the Directorate Avner Shalev (pictured in the new Hall of Names).



# W Friends WORLDWIDE

## U.S.A.

The American Society for Yad Vashem held its 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Tribute Dinner on 7 November at the Sheraton New York Hotel and Towers, attended by over 1,000 guests. Consul General of Israel to New York Ambassador **Arye Mekel**, Chairman of the Yad Vashem Directorate **Avner Shalev** and Chairman of the American Society **Eli Zborowski** addressed the audience. Minister of Education, Culture and Sport **Limor Livnat**, MK (top, left, with Avner Shalev, center, and Eli Zborowski, right), was the guest speaker. The program was presided over by Dinner Chairmen **David Halpern** and **Mark Wilf**. This year's theme of honoring the survivors, their children and grandchildren was marked by the presentation of the Key to Yad Vashem to **Stella and Sam Skura** (center, right), their daughter and son-in-law **Cheryl and Moshe Lifshitz** (center, left) and granddaughters **Iris and Ilana** (bottom).



"Yad Vashem 2001" Campaign Chair and major donor to the new Holocaust History Museum **Joseph Wilf** (right, with **Shaya Ben Yehuda**) toured the new Museum Complex in November. In an emotional meeting with **Avner Shalev**, Wilf expressed his admiration of the complex as it nears completion.



**Dr. Robert Cherry** (right), son-in-law of Yad Vashem benefactors **Sol and Gloria Silberzweig z"l**, toured Yad Vashem and met with Head of the International Institute for Holocaust Research **Professor David Bankier** and with staff at the International School for Holocaust Studies.



**Yad Vashem** supporter and **American Society for Yad Vashem** Executive Committee member **Andy Groveman** (top, second from right) accompanied a Memphis Jewish Federation mission, headed by Executive Director **Jeffrey Feld** (top, third from right) to Yad

Vashem in October. The group was given an overview of activities and the development plan from Director of the International Relations Division **Shaya Ben Yehuda** (left).

**Mark Wilf** (right), National Chair of the 2005 UJA Federation Campaign of the UJC, **American Society for Yad Vashem** Executive Committee member and leading member of the Second Generation,



accompanied the 70-member UJC Prime Minister's Mission to Yad Vashem in October. After a tour of the new Museum, the group viewed presentations on archival documents, museum artifacts and Holocaust period art, the new Hall of Names and the Central Database of *Shoah* Victims' Names.

Vice Chairman of Lehman Brothers **Harvey Krueger** (right), his wife **Connie**, family members, and friend **Barbara Mandel** toured Yad Vashem in November. **Harvey Krueger** recently became a "builder" of the new Holocaust History Museum.



Treasurer of the American Society for Yad Vashem **Marvin Zborowski** and his wife **Celina** (center), their children **Mark and Judy Zborowski** (left) and **Ziggy and Galit Zborowski** (right), and their grandchildren toured Yad Vashem in September.



# W Friends WORLDW

**American Society for Yad Vashem Vice-Chairman Mark Palmer and his wife Myrna, National Vice-Chair (Illinois) Fred Weiss and his wife Gloria, and Executive Board member William Mandell and his wife Paula, visited the Founders Square of the Valley of the Communities.**



**U.S.A.**



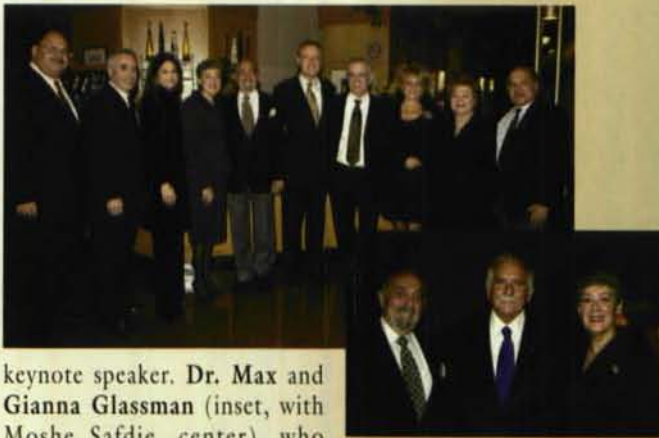
**Richard and Debbie Born and their son visited the "No Child's Play" exhibit during a tour of Yad Vashem in October.**

Yad Vashem mourns the loss of **Diana Zborowski ז"ל**, beloved wife of **American Society for Yad Vashem Chairman Eli Zborowski**. Born in Ukraine, Diana was hidden for 14 months during the *Shoah* under a sofa in the home of her Catholic nursemaid. Eli and Diana met in a displaced persons camp in Germany and married in 1948. In 1952 they emigrated to the United States, settling in Forest Hills, New York, where they established a family, built a successful business career, and became active in the local and extended Jewish community. The Zborowski's commitment to Holocaust remembrance and education led to their affiliation with Yad Vashem, beginning in the early 1960s. Over the years Eli toiled to build the American Society for Yad Vashem, with Diana's steadfast support and encouragement. Yad Vashem remembers Diana as a dear and devoted friend, and joins Eli, their children Lilly and Murry, and their seven grandchildren in mourning her passing.



## CANADA

The Canadian Society for Yad Vashem held a Gala Dinner on 14 November in Toronto marking the upcoming opening of Yad Vashem's new Holocaust History Museum. World-renowned Museum architect Moshe Safdie was the



keynote speaker. **Dr. Max and Gianna Glassman** (inset, with Moshe Safdie, center), who endowed "The World Rebuilt" balcony at the new Museum overlooking a spectacular view of Jerusalem, received the Yad Vashem Benefactors' Award. The **Koschitzky** family was presented with the 2004 Yad Vashem "*Zachor*" Award for their contribution of *Through Our Eyes*—a new compilation of writings, art and photographs by children from the Holocaust period. **The Hon. Art Eggleton, P.C.** (main photograph, center) was Dinner Chair and **Will Hechter** (second from left, with his wife **Linda**) chaired the Dinner's fundraising campaign. Also in attendance were: Director of the International Relations Division **Shaya Ben Yehuda** (left), Director of the Division's English Desk **Solly Kaplinski** (right), **Helen Rosenbaum** (second from right), Canadian Society Executive Director **Hetty Shapiro** (third from right) and Canadian Society Chairman **Hank Rosenbaum** (fourth from right).

## UNITED KINGDOM



Marking Yad Vashem's 50<sup>th</sup> year, over seventy 35-55 year-old professionals were invited to a Yad Vashem UK Foundation reception aimed at raising awareness of Yad Vashem's work in the UK. Executive Trustee of the Foundation **Jeffrey Pinnick** (pictured) and Director of the

English Desk, International Relations Division, **Solly Kaplinski** addressed the audience.

**Michael Gee** (left), representing the Archie Sherman Charitable Trust, toured Yad Vashem with Chairman of the Yad Vashem Directorate **Avner Shalev** (right), including the new Holocaust History Museum. The Archie Sherman Charitable Trust has endowed "The Last Jews" chapter in the new Holocaust History Museum.



Yad Vashem supporter **Lily Cantor** (left) of Sheffield visited Yad Vashem in early October.



# IDE

## FRANCE

### French Society Seeks Information on Righteous

**T**he French Society for Yad Vashem is currently collecting evidence concerning the following Righteous Among the Nations:

Professor Stanislas de Seze, who saved Jews at the Hospital of the Cité Universitaire, Paris and in the Grignon clinic, Orly; Father Giovanni Lucrini from Alessandria, Italy, who saved a Polish Jewish woman and her son, and Henri Askenazi; The Jolivet family, from Primelle, who assisted the family of Albert Bloch alias Blocher (Paris)—Henri Bloch, Roger Ulmann, Paul Meyer and his daughters Josette and Jacqueline—and Claire Rozanes, a lawyer in Paris; Paul Sclarovitz from Nancy, his wife and two daughters Paulette and Jacqueline, who were hidden in Mayet de Montagne near Vichy (Allier) by Mr. and Mrs. Etaix, and then by the Rochen family at St. Germain Laval and by the Roux family at St. André d'Apchon; Mr. and Mrs. Gotchouck (alias Garnier) and their two daughters Ginette and Monique from Mulhouse who were hidden by Mr. and Mrs. Lutrand at Livron (Drome), then by Mr. and Mrs. Breyto, Crest; Sister Leocadie who hid 15 young Jewish girls at the Catholic boarding school "Ste. Madeleine" in Vezelay; and Mr. and Mrs. Boucher in Gonon la Voulte sur Rhone, who hid Klara Adler and her son Norbert.

If you have information about any of these people, please contact: Mr. Louis Grobart, French Society for Yad Vashem, 64 Avenue Marceau, 75008 Paris, France. E-mail: yadvashem.France@libertysurf.fr

## MEXICO

Members of Club Deportivo Israelita de Mexico, including Chairman **Sammy Lifshitz** and board member **Bernardo Shapiro**, previewed the new Holocaust History Museum.

On 18 November, the "No Child's Play" exhibit opened in Mexico sponsored by **Israel Feldman** and **Jaime Berenstein**. Leaders and members of the Mexico Jewish community attended the opening ceremony as did President of the National Commission on Human Rights **Dr. Jose Luis Soberanes**



**Fernandez**, who composed a declaration of identification with the Jewish people for the event. Israel's Ambassador to Mexico **David Dannon** and Major Gen. (res.) **Itzhak Eitan** were also present. Director of the Iberoamerican Desk **Perla Hazan** (right) presented a plaque to **Bronia Sigal** (left) in appreciation for organizing the exhibit.

## GERMANY

Two events were recently held in Hamburg marking Yad Vashem's 50<sup>th</sup> year: the first was a benefit concert at the Hamburg Music Hall, organized by Keren Kayemet L'Yisrael (KKL) together with Yad Vashem. The concert was sponsored and conducted by **Professor Wolfgang Engels**, who initiated the event. Some 600 people attended including Israel's Ambassador to Germany **Shimon Stein**, Chairperson of the Freundeskreis Yad Vashem in Germany **Prof. Rita Süßmuth**, President of KKL, Germany, **Benny Bloch**, Director of Yad Vashem's International Relations Division **Shaya Ben Yehuda** and other distinguished guests.

The Hamburg Municipality and Senate, together with Yad Vashem, hosted an event at the city hall attended by 460 guests and dignitaries. Former Israeli



**Chief Rabbi Israel Meir Lau** (left) was the guest speaker. **Mayor Ole von Beust** (center), President of the Hamburg Senate **Berndt Roeder** and First Vice-Chair of the

**Freundeskreis Albrecht Fuerst zu Castell-Castell** (right) also addressed the guests.

## UKRAINE

In October, the first **Yad Vashem Society in Ukraine** was established in Dnepropetrovsk by President of the local Jewish community **Gennady Bogolubov** (pictured right, with Special Advisor to the Chairman of the Directorate **Arie Zuckerman**, laying a wreath in the Hall of Remembrance) and his family, and Dnepropetrovsk Chief **Rabbi Shmuel Kaminezki**. The society recently contributed toward the support of Yad Vashem activities and is planning a dinner in April 2005. The founding of the society signals Yad Vashem's intention to bolster its activities and strengthen its ties with Jewish communities in Eastern Europe.



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

### To make tax deductible donations:

**USA:** American Society for Yad Vashem  
500 Fifth Avenue, 42<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
New York, NY 10110

**Canada:** Canadian Society for Yad Vashem  
970 Lawrence Avenue West, Suite 211  
Toronto, ONT M6A 3B6

**UK:** Yad Vashem UK Foundation  
6 Bloomsbury Square  
London, WC1A 2LP

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

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



