

# Yad Vashem Jerusalem

Volume 82, February 2017

## Who Was Karoline Cohn?

Searching for  
the Identity of  
the Owner of a  
Pendant Found  
in Sobibór

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**International Holocaust Remembrance Day 2017**

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**First International Conference for Jewish Educators**

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■ **On the cover:** The pendant found at Sobibór with the Hebrew words “Mazal Tov” and the date 3 July 1929. Photo: Yoram Haimi, Israel Antiquities Authority

# Who Was

■ For over a decade, Yad Vashem has coordinated excavations at the site of the former Nazi extermination camp, Sobibór (Poland). The excavations are conducted by Wojciech Mazurek (Poland), Israel Antiquities Authority researcher and archeologist Yoram Haimi, and archeologist Ivar Schute (Holland). Among the discoveries made over the years are the foundations of the gas chambers, the original train platform, and a large amount of personal artifacts belonging to the victims, including watches, jewelry and children's identification bracelets.

In late 2016, the remains of the hut where victims undressed and were shaved before being



■ The online Deportations Database helped researchers identify the possible owner of the pendant

sent to the gas chambers was uncovered. The ruins unearthed by the archeologists are located on the “Pathway to Heaven,” the trail cynically named by the Germans used to force arriving Jews to the gas chambers. The personal items found in the foundations of the building probably fell through the floorboards and remained buried in the ground until they were discovered a few months ago.

The items found in the area include a Star of David necklace, a woman's watch and a metal charm covered in glass with an etching of the image of Moses holding the Ten Commandments; engraved on the reverse side of the charm is the central Jewish prayer “Shema.” Also found was a pendant bearing the date 3.7.1929, the words “Frankfurt AM” and “Mazal Tov” (written in Hebrew) on one side, and on the other side the Hebrew letter “He” (representing God's name) as well three Stars of David.

With the help of Yad Vashem, Yoram Haimi was able to speculate to whom the pendant belonged. Through concerted and complicated

# Karoline Cohn?

## Searching for the Identity of the Owner of a Pendant Found in Sobibór



■ A woman's watch and ring found in the ground at the location of the remains of the hut where victims undressed before their murder. Photo: Yoram Haimi, Israel Antiquities Authority



■ A metal charm covered with glass with the image of Moses holding the Ten Commandments painted on it. Engraved on the reverse side is the central Jewish prayer "Shema." Photo: Yoram Haimi, Israel Antiquities Authority

The personal items found in the foundations of the building probably fell through the floorboards and remained buried in the ground until they were discovered a few months ago

work, Yad Vashem researchers identified its possible owner as Karoline Cohn, a young girl born in Frankfurt on 3 July 1929. Haimi also checked the population registry in Frankfurt and discovered just one Jewish girl born that day – Karoline Cohn. Dr. Joel Zisenwine, Head of the "Transports to Extinction" Deportations Database, a project of Yad Vashem's International Institute for Holocaust Research, found Karoline's name on a list of Jews deported from Frankfurt to Minsk on 11 November 1941. While it is not known if she survived the harsh conditions in the Minsk ghetto, her pendant reached Sobibór sometime between November 1941 and September 1943, when the ghetto was liquidated and the 2,000 Jewish prisoners interned there were deported to the death camp. There, along the path to the gas chambers of Sobibór, the pendant belonging to Karoline Cohn was taken, dropped and remained buried in the ground for over 70 years.

Additional research revealed a very similar pendant belonging to another young girl murdered in the Holocaust who was born in Frankfurt and wrote a diary during her time spent in hiding in Holland – Anne Frank. After the discovery of

the pendant in Sobibór was widely publicized, Yad Vashem received a number of messages from members of the public who own similar pendants once belonging to family members who were born in Frankfurt.



■ The reverse side of the pendant bears the words writing "Mazal Tov," the Hebrew letter "He" and three Stars of David. Photo: Yoram Haimi, Israel Antiquities Authority

In addition, contact was made with relatives of Karoline Cohn living in Israel and abroad.

"These recent findings from the excavations at Sobibór constitute an important contribution to the documentation and commemoration of the Holocaust," said Prof. Havi Dreifuss, Head of the Center for the Research on the Holocaust in Poland at Yad Vashem's International Research Institute and Tel Aviv University. "They also help us to understand better what happened at Sobibór, both in terms of the camp's function and also from the point of view of the victims."

According to Yoram Haimi, "The significance of the research and findings at Sobibór only grows with every passing season of excavations. Every time we dig, we reveal another part of Sobibór, find more personal items and expand our knowledge about the camp. Despite attempts by the Nazis and their collaborators to erase all traces of their crimes, as well as the effects of forestation and time, we are gradually enhancing our understanding of the site's history, which was previously known to us only through survivor testimonies. This pendant demonstrates once again the importance of archaeological research of former Nazi death camp sites. The moving story of Karoline Cohn is symbolic of the shared fate of the Jews murdered in the camp."

*The archeological excavations at Sobibór are funded by the Steering Committee for the International Project to Establish a New Museum-Memorial Site in the Area of the Former German Nazi Extermination Camp in Sobibór, in coordination with Yad Vashem's International Institute for Holocaust Research and supported by Tel Aviv University.*

27 January

# International Holocaust Remembrance Day Worldwide



In honor of International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust, popularly known as International Holocaust Remembrance Day, Yad Vashem was involved in a large number of events and commemorative activities in Israel, throughout the world, online and via social media.

■ Yad Vashem Chairman Avner Shalev participated in a special Israeli Government Cabinet Meeting on 22 January dedicated to discussing Holocaust commemoration and the status of global antisemitism in the presence of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and other ministers. Shalev highlighted the work and accomplishments of Yad Vashem in the various international and local forums and committees for Holocaust remembrance and commemoration. On 24 January, the Knesset marked the day in its general assembly.

■ On 26 January, Yad Vashem held its annual symposium for members of the international diplomatic corps. Ambassadors

"We are fulfilling our obligation never to forget, and to keep in mind that every victim had a story, a family, a childhood, a future cut short."

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu

and representatives from some 50 countries, including the US, Canada, the UK, France, the Netherlands, Italy, Spain, Poland, Germany, Hungary, Russia, Ukraine and Lithuania attended this event. Following a keynote speech by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in the Yad Vashem Synagogue, the Director of Yad Vashem's International Institute for Holocaust Research Dr. Iael Nidam Orvieto addressed the audience. In her lecture, Dr. Nidam Orvieto told the story of Ruth and Meir Kalka, a young Jewish couple who

fled the Czestochowa ghetto and wandered for some two years from refuge to refuge, until they were finally liberated. During their travels, Ruth wrote a diary on a small metal-bound notebook. Dr. Nidam Orvieto displayed the original diary, which was donated to Yad Vashem by Ruth and Meir's children, to the participants. In addition, the diplomats toured the exhibition "Stars Without a Heaven," which tells the story of the Holocaust from the point of view of children, and heard a presentation by Yad Vashem Archives Director and Fred Hillman Chair for Holocaust Documentation Dr. Haim Gertner.

■ On 27 January, the annual ceremony commemorating the deportation of Italian Jews during the Shoah took place at Yad Vashem in the presence of the Italian Ambassador to Israel, in coordination with the Italian Embassy.

■ The "Generation to Generation-Bearers of the Holocaust and Heroism Legacy" organization held a special event under the

"It is a testament to the Jewish people that we remember all of the victims of the Holocaust, whether they are related to us or not."

Joe Lara, participant in Yad Vashem's Facebook Event: IRemember Wall



banner "Bystanders: A Current Perspective," in cooperation with Yad Vashem. Speaking at the event were Holocaust survivor Michael Gilad, Righteous Among the Nations Department Director Irena Steinfeldt, philosopher Dr. Shimon Azulay and educator Aryeh Barnea.

■ **No Home Movie** was screened at six Cinemateques across Israel. Directed by the late Chantal Akerman, the film won the 2016 Avner Shalev Yad Vashem Chairman's Award for Artistic Achievement in Holocaust-Related Film. Visual Center Director Liat Benhabib gave a short lecture at the screening on 25 January at the Jerusalem Cinemateque.

■ Around the world, the day was observed by academic lectures, educational activities and official memorial events led by Yad Vashem staff and supporters. Yad Vashem Council Chairman Rabbi Israel Meir Lau spoke at a **remembrance event sponsored by the European Union in Belgium**; Yad Vashem Director General Dorit Novak took part in **UNESCO's Annual Day**

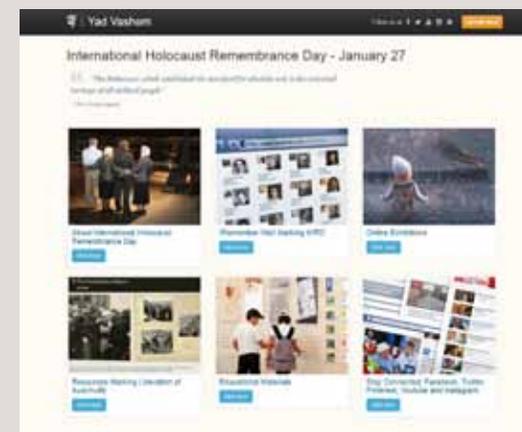
**of Commemoration in Paris**; Yad Vashem Historian Prof. Dina Porat participated in a **European Jewish Congress event marking the day at the European Parliament in Brussels**; Academic Advisor Prof. Yehuda Bauer lectured at the **UK Foreign Office and the JW3 Jewish Community Center in London**; and Archives Director Dr. Haim Gertner represented Yad Vashem at a **special meeting in Brussels sponsored by EHRI**, the European Holocaust Research Infrastructure.

■ A number of Yad Vashem **"ready2print" and traveling exhibitions** went on display in many countries worldwide, including the US, Canada, Germany, the Netherlands, Brazil, Peru and New Zealand. Versions of "I Am My Brother's Keeper," the exhibition honoring the Righteous Among the Nations, was specially tailored for Australian and German audiences, and an Italian version of "Shoah: How Was It Humanly Possible?" was supported by the Italian branch of the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem (ICEJ).

## Remembering Online

■ As in previous years, Yad Vashem provided a range of ways for people around the world to learn more about and commemorate International Holocaust Remembrance Day.

The new online exhibition "We Shall Meet Again" (see pp. 12-13) was uploaded to the Yad Vashem website, as well as Spanish and German versions of the online exhibition "Don't Forget Me," featuring children's personal albums from the Holocaust.



Yad Vashem also launched its **annual Facebook event: The IRemember Wall**. By joining the wall, the user's Facebook profile was randomly linked to the name of a Holocaust victim from Yad Vashem's Central Database of Shoah Victims' Names and then posted to the wall together with the photo and name of the Holocaust victim. Tens of thousands of people from around the world have participated in this unique commemorative project since it was launched six years ago, with increasing numbers joining each year. Many of the people who joined the event wrote poignant posts on their pages. "It is a testament to the Jewish people that we remember all of the victims of the Holocaust, whether they were related to us or not," wrote Joe Lara from Texas. "We must remind ourselves that many entire families were murdered and that they have no family members left to mourn or remember them. May all of their memories be a blessing." Additionally, thousands of people viewed a unique and moving series featuring the personal stories and pictures of Auschwitz survivors via **Instagram**.

A **mini-site containing relevant commemorative and pedagogical resources**, including new films released in 2016 on Yad Vashem's Holocaust Education Video Toolbox (see p. 9), were all readily available to help thousands of people around the world commemorate the day in a meaningful way.

# Education ■ “The Shoah and

Leah Goldstein



■ Conference organizer Ephraim Kaye, Director of the International Seminars and Jewish World Department at the International School for Holocaust Studies, launched the unprecedented event



■ Yad Vashem Academic Advisor Prof. Yehuda Bauer engaging with the audience of top-level educators

■ **“It’s important to convey that when we teach the Holocaust, our students should not acquire a sense of shame, a loss of self-esteem. There needs to be an emphasis on the miraculous behavior of Jews during the Shoah; there needs to be a way of conveying the light amidst the darkness, to teach about the Jewish people who did remarkable things. As Jewish educators, we need to advance Jewish identity and situate Holocaust education in connection to the larger Jewish experience.”**

So stated Prof. Steven Katz, Slater Professor of Jewish and Holocaust Studies at Boston University, at the first International Conference for Jewish Educators held in December 2016 at Yad Vashem. Over 200 Jewish day school principals, headmasters and senior Jewish Studies educators representing 34 countries and six continents around the world gathered at Yad Vashem’s International School for Holocaust Studies for the conference, entitled “The Shoah and Jewish Identity: Challenges in Jewish Education.” The conference – the largest and most prestigious gathering of worldwide leaders in Jewish education – presented Holocaust education as a compelling, engaging and inspirational topic, which remains relevant to Jewish students in Israel and the Diaspora.

The conference had many generous sponsors, including Genesis Philanthropy Group (GPG), longtime partners of Yad Vashem in the area

of Holocaust education and research among the Russian-speaking public. In advance of the conference, GPG President and CEO Ilia Salita said: “This conference continues the well-established tradition of academic and practical exchanges between scholars and educators from all over the world, which is enormously important for the future generations of students of the Holocaust.”

**The conference presented Holocaust education as a compelling, engaging and inspirational topic, which remains relevant to Jewish students in Israel and the Diaspora**

The three full days of the conference were dedicated to reinforcing the role of Holocaust education in modern-day Jewish identity. On the first day, experts investigated Jewish identity during the Shoah through testimonies, artifacts and letters in Yad Vashem’s collections that were left behind by Jewish victims and survivors. In one session, Dr. Robert Rozett, Director of the

Yad Vashem Libraries, presented the recently published Yad Vashem anthology *After So Much Pain and Anguish: First Letters after Liberation*, which he co-edited with International Institute for Holocaust Research Director Dr. Iael Nidam Orvieto. In his talk, he retold the moving story of the American Jewish soldier Sammy Popush, who was among the liberators of Dachau. In a letter to his family back in the US, Popush described the survivors’ astonishment on discovering that he was Jewish, and that even more than their hunger for food, they were desperate to draw strength from his Jewish identity. Participants were also inspired by meetings with Holocaust survivors, with many expressing their apprehension at endeavoring to connect the next generations to Shoah remembrance after the survivor generation has passed.

The second day focused on teaching the Holocaust in formal and informal settings. Dr. Eyal Kaminka, Lily Safra Chair of Holocaust Education and Director of the International School for Holocaust Studies, gave the opening address in which he stated, “Our future is all about the choices we make here and now.” Yad Vashem Academic Advisor Prof. Yehuda Bauer spoke about the effects of Jewish identity on communities and individuals during and after the Shoah: “It’s not what you believe in, it’s how you act,” he declared. “In the end, words become tradition, and tradition becomes identity.”

# Jewish Identity”

## First International Conference for Jewish Educators



■ Yad Vashem Chief Historian Prof. Dina Porat led one of the expert workshops



■ Yad Vashem Director General Dorit Novak addressing the participants

Participants were then presented with pedagogical workshops for primary, middle and high school, with hands-on demonstrations of many of the age-appropriate and innovative materials created at Yad Vashem, answering the expressed need of many participants for new materials, especially those suitable for grade-school students. “Learning about the Holocaust cannot be just about the mind-boggling numbers,” commented Sora Bulka, Dean of The New Seminary, New York. “It must become accessible through hearing about one

woman, one man, one child and their response to their terrible circumstances. When that aspect comes to the fore, we can watch the students engage more and connect.”

A number of simultaneous workshops and panel discussions were also held, showcasing multidisciplinary approaches to Holocaust education, such as through testimonies, art, films and technology. Michael Voskoboynik of the Hasten Hebrew Academy of Indianapolis presented the state-of-the-art tools, such as “augmented reality,” which he uses to engage

**"Our future is all about the choices we make here and now."**

**Dr. Eyal Kaminka**

his students in the topic of the Holocaust: “Using technology helps today’s generation understand the themes of the Shoah, develops their motivation and personalizes their learning experience.”

The workshops were followed by informal roundtable discussions, providing the participants with opportunities to share with one another as well as with Yad Vashem staff the challenges they face in order to further develop new and more effective ways to integrate Shoah education into Jewish day school curricula. “Because it was an international event, I found it beneficial to hear the viewpoints and issues of other heads of schools,” said Angela Capurso, Principal of the Lubavitch Educational Center in Miami Beach, Florida. “These issues are, indeed, universal.”

The final day of this extraordinary conference was packed with relevant information, hands-on tools and lively discussions relating to the place of the Holocaust in Jewish identity today.

## Rekindling the Lights of Hanukah

■ As the conference took place during the Jewish festival of Hanukah, the traditional lighting of the Hanukah candles was conducted each evening, using *hanukiot* (menorahs) that survived the Holocaust. Honored guests lighting the candles included Chairman of the Yad Vashem Council and Holocaust survivor Rabbi Israel Meir Lau (pictured) and Jewish Agency Chairman Natan Sharansky, who were accompanied by family members of the original owners of the *hanukiot*. “The word Hanukah has the same root as the Hebrew word *hinuch* - education,” explained Rabbi Lau. “That is why it is befitting for you all to gather here in Yad Vashem over the festival of Hanukah for a conference on

Jewish identity during the Shoah. Three thousand four hundred years of Jewish continuity is the unbroken chain of Jewish immortality and you, the Jewish educators, hold the key for the future destiny of the Jewish people.”



"We need to be careful how we employ Holocaust vocabulary, especially in political speech."

Evan Gottesman

Participants gathered in the morning to watch a stimulating address recorded especially for the conference by world-renowned Jewish leader, philosopher and educator Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks. Rabbi Sacks urged the gathered assembly to pass on the Jewish ideas of hope and building a better future – so eloquently embodied by Holocaust survivors – through the fight against injustice, through not being defined by antisemitism, and through celebrating the differences upon which humanity itself depends. This spoke to many participants, including Romanian educator Laura Vlaicu: "We must use Holocaust studies to develop and improve awareness of antisemitism as well as the lack of tolerance in both the political and civic environment today."



■ The Asper Foundation's Shai Abramson discussed the challenges of "keeping Holocaust history relevant and engaging"

Former Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, The Hon. Irwin Cotler, gave a talk on combating antisemitism and the BDS movement. "We cannot allow antisemitism to define our identity, but we cannot ignore the history of antisemitism," he said. "We have a responsibility to unmask the bearers of false witness, and expose the criminality of the deniers as we protect the dignity of their victims." A panel session, featuring top executives of Jewish institutions in the US, France, Argentina, Russia and Israel, tackled the topic of how the Holocaust shapes contemporary Jewish identity.

The afternoon offered participants the opportunity to hear one of five panels on

contemporary issues: educational trips to Poland; coping with the "new antisemitism" in the classroom; teaching about Israel and Zionism to strengthen Jewish identity; reinforcing informal Jewish education through Shoah programming; and the challenges of Holocaust denial and anti-Israel activities on college campuses. "We are not dealing with Holocaust denial, but Holocaust minimization," said Evan Gottesman, from Rutgers University. "People throw around flagrant comparisons to the Holocaust, which serves to minimize it. We need to be careful how we employ Holocaust vocabulary, especially in political speech, and how we use that imagery." However, Yosef Tarshish, President of the World Union of Jewish Students (WUJS) UK/Israel, added, "Jewish students don't let BDS define their experiences on campus."

In his address to the audience on the Jewish people, Israel and the memory of the Shoah, Chairman of the Jewish Agency for Israel Natan Sharansky declared: "The fact is that there is no better way to rebuild your Jewish identity or to rediscover your Jewish roots other than through Israel and your connection to Zionism. A world without Israel is a world without optimism, without hope and without Jewish identity."

The conference concluded with the traditional Closing Session In Memory of Izzy and Babs Asper, with Shai Abramson, Consultant at The Asper Foundation-Israel, a major supporter of Yad Vashem and its educational enterprise, giving the formal address. "It is incumbent upon us all to continue to teach the legacy of the Shoah in a way that directly addresses our future generations," she said. "The Asper Foundation wholly identifies with this legacy, and we stand with you as we face – together – the challenges of Holocaust education, against Holocaust denial, against antisemitism and keeping Holocaust history relevant and engaging."

Participants left buoyed by the newfound friendships with fellow top-level educators, as well as a wealth of practical ideas to use in their schools. "This was a great opportunity to come and experience meaningful and top quality *hinuch* from a world-class institution," said Jeremy Stowe-Lindner, Principal of Bialik College, Melbourne, Australia. Tamara Donnenfeld, Director of Lifelong Learning at Temple Beth Am, Florida, agreed: "The subjects were relevant to our schools, students and families and we were able to learn from each other... I am very grateful to Yad Vashem for allowing educators to come together to wrestle with the Jewish challenges we face worldwide."

*The International Conference for Jewish Educators was generously supported by The Asper Foundation, the Adelson Family Foundation, the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany, Genesis Philanthropy Group and the Israel Ministry of Diaspora Affairs.*

## Seminars for Muslim Educators

James Joseph McIntosh

■ In recent months, the International School's European Department organized three seminars for educators from Albania, Morocco and Kosovo (pictured). These projects were particularly noteworthy in view of the fact that all three countries have Muslim-majority populations, and all the more so as Israel has no formal diplomatic relations with either Morocco or Kosovo.



Held in partnership with the Albanian Ministry of Education and Sport, the first-ever seminar for Albanian teachers at Yad Vashem was the result of a visit by European Department Director Richelle Budd Caplan to Albania and the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding in the presence of Albanian Prime Minister Edi Rama, in which the Ministry pledged to accredit the seminars held in Jerusalem. Seminar participants voiced their appreciation of the educational materials they received, as well as the opportunity to broaden their historical knowledge.

The group from Morocco included both educators and opinion leaders, and drew considerable coverage in the Arabic and French media. The participants remarked that the seminar's daily schedule was very full, but few would have cut any activities. "Each one of us learned something new. Now it's our turn to educate those who didn't attend this seminar," said one of the participants. "All of us, on our own levels, will work hard to make an impact," said another.

Yad Vashem's cooperation with Kosovo's Ministry of Education, Science and Technology dates back to 2011, and a Yad Vashem expert first visited the country and worked with educators in the capital city of Prishtina in April 2016. The European Department also made contact with the Prishtina branch of the German Forum for Civil Peace Service (forumZFD), which rendered considerable assistance in planning the seminar.

*These seminars were sponsored by the Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the ICHIC Program for Holocaust Education in Europe, and the Adelson Family Foundation.*

*The author works in the European Department, International School for Holocaust Studies.*

## Teachers from Europe Attend Follow-Up Seminar

James Joseph McIntosh

■ In late November 2016, 45 teachers from across the European Union who have attended Yad Vashem educational seminars gathered together for a two-day follow-up seminar. The seminar took place in Sered', Slovakia, the site of a forced labor camp during WWII.

Following an encouraging pilot in Rome in December 2014, this formative program marked Yad Vashem's second experience organizing a Europe-wide graduate seminar under the rotating presidency of the Council of the European Union. During the seminar, organizers modeled how to use newly developed resources for teaching the Holocaust and human rights. One such resource is "A Calendar for Life," an educational kit which recounts the story of Dutch Holocaust survivor Tswi Herschel, using testimony, historical notes, archival photographs and a calendar drawn by his father depicting how he imagined his then-infant son's lifecycle would unfold. The sketches in the calendar envisioned young Herschel growing up, choosing a vocation, getting married and even immigrating to *Eretz Israel*. Originally developed in Dutch and German, this was the first time the English version was presented. Participants reacted positively, and several inquired as to the possibility of translating it

into their own languages. The day's activities concluded with a visit to the last functioning synagogue in nearby Galanta, which had hosted a thriving Jewish community before WWII.

Among the honored guests addressing the participants was Slovak Justice Minister Lucia Žitnánská, as well as Holocaust survivor Naftali Fürst. Mr. Fürst, a native of Slovakia who was interned as a child in Sered' for two years, emotionally recounted his story to the participants as they trod upon the very places he described. Although the German puppet state of Slovakia originally used Sered' as a camp for Jewish forced labor, the authorities began to step up deportations to the extermination camps as the "Final Solution" progressed. Guides from the Sered' Memorial took the participants on a tour of the museum, as well as the cattle car that serves as an outdoor memorial to the deportees.

Another highlight of the seminar was an interactive and interdisciplinary workshop demonstrating a Holocaust Remembrance Day activity. The activity made use of Holocaust-themed postcards created by Israeli design students, which the participants were invited to keep and use in their classrooms. The graduates were grateful for the materials they received, as



■ Seminar participants visit the cattle car in Sered': an outdoor memorial to the deportees

well as the opportunity to meet with colleagues from across Europe.

"Holding a pan-European seminar under the rotating presidency of the EU Council has proven itself a success," said European Department Director Richelle Budd Caplan. "Although the seminar took place in a remote location in Slovakia, participants found the proceedings both meaningful and relevant to their teaching."

*This seminar was supported by the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights and the Federal Republic of Germany.*

## News from the Virtual School: Holocaust Education Video Toolbox

■ Twenty-four English-language video clips have been produced so far for the Holocaust Education Video Toolbox, an online resource designed to help educators teach the Holocaust. All of them have been translated into four languages – Hebrew, Russian, Spanish and German – and five have been translated into Greek as well. The clips deal with basic topics in Holocaust education, including a basic overview of the Holocaust, the roots of Nazi ideology, the evolution of the "Final Solution," rebuilding lives after the war, pre-Holocaust Jewish life and interdisciplinary pedagogy in Holocaust education. The clips are available on Yad Vashem's website and its YouTube channels, and they have already been viewed some 625,000 times.

Five new clips were recently uploaded to the Toolbox, dedicated to the "Oneg Shabbat" underground archives in the Warsaw ghetto, run by the historian and socio-political activist

Dr. Emanuel Ringelblum. The clips are based on the writings of the archivists and recount in the first-person the historical and personal events described therein. The six archivists depicted in the clips reveal differing perspectives on the work of "Oneg Shabbat," creating a complex picture of the archive's activity in view of the Jews' fate: Ringelblum describes his evolving role and the work of the archive over time; Rachel Auerbach, one of the three activists who survived, talks about her job as the manager of a soup kitchen and



documenter, a job she kept up until the day she died; Perez Opoczynski, "the Jewish postman," describes the travails of the ghetto from the perspective of an author who is compelled to walk endlessly through the streets in order to make a living as a mailman; Avraham Levin, who kept writing in his journal even during the "Great Deportation," describes the terror of the summer of 1942; and the last wills and testaments of Israel Lichtenstein and Gila Sackstein, two documents portraying the collectors of the archive, reveal the couple's mood when faced with death, as their writing glides from the personal and familial into the public and communal, and laments the fate of the Jews of Poland as part of the destruction of all the Jews of Europe.

*The Holocaust Education Video Toolbox is supported through the generosity of Jan and Rick Cohen, USA. The Toolbox translations were also supported by ICHIEC and the Adelson Family Foundation.*

## Greece to Accredit Teacher-Training Seminars

■ In January 2017, in the lead-up to International Holocaust Remembrance Day, Yad Vashem and the educational authorities in Greece signed their first Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

Yad Vashem Chairman Avner Shalev signed in Jerusalem, while H.E. Mr. Konstantinos (Kostas)

Gavroglou, Minister of Education, Research and Religious Affairs of the Hellenic Republic, and Jewish Museum of Greece President Samuel Matsas signed in Athens.

To date, some 150 Greek educators have studied the Holocaust in professional development seminars at Yad Vashem. The MOU formalizes

the ties between Yad Vashem and the Greek educational authorities, which pledged to accredit these seminars, and lays the foundation for the sides to continue their cooperation and explore creating new educational resources.

## Graduate Spotlight

Every year, over 300,000 students and educators in Israel and around the world attend hundreds of educational activities, in a dozen languages, at the International School for Holocaust Studies. Featured here are two of the School's graduates, and what they have achieved since:

## Dr. Andrea Peine and Gerda Küper Germany

James Joseph McIntosh

Photo: Mediberatung NRW/Bildungspartner NRW, Andreas Weinhold



■ Holocaust survivor Helga Becker-Leeser showing her family photo album to students

■ Dr. Andrea Peine, a history teacher at the Hermann Leeser School in Dülmen, first made contact with Holocaust survivor Helga Becker-Leeser in 2008, in connection with a project she and her colleague Gerda Küper conducted at her school. Becker-Leeser was born in Dülmen, a city located in the German federal state of North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW), to Hermann Leeser (after whom the school was named) and Dutch citizen Rhea Leeser (née Zondervan). During the war Helga fled to the Netherlands, where she remained after liberation. Each class in the school had sponsored a *Stolperstein* (a brass-plated cobblestone inscribed with the name and dates of birth and death of a Holocaust victim) to be laid in Dülmen. In the lead-up to the dedication ceremony, Dr. Peine and Küper encouraged their students to mail questions to Becker-Leeser.

The ceremony at the school's assembly hall drew all of the class representatives, several guests from the Dülmen municipality and numerous teachers, students and parents, as



■ Dr. Andrea Peine and Gerda Küper. Courtesy: Claudia Marcy, Dülmener Zeitung

well as Becker-Leeser, who attended together with her son Joost. Becker-Leeser answered the audience's questions and recounted in detail how she had witnessed the *Kristallnacht* pogrom as a young girl. "Getting to know Helga was just wonderful," says Dr. Peine. "What struck me most was her matter-of-fact manner and her warm and open personality."

Following the ceremony, the teachers and their students contemplated the idea of writing a book about Becker-Leeser's life. Theo Schwedmann, an educator and longstanding partner of Yad Vashem, advised and supported them throughout, and Andreas Weinhold of Bildungspartner NRW encouraged them to pitch their book idea in a state-sponsored competition. The students won, and they received a sizable grant for their project.

Becker-Leeser sent material and texts, and the students combed the local library for age-appropriate books about the Holocaust in a search for inspiration. It quickly became clear that the students were interested in the graphic novel genre, as well as developing a mobile app in order to attract more students to the project.

In May 2015, Becker-Leeser met again with the students, who were working on their project about the story of her life and survival, and answered questions about hitherto unmentioned historical details. "Helga had her photo album, a unique historical source since Dülmen was almost destroyed during WWII," recalls Küper. "Not very many photographic sources have survived. Thanks to the album and all the stories that Helga told about herself, a new world full of details opened up."

The project team quickly realized that every picture illustrating Becker-Leeser's narrative would require meticulous research. This triggered a whole array of questions, such as the color of her eyes, the appearance of the so-called 'Green Police' (Nazi German Police who donned a green uniform) in the Netherlands, and the design of radio sets in the late 1930s. In addition to hiring a graphic designer, they used funds from the grant to cover a study visit to Yad Vashem. Weinhold further proposed that they design a mobile app to complement the book, giving rise to the motto "Students Explain Yad Vashem to their Schoolmates." NRW Education Minister Sylvia Löhrmann visited the school upon the release of the graphic novel and mobile app, praising the group's accomplishment. "Working on the book and our app taught our students so much about the Holocaust," concludes Dr. Peine. "I am deeply convinced that it's a good idea to include both graphics and digital media in Holocaust education."

## German Minister Learns More about Holocaust Education

■ The Hon. Sylvia Löhrmann, Deputy Prime Minister and Education Minister of the German federal state of North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW), recently visited Yad Vashem in honor of International Holocaust Remembrance Day.

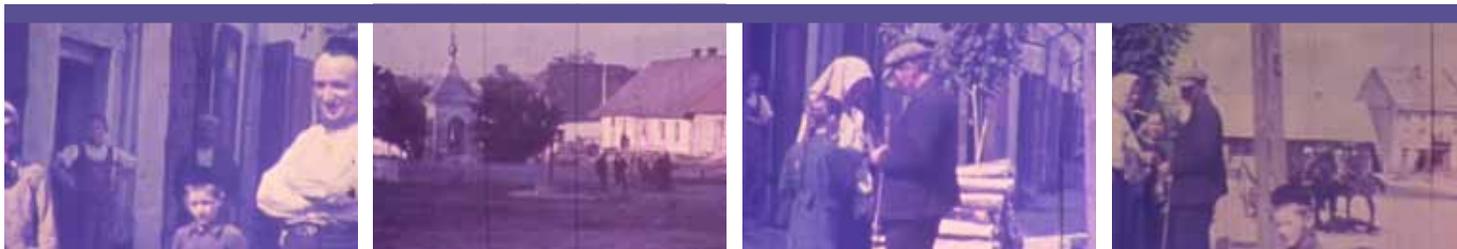
Minister Löhrmann began her visit by speaking with a contingent of visiting German

high-school students from the growing network of Yad Vashem-ICHEIC Partner Schools in NRW. Dr. Noa McKayton, Deputy Director of the International School for Holocaust Studies' European Department, later guided the minister on a tour of the Holocaust History Museum and the campus. Back at the International School, Minister

Löhrmann met experts and heard about Yad Vashem's educational philosophy and pedagogical resources. The day's activities concluded with an official commemoration ceremony in the Hall of Remembrance. German Ambassador to Israel H.E. Dr. Clemens von Goetze joined Minister Löhrmann for the ceremony.

# Building a Visual Memory of the Holocaust

Deborah Berman



■ Archival footage of Wielopole Skrzyńskie filmed by David Teitelbaum in 1938 (and 1939?). Yad Vashem Film Archive. Gift of Helen Glucksman and the Family of David Teitelbaum

■ **The Yad Vashem Archives house thousands of Holocaust-related films, including newsreels, amateur films, propaganda and postwar trials.** Archival footage contains many layers of information, and comprehensive research can help clarify the motivation and ideology of the photographer; identify places, situations and people; create the geographical frame; and date the film – all in order to both deepen historical knowledge and commemorate the victims. Thus, the more information collected about each film, the greater its importance as historical documentation.

A groundbreaking workshop on the subject, entitled “Holocaust Archival Footage as a Historical Source: Methodology and Ethics in the Digital Era,” took place at Yad Vashem in September 2016, under the auspices of the European Holocaust Research Infrastructure (EHRI). EHRI is a trans-national project aimed at supporting and promoting improved access to Holocaust documentation scattered across the globe. The workshop, designed especially for experts, convened some 30 top-level professionals, providing tools and tips for archivists, researchers and historians from Austria, France, Germany,

the Netherlands, the US and other countries in utilizing Holocaust-era footage as a historical source. Sessions at the workshop focused on the research work on footage located at various archives and collections of Holocaust-related material worldwide; the unique challenges entailed in locating, collecting and restoring these rare films; and technical and methodological dilemmas of using archival films.

One of the films presented at the workshop was shot in Wielopole Skrzyńskie, southwestern Poland, by David Teitelbaum, an amateur photographer who was born in Wielopole in 1891 and later relocated to the United States, where he became a successful businessman. Teitelbaum would return to his hometown almost every year to visit his family, filming scenes in the town in 1938 and possibly in 1939. Members of the Teitelbaum, Rappaport and Sartoria families, as well as their neighbors and acquaintances, were captured by his camera.

Wielopole was occupied by the Germans in 1939. On 26 June 1942, the Jews of Wielopole were evicted and sent to the ghetto in Ropczyce. Some 50 sick and elderly Jews were murdered before the forced departure. Some of the people

who appear in Teitelbaum’s footage were amongst those murdered that day.

Several years ago, this rare color footage depicting Jewish life in the shtetl of Wielopole before the Holocaust was donated to Yad Vashem. With the assistance of relatives (particularly Channa Rachel Helen Glucksman, David Teitelbaum’s niece), Yad Vashem experts succeeded in identifying many of the individuals in the film. Since the film was uploaded to Yad Vashem’s YouTube channel, it has received over 150,000 views. “Films open a window onto the world of their subjects, as well as that of their creators,” explains Efrat Komisar, Head of the Footage Section in Yad Vashem’s Archives Division and one of the presenters at the workshop. “It is our obligation as archivists to research them thoroughly, and present them to the public in the most accurate way possible, thus building a more accurate visual memory of the Holocaust. Moving images provide something that other kinds of documentation – written, audio and even photographs – cannot give: images of people, places and events that allow us to visualize what was happening in real time. In a way, seeing them almost brings them back to life.”

## Second EHRI Seminar: Providing Good Service

■ **In today’s world of fast response and instant answers, how can Yad Vashem and other Holocaust-based institutions provide accurate, in-depth information to a family searching for the fate of a loved one?** How is it possible to provide both professional and empathetic service to the growing number of people seeking evidence on Holocaust victims?

These questions were at the crux of an EHRI-sponsored seminar, entitled “Reference Services: Best Practices and Innovative Use of Materials,” held at Yad Vashem in November 2016. Participants from 15 institutions worldwide who provide reference services on Holocaust-

related collections gathered to discuss how best to serve anyone seeking information from events that occurred over seventy years ago.

“During the seminar, significant differences between small and large institutions became apparent, as well as local historical and legal influences on the institution itself,” says Lital Beer, Director of the Reference and Information Services Department in Yad Vashem’s Archives Division. “But most of our challenges are actually quite similar. While the massive computerization projects of Yad Vashem and other institutions have greatly enhanced our ability to supply information, many details were simply not documented by the Germans

at the time, or documentation was destroyed over the years. Each one of the participants had a story to tell about the professional satisfaction they felt to be able to provide a family with information that gave them closure on their loved one’s fate, and yet everyone related the disappointment they felt when they were unable to complete the research. Through EHRI, we hope to strengthen our professional connections and knowledge of where to find particular pieces of information, and thereby help more people complete their own family puzzle.”

*The author is Deputy Director of the Reference and Information Services Department, Archives Division.*

Zvi Bernhardt

# “We Shall Meet Again”



## Last Letters from the Holocaust: 1941



■ Blanche Nabarro and Meier Viejra on their wedding day, Amsterdam, 9 August 1939



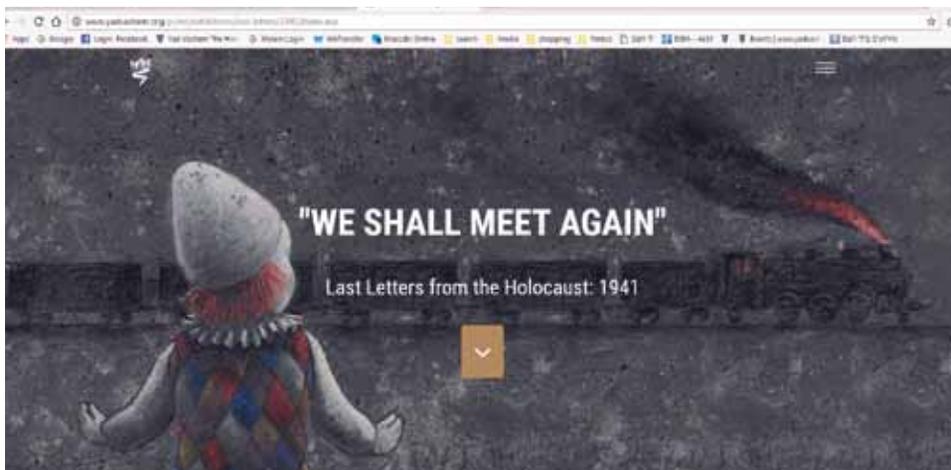
■ Reflected image of Zalman Levinson, Riga, 1937. Yad Vashem Photo Archive

■ **“You too must be strong and patient. One day this too will come to an end... I am writing this just in case I don't survive, but I have a feeling that we will see each other again.”**

Regina Kandt wrote these words in her last letter to her husband Maximilian and her son Rudy before she was deported from Belgrade to her death, together with her grandson Sasha and her daughter-in-law Eva.

The Yad Vashem Archives house many personal letters sent by Jews – adults and children – to their relatives and friends from their homes, the ghettos and the camps while fleeing, in hiding and while wandering from place to place.

The new online exhibition “We Shall Meet Again” features nine of these letters whose authors were murdered in the Holocaust. The letters were sent from Poland, Latvia, France, Austria, Ukraine, Yugoslavia and Romania. Some were sent to destinations outside Europe, and thus survived. Each letter, missive and postcard reveals the inner world and fate of Jews in the Holocaust. For many recipients, these were the last greetings from the home and family they had left behind. Though parting with these letters was often difficult for their owners, they ultimately chose to give them to Yad Vashem to be preserved for posterity.



■ Paul Kor (1926–2001), *Transport no. 2*, from the series: “Six paintings dedicated to the memory of the six million,” 1997–1998. Yad Vashem Art Collection

### Each letter, missive and postcard reveals the inner world and fate of Jews in the Holocaust

The letters in this exhibition were written in 1941, the year when the vicious persecution of the Jews under the Nazi regime became a planned-out campaign of systematic murder. Nevertheless, they were filled with hope and

certainty that the war would end quickly, and that their families would eventually reunite and live happily together.

One family featured in the exhibition is that of Frieda and Zelik Levinson, who lived in Riga with their nine-year-old son Zalman, Frieda's mother Sara Lohak and other relatives. Frieda's sister Agnes Hirschberg had immigrated to *Eretz Israel* in 1936, but remained in contact with her family in Riga. Zalman often sent his aunt letters and drawings. In April 1941, Frieda sent Agnes a short postcard from Riga. This

The letters were filled with hope and certainty that the war would end quickly, and that their families would eventually reunite and live happily together

Yona Kobo



■ Drawing sent from Riga by nine-year-old Zalman Levinson to his aunt, Agnes Hirschberg, in Eretz Israel. At the top of the picture, he wrote in Hebrew: "Home." His mother, Frieda, added on the left: "Zima [Zalman] drew our house."

was the last sign of life from Agnes's family. The names of her family members appear on the lists of inmates in the Riga ghetto. After the war, Agnes was informed that her mother Sara, her sister Frieda, her nephew Zalman and her brother-in-law Zelik had been murdered. Her brother, Misha Lohak, survived.

"We Shall Meet Again" also features the tragic account of Meier Viejra. In February 1941, Viejra was arrested in a roundup in Amsterdam. That August, he sent a letter from the Mauthausen concentration camp to his pregnant wife Blanche in Amsterdam. The letter was the last sign of life from him. Per the censor's demands, it was written in German, a language that Viejra apparently did not speak fluently, and it was not written in his handwriting. It had only his signature and a poignant, personal line: "Blanche, if it's a boy, name him Jacob Ben Meier. If it's a girl, name her Rachel." A few weeks after receiving the letter, Blanche gave birth to a daughter and named her Rachel. The letter informing Viejra of the birth of his daughter was returned to Blanche from Mauthausen unopened. Meier Viejra was murdered in September 1941.

As with other online exhibitions on the Yad Vashem website, this exhibition interactively expresses the fate of communities, families and individuals in a historical context through a variety of materials at Yad Vashem. The exhibition

## For many recipients, these were the last greetings from the home and family they had left behind

makes use of Yad Vashem's archives and collections of photographs, artifacts and artwork. In order to enhance the experience of viewing the exhibition, some of the letters can be heard read aloud. Visitors to the exhibition "We Shall Meet Again" will thus become acquainted with the stories of victims of the Holocaust through the most personal, intimate and unique thing they left behind – their own writing.

In the last letter she sent from the Warsaw ghetto to her husband and daughter in Siberia, Perla Tytelman wrote, "My loves. I want to see you. I am drawing on all my strength in order to survive for you. But you, my beloved ones, have to prove your bravery, you have to prove that you are capable of overcoming this undeserved punishment and the wanderings with strength and dignity. You should be consoled by the thought that this has to end sometime, and that then we will once again be happy together. Our yearning for each other knows no bounds."

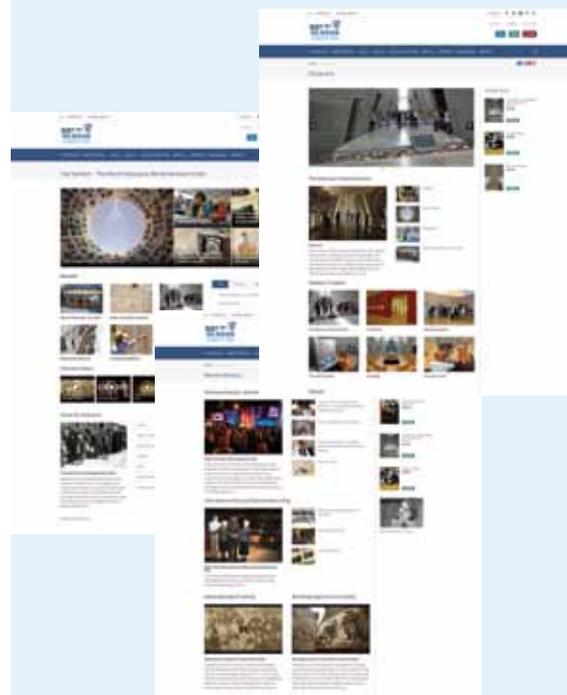
*The author is Coordinator of the online exhibition in the Internet Department, Communications Division.*

## Yad Vashem Website Upgraded

■ In 2016, the Internet Department in Yad Vashem's Communications Division, together with the Information Systems Division, began the complex and challenging task of moving the thousands of pages that comprise the Yad Vashem website to a content management system (CMS). The upgrade of the website was necessary in order to create a responsive web design (RWD) for an optimal viewing experience – easy reading and navigation with a minimum of resizing, panning and scrolling – across a wide range of devices, from desktop computer monitors to mobile phones. In addition, the upgrade ensures that the website meets international accessibility standards; improves the information architecture within the site, thus ensuring a more meaningful user experience; optimizes the extensive online content for improved search engine optimization (SEO); enhances the ability to understand and monitor user behavior; and ensures maximum integration and interaction throughout the website with all of the various social media platforms.

This ambitious undertaking, which entailed countless hours of analysis, planning, design and implementation, utilized the experience and expertise developed over many years by both Divisions.

Large parts of the website have already been moved to the CMS. The upgrade will continue throughout 2017, with supplemental features and functionalities.



## The Jewish Refugee

Prof. Dan Michman

■ Some 50 years ago, the issue of the Jewish refugees during the Nazi period occupied a relatively central place in Holocaust research. Although the topic did not disappear completely, from the mid-1970s, Holocaust research increasingly focused on the persecutors and the mass murder during the “Final Solution.” The fall of communism in Eastern Europe and the opening of archives there further accelerated this process.

With additional insights gained since then in terms of Holocaust research in general, and in light of the acute refugee problem in recent years, the International Institute for Holocaust Research organized an international conference in December 2016 to reconsider the topic of Holocaust-era refugees.

The biennial international conference was attended by researchers from Germany, the Czech Republic, Croatia, Austria, the US, Greece, Serbia, Lithuania, the UK and Israel. Yad Vashem Chairman Avner Shalev opened the conference by calling on the world to wake up with regards to what is happening in Syria – both the crimes being perpetrated there and the powerful wave of refugees fleeing the country. “In the past few weeks and months, the world has witnessed the renewal of bloodshed in Syria,” he said, and expressed his deep concern over “the appalling images of the massacre of human beings in the area of Aleppo.” He

emphasized that “following WWII, the global community enacted universal principles and instituted international organizations with the express purpose of averting future crimes against humanity. World leaders and the global community must put a stop to these atrocities and avert further suffering, as well as provide humanitarian assistance to the victims seeking safe haven.”

**Yad Vashem Chairman Avner Shalev opened the conference by calling on the world to wake up with regards to what is happening in Syria – both the crimes being perpetrated there and the powerful wave of refugees fleeing the country**

The conference’s lectures sketched a broad image of waves of refugees that surged during the 1930s and 1940s in Nazi-occupied areas and in free territories (in Europe, North and South America, and the USSR), and relations



■ Greek researcher Dr. Nikolaos Tzafleris addressing conference participants

between Jewish and non-Jewish refugees on the one hand and between different groups of Jews on the other. Prof. Norman Goda, from the University of Florida, Gainesville, delivered the keynote address about refugees in the 1930s and 1940s from the perspective of James McDonald, who served as “High Commissioner for Refugees (Jewish and Other)” coming from Germany in the years 1933-1935. Other topics discussed in depth included international Jewish organizations and the refugee crisis in Europe; Jewish refugees in Croatia in the shadow of the Holocaust; Turkish policy towards Jewish refugees during WWII; Jewish refugees in Tehran during the war; and the role of the Italians in the fate of the Jewish refugees aboard the illegal immigrant vessel *Pentcho*.

## Mirilashvili Center International Workshop ■ Jews and

■ In November 2016, the Moshe Mirilashvili Center for Research on the Holocaust in the Soviet Union at Yad Vashem’s International Institute for Holocaust Research held a research workshop, entitled “Jews and Non-Jews During the Holocaust in the USSR: The Perspective of Inter-Ethnic Relations.”

The workshop, which was attended by researchers from the US, Moldova, Canada, the Netherlands, Russia and Israel, was part of a multiannual study seeking to research various aspects of this key topic. Prof. John-Paul Himka, Emeritus Professor of History at the University of Alberta, Canada, gave



■ Prof. John-Paul Himka argued that during WWII young Ukrainian nationalists adopted the Nazi line

a lecture that elicited great interest. Prof. Himka emphasized the Nazi-style racist aspect

of the hatred that members of the Ukrainian nationalist organization OUN felt for the Jews along with classic antisemitic stereotypes, such as blaming them for exploiting others, promulgating “Judeo-Bolshevist” ideology and acting as “agents of Moscow.” Prof. Himka argued that the young Ukrainian nationalists adopted the Nazi line, which caused a dramatic change vis-à-vis the Jews: In contrast with the other peoples, it was no longer possible to incorporate them into Ukrainian society. That notwithstanding, Prof. Himka recalled that for the Ukrainian nationalists, the Jews constituted a secondary enemy, and that the Ukrainian

# Problem 1933-1945: Reconsidered



■ Kindertransport children from Hamburg, Germany aboard the “Washington” at Southampton, UK. Yad Vashem Photo Archive

During the third day of the conference a special session on the topic of the Jewish refugees in the USSR was held by the International Institute’s Moshe Mirilashvili Center for Research on the Holocaust in the Soviet Union. Eliyana Adler of Pennsylvania State University spoke about Jewish refugees from Poland who traveled

to Central Asia during the Holocaust, and Sara Bender of the University of Haifa focused on the problem of Polish Jewish refugees in the eastern Polish territories annexed to the USSR from 1939-1941.

The conference’s concluding discussion summed up the picture that emerged from

the lectures and raised insights into the contemporary refugee problem. This panel featured Prof. Deborah Dwork of Clark University, Yad Vashem Academic Advisor Prof. Yehuda Bauer, Yad Vashem Chief Historian Prof. Dina Porat and Prof. Guy Miron of Yad Vashem and the Open University, Israel. The participants emphasized that the policy vis-à-vis refugees of the various countries that absorbed refugees during WWII became tougher as the problem worsened, and the conditions for the refugees varied greatly from country to country, albeit with some similar basic experiences. Regarding insights concerning refugees today, panel participants pointed out the altered place of antisemitism in the current discourse on the topic as compared to the Holocaust period, and that refugees during WWII had to leave Europe, whereas today they come from the Third World and the Mediterranean to Europe, which points to a change in the place of Europe in the awareness of those seeking refuge.

*This conference was held with the generous support of The Gertner Center for International Holocaust Conferences and the Gutwirth Family Fund. A special session was supported by the Moshe Mirilashvili Center for Research on the Holocaust in the Soviet Union.*

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

## Non-Jews in the USSR during the Shoah

Shlomit Shulhani

nationalist movement’s sworn enemies were the Poles and the Soviet regime.

Prof. Nikita Lomagin, Vice-Rector at the European University, St. Petersburg, gave an overview of antisemitism in Leningrad during the German siege. He claimed that there was a rapid increase in antisemitism between July-November 1941, which even caused Andrei Zhdanov, secretary of the Communist Party in Leningrad and the political official responsible for the Leningrad front during WWII, to give two public addresses in August 1941 against the antisemitism spreading across the city.

The lecture of Dr. Leonid Rein of Yad Vashem’s Research Institute addressed the image of Jews as reflected in *Belaruskaya Hazeta*, the leading Belarussian-language newspaper, which was published under German occupation. Dr. Rein illustrated how the image of Jews as depicted in the pages of the newspaper constituted a mixture of racist-ideological images and classic antisemitic stereotypes. The paper actively promoted the idea that Jews were a misfortune that had befallen Belarus, and voiced support for their physical annihilation, even if it did not explicitly mention the mass murder of the Jews. Dr. Rein also noted that the

further the mass murder of the Jews of Belarus expanded, the greater the number of antisemitic articles in the paper. Other participants presented additional aspects in this field of research.

The workshop afforded the participants the opportunity to share their projects’ intermediate findings with their colleagues and obtain important feedback for their continued research.

*The Moshe Mirilashvili Center for Research on the Holocaust in the Soviet Union is supported by Laura and Michael Mirilashvili.*

*The author is Coordinator of the Moshe Mirilashvili Center for Research on the Holocaust in the Soviet Union, International Institute for Holocaust Research.*

## Dr. Kim Wünschmann: 2016 International Book Prize Winner

■ On 13 December 2016, Yad Vashem awarded its annual International Book Prize for Holocaust Research in memory of Holocaust survivor Abraham Meir Schwarzbaum, and family members murdered in the Holocaust, to Dr. Kim Wünschmann, DAAD Lecturer in Modern European History and Acting Deputy Director of the Centre for German-Jewish Studies at the University of Sussex, for her book, *Before Auschwitz: Jewish Prisoners in the Prewar Concentration Camps* (Harvard University Press, 2015).

The ceremony opened with a recorded greeting by Sabina Schwarzbaum, the prize donor who was absent from the event due to the birth of her daughter. Prof. Dan Michman, Head of Yad Vashem's International Institute for Holocaust Research and Incumbent of the John Najmann Chair for Holocaust Studies, then presented Dr. Wünschmann with the award, and spoke about the judges' considerations: "In her superbly researched and richly documented study, which systematically integrates perspectives and voices, Dr. Wünschmann has provided a



■ Left to right: Prof. Dina Porat, Dorit Novak, prizewinner Dr. Kim Wünschmann, Prof. Dan Michman

broad description of the special treatment of Jewish inmates, offering detailed evidence for an understanding of the place of Jews in the prewar camps, which, until now, was largely based on anecdotal evidence. This alone justifies a close reading of *Before Auschwitz*. What turns the book into a major contribution to Holocaust scholarship are the implications of this special treatment of Jews in the prewar camps for our understanding of the quick acculturation of the German public to the idea that the Jewish neighbor was an enemy to be extirpated, first

from civil society and ultimately from the world, as Dr. Wünschmann wrote, 'By using the concentration camps as murderous instruments of deterrence, humiliation and expulsion, the Gestapo and the SS helped to transform German Jews from a heterogeneous minority group within society to outsiders perceived as a homogeneous group of enemies to be excluded from German communal life. Concentration camps, therefore, helped to shape an enemy category that was still in the making.' Thus the treatment of Jews in the prewar concentration camps paved the way for the systematic, pan-European (and beyond) murder campaign of the Jews that unfolded between 1941 and 1945."

In addition to the winner of the Book Prize, there were also two honorable mentions: *Displaced Persons at Home: Refugees in the Fabric of Jewish Life in Warsaw September 1939-July 1942* (Yad Vashem, 2015) by Yad Vashem's Dr. Lea Prais; and *The Pope's Dilemma: Pius XII Faces Atrocities and Genocide in the Second World War* (University of Toronto Press, 2015) by Prof. Jacques Kornberg.

## PhD Candidates Study the Holocaust in Poland

■ The International Research Institute's Center for Research on the Holocaust in Poland recently held a workshop for doctoral candidates in Israel. The goals of the workshop were to help build a network between research students working on topics concerning Holocaust-era Poland, and to facilitate a research-oriented discourse with a view to raising common issues and methodological problems.

Prof. Dan Michman, Head of the International Research Institute and Incumbent of the John

Najmann Chair for Holocaust Studies, and the Center's Director Prof. Havi Dreifuss welcomed the participants and presented the goals of the meeting. Afterwards, Prof. Barbara Engelking of the Polish Center for Holocaust Research in Warsaw chaired a special session in which she moderated a methodological discussion about Holocaust-era documentation in Poland. Two doctoral candidates, Maya Dover-Daffan and Noam Rachmilevitch, presented their research papers during the second half of the workshop, followed by a discussion about each of the

lectures. The day concluded with an open discussion about contemporary challenges faced by research students focusing on the Holocaust in Poland, including finding material, analyzing documentation, and learning the germane languages for research. The participants also discussed new ways to assist and promote research students.

*The Center for Research on the Holocaust in Poland is generously supported by the Aaron Gutwirth Fund and the Danek Gertner Yad Vashem Scholarship.*

## International Workshop for Doctoral Students

■ In November 2016, the International Institute for Holocaust Research hosted a joint workshop for PhD candidates, including fellows of the Claims Conference's Kagan Fellowship in Advanced Shoah Studies. The workshop, which took place at Yad Vashem in cooperation with the Wiener Library for the Study of the Holocaust and Genocide (London) and the University of Tessaly (Greece), included participants from the UK, Germany, Ukraine, Greece and Israel, who presented their doctoral research before their peers and Yad Vashem researchers. The variety of topics included vocal music in the Terezin ghetto; Jewish students in Thessaloniki during WWII; reactions to the deportation of Jews from Thessaloniki; the planning of the

implementation of Operation Reinhard; Jewish property in postwar Poland; Second Generation reflections on the Holocaust in Greece; apartheid censorship and Holocaust memory in South Africa; trauma and testimony in the writings of Otto Dov Kulka; and innovative research on the question of collaboration or resistance pertaining to ballet music and performance in Nazi-occupied Paris.

In addition, the participants were given time to utilize the vast resources housed in the Yad Vashem Archives and Libraries. A special meeting was dedicated to discuss available resources in various institutions, problems and dilemmas of archival notations, and diverse governmental laws regarding identical collections housed in

different archives. The speakers in this session included Wiener Library Deputy Director and Head of Research Dr. Christine Schmidt; International Tracing Service (ITS) Researcher at the Wiener Library Mary Vrabec; Dr. Zoe Waxman (Oxford University and Wiener Library); Vincent Slatt of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum; Director of the Reference and Information Services Department in Yad Vashem's Archives Division Lital Beer; and Director of Yad Vashem's International Institute for Holocaust Research Dr. Iael Nidam Orvieto.

*The workshop was held with the generous support of the Gutwirth Family Fund and the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany.*

## Fellows Corner: Dr. Anna Marciszovszky

■ Since she began her Hungarian, French and Holocaust studies at the ELTE University in Budapest, Dr. Anna Marciszovszky has focused on the artistic representation of the Holocaust and Jewish identity in the postwar years in Hungary, specifically the Communist period of 1948–1989.

In the first three years following the end of WWII, Hungary's new coalition government, which included the Communist Party, set about trying war criminals; the press freely discussed antisemitism during the war; and some Hungarian Jewish writers published accounts of what was later to be known as the Holocaust in Hungary. As historian Paul Hanebrink explains, however, once the one-party rule was established in 1948, the communists created and defended an official memory in which the heroic Red Army liberated Hungary from fascist tyranny and gave Hungarians the chance to create a new and just workers' state. The triumph of communism thus relieved Hungarian society of any serious examination of its own past, and public discourse about the Holocaust or one's Jewish identity became almost impossible.

"After the defeat of the revolution in 1956 against the government of the Hungarian People's Republic and its Soviet-imposed policies, some 25,000 Jews emigrated to Israel, America, Australia and Western Europe," Dr. Marciszovszky explains. "Sporadically

at first, and with greater frequency from the 1960s, collections about the ghettoization and deportation of Hungarian Jews, as well as novels and memoirs were published, films were released and, from the 1980s, scholars could even travel abroad, conferences were organized and Jewish identity could be manifested more and more openly. Yet, there was still a noticeable 'dejewification' (a term coined by the Hungarian philosopher Ágnes Heller) in Hungarian literature, in which Jewish heroes were nevertheless presented as non-Jews."

Dr. Marciszovszky came to Yad Vashem with the aim of trying to place the so-called "policy of forgetting" of the communist era in an international context. Using the extensive resources of the Yad Vashem Archives, she compared articles published in *New Life*, the official journal of the Hungarian Jewish community in Hungary, with those written by immigrants to Canada, Uruguay, Argentina, Brazil and Israel. "It soon became apparent that there were discernable differences in the language of these papers," says Dr. Marciszovszky. "For example, while recording the fate of Hungarian Jewry before and during the war, articles in *New Life* do not fail to add in most of them that 'ideological touch,' required by the official policy. Not surprisingly, the glorification of the liberating Soviet Army and of the beneficence of the regime is absent in the

Jewish emigration press. Another notable difference is the use of obscure or generalized wording, such as 'the victims of fascism,' in the Hungarian press, which was absent in the emigrant press."

A literature devotee, Dr. Marciszovszky has taken particular pleasure in discovering in the Yad Vashem Archives Hungarian literary texts (novels and poems) published in Israel and in North and South America between 1945 and 1989. "Though I spent only three months at Yad Vashem, my stay was highly fruitful," she concludes. "Besides my own research, I enjoyed attending all the lectures and events taking place at Yad Vashem, especially the conference on Jewish refugees during WWII that took place in December [see pp. 14-15], the closing panel of which (comparing the refugee crisis after the war to those of today) I found extremely important for us, the researchers of the Holocaust."

*Dr. Marciszovszky received support from Yad Vashem's International Institute for Holocaust Research and the Fund for Research of the Holocaust in Hungary and Hungarian Jewish History in Honor of Dr. Ingrid Tauber.*



## IHRA's Growing Impact

■ Adoption of the Working Definition of Antisemitism by the government of the United Kingdom; embarking on a project to develop an interactive map of areas of concern; engaging with the government of Poland regarding the investigation of a historian for research conclusions that he voiced in an interview, as well as proposed legislation that could threaten to intimidate scholars, educators and others in their discussions of the Shoah in Poland – these are but a few of the many examples of the growing influence and impact of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA).

The Working Definition of Antisemitism adopted by IHRA at its plenary meeting in Bucharest in May 2016 says: "Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities." The definition highlights several

contemporary examples that could constitute antisemitism, such as denying the Holocaust; drawing parallels between Israeli policy and the Nazis; and denying the Jewish people their right to self-determination, for example, by claiming that the existence of a State of Israel is a racist endeavor. The Government of the UK adopted the definition in December 2016, as had the UK College of Policing and other institutions around the world earlier. The definition is under discussion for adoption in many European and international forums, an important step in combatting antisemitism.

IHRA is also embarking on a project to produce an interactive map that will call attention to neglected authentic sites and other issues of concern regarding Holocaust remembrance, education and research. The project will be led by a team of IHRA experts drawn from its various working groups and committees. A pilot is already being prepared.

IHRA experts have expressed great concern in recent months regarding proposed Polish legislation that they fear will impinge on free

research and discussion of the Shoah and of the roles of Poles in the persecution and murder of Jews. The opening of a criminal investigation against a Princeton University historian, Polish-born Jan Tomasz Gross, several months ago on suspicion of purportedly defaming the Polish nation has reinforced these concerns. IHRA has engaged in discussions with the Polish government on these matters, and in December 2016, an IHRA delegation met in Warsaw with senior officials from the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Justice, and with members of the Polish Senate. The delegation included Ambassador Michael Baier (chair), Co-Head of the Austrian delegation to IHRA; Dr. David Silberklang of Yad Vashem and the Israeli delegation to IHRA; Mark Weitzman of the Simon Wiesenthal Center and the US delegation to IHRA; and world-renowned British lawyer Dr. Anthony Julius.

Israel's delegation, co-headed by Yad Vashem Chairman Avner Shalev, has been at the heart of these developments and more, in which IHRA continues to leave its mark.

# Seizing the Opportunity

## Robbing the Jews During the Shoah

Dr. David Silberklang

■ **What happened to Jewish property and belongings during the Holocaust?** How did property and belongings find their way to local non-Jewish hands, and what happened to it afterward? As Dr. Anna Wylegała and Dr. Ștefan Ionescu show in two articles in the new issue of *Yad Vashem Studies* (44:2), there were

**Jewish property made its way into the hands of local Christians in various manners, but extortion of Jews and German rewards for collaboration in the mass murder of Jews were the most common**

various routes and methods for the widespread and often zealous theft of Jewish belongings and property during the Holocaust. In many cases, this theft was also driven by murderous zeal. At the same time, a Jewish person's belongings could be either an opening to murder, or an opening to a path to survival.

Dr. Wylegała and Dr. Ionescu examine two neighboring regions: Eastern Galicia and Northern Bukovina. Their articles reveal many differences between the two regions before and during the war, yet the greed to take Jewish property and belongings bridges these gaps. One of the differences was the controlling power – Germany, which occupied Eastern Galicia, or Romania, which had reclaimed and annexed Northern Bukovina – that influenced the nature and perpetrators of the theft.

Based on a wide variety of diaries, memoirs, testimonies and interviews, Dr. Wylegała's "About 'Jewish Things': Jewish Property in Eastern Galicia During World War II" examines the takeover of Jewish property and belongings in what became the wartime Galicia District in the *Generalgouvernement* of Poland. Here, both Germans, whether acting privately or officially, and the Jews' Polish and Ukrainian neighbors plundered Jewish property, often in close connection to violence against the Jews. Jewish belongings and property made their way

into the hands of local Christians in various manners, but extortion of Jews and German rewards for collaboration in the mass murder of Jews were the most common. Dr. Wylegała also shows the potentially opposite roles that greed for Jewish property could play in a Jew's chances for survival. Jewish accounts frequently



**They were motivated by greed and the desire to get rich quick at the Jews' expense**

discuss Poles and Ukrainians from this region as perpetrators, and judge these erstwhile neighbors very harshly. This reflects "the tremendous disappointment that the Jews felt toward their neighbors." In tracing the postwar fate of this property, Dr. Wylegała finds that local people had hardly any regrets or second thoughts. As one local Ukrainian noted in an on-camera interview, "When he was carting Jewish belongings to an empty synagogue in Bóbrka on German orders in 1942, he was young and stupid. Today he would have kept more for himself."

Dr. Ionescu analyzes the beneficiaries of the Antonescu regime's Romanianization policies in Bukovina, particularly in Czernowitz, during the period 1941-1943. These beneficiaries included both "Californian" colonists (Bukovina was known then as Romania's "California" because of its many opportunities for profit) and local profiteers. The economic Romanianization policy instituted by Antonescu triggered sharp competition between these two groups. They were motivated by greed and the desire to get rich quick at the Jews' expense, and by the hope to evade mobilization into the Romanian armed forces and transfer to the eastern front. Whereas these ethnic Romanian profiteers earned their reputation for greed, corruption

**A Jewish person's belongings could be either an opening to murder, or an opening to a path to survival**

and ruthlessness, some of them collaborated with local Jewish entrepreneurs and skilled workers to run their new businesses. This enabled the Jews to stay in their city as indispensable skilled employees, which in turn increased their chances for survival.

Antisemitism laced with greed abounded during the Shoah, as did local willingness to be rid of the Jews or even to murder them. Still, at times the greed could lead to efforts to leave the Jews alive, and Jews often tried to exploit these momentary opportunities for life.

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

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www.yadvashem.org*

## Brothers in Arms

Iris Bar-Nir Cohen

■ **Jakob Abramovicz was a partisan and commander in Tuvia Bielski's family camp.** In February 2016, Abramovicz's wish was fulfilled when his wartime personal belongings were donated to Yad Vashem for eternal safekeeping.

Born in 1913, Abramovicz fought the Nazis in the Nowogrodek Forest (today in Belarus) alongside his Jewish compatriots. "Jakob Abramovicz was a dedicated and loyal soldier who performed extremely dangerous missions," noted Tuvia Bielski after the war. "He carried out his assignments with love and dauntlessly risked his life."



■ After the war, Abramovicz made models that illustrated how the partisans lived in the town and the forest

Abramovicz first heard about the Bielski brothers, who hid in the forest and conducted operations against the German army, while he was still in the Nowogrodek ghetto. He sought to join their ranks, and with his mother's encouragement, he attempted to escape the ghetto and join up with the Jewish partisans. When his plan failed, he devised an alternative scheme.

Rumors traversing the ghetto had it that the partisans usually came to the Dworzec labor camp outside the town to bathe. Abramovicz and his younger brother Gabriel looked for a way to reach Dworzec where, they hoped, they would be able to link up with the group of fighters.

With the aid of a friend, the Abramovicz brothers managed to get out of the ghetto and into the camp, where they joined a group of loggers. Two weeks after they fled, the ghetto was liquidated and all its inhabitants were murdered.

Abramovicz met Bielski's partisans in Dworzec, though they told him that Bielski's orders were that no one could join the fighters without a gun. With the help of a friend from the labor camp, he managed to obtain a rifle in poor condition, fled the camp and hoped that the Bielskis would accept him despite his substandard weapon. His

brother Gabriel stayed behind in Dworzec. The Germans murdered the camp inmates not long afterwards, including Gabriel.

Jakob Abramovicz roamed the forests, and after a prolonged search of the area, he managed to locate the family camp of Tuvia Bielski and join the group. "I opened my eyes one morning," he later recalled, "and there I was, among Jews! Among partisans! I was already flouting the Germans! I was no longer afraid. Tuvia told me, 'Jakob, polish your gun, brush the horse, and prepare yourself. Tomorrow at six you're to report for a mission.'" The mission, an example of which was depicted in the film *Defiance*, was to blow up railroad tracks.

Jakob Abramovicz lived in the forest for more than two years while fighting with the partisans. He commanded a mounted unit and was later transferred to a unit of saboteurs. He was wounded a number of times throughout the war.

At the family camp, Abramovicz met Yokheved Slucki, whom he had known in Nowogrodek before the war while studying Torah at her great-grandfather's home. Slucki had managed to flee to the forest after her son and husband had been murdered by the Germans. Jakob and Yokheved married after the war and immigrated to *Eretz Israel*. They had two daughters. In 2009, Jakob Abramovicz died at the age of 97.

Jakob Abramovicz's partisan-era possessions and photographs that were



■ The boots and trousers worn by Abramovicz as a partisan during the war



■ Jakob Abramovicz (center, with fellow Jewish partisans) in the Bielski Family Camp

donated to Yad Vashem provide information and concrete evidence of the unique activities of Tuvia Bielski's family camp, a partisan camp that received international exposure in the wake of *Defiance*. Abramovicz's boots still bear signs of the repairs made at the camp, crude seams and wooden nails intended to strengthen the heels and which attest to life in the forest.

After the war, Jakob Abramovicz built model pack horses with carts of timber and hay, illustrating how the partisans lived in the town and the forest. These models were also donated to Yad Vashem's Artifacts Collection.

Abramovicz's granddaughter Idit Orani facilitated the transfer of his treasured mementos to Yad Vashem. "We, the family, are delighted to have fulfilled my grandfather's wishes," she said. "Here they can be properly preserved and displayed for generations to come."

The author is Associate Curator in the Artifacts Department, Museums Division.

From 1983, Yad Vashem Benefactor David Berg z"l generously supported Yad Vashem's development on the Mount of Remembrance. Since his passing, The David Berg Foundation has partnered with Yad Vashem to digitize photographs as well as preserve precious artworks and artifacts from the Shoah. Most recently, The David Berg Foundation has supported the conservation of artworks and artifacts in Yad Vashem's vast collections, examples of which are highlighted above.

# “We Are No Longer Alone”



## Family Reunion at Yad Vashem

Leah Goldstein

■ **Sisters Henia Moskowitz and Rywka Peczenik went through life believing they were alone.** Their parents, Symcha and Jenta Borenstein, had died when they were young, and they were told that their extended family had been wiped out in the Holocaust. Symcha and Jenta had fled Warsaw during WWII with three of their children, Hercz-Lejb, Abram and Rywka; Hana (Henia) was born in Siberia. In September 1948, Jenta and Symcha immigrated to Israel together with their two daughters. The family was sure they were the only survivors of Jenta’s entire family – her brother, Nisan Band, and four other sisters.

However, before Jenta’s escape from Poland, Nisan had also fled to the USSR. While neither Jenta nor Nisan knew of each other’s fate, throughout the years, Nisan never gave up hope of finding some remnants of his family. His children, Fania Balakai and Gennadi Band, immigrated to Israel with their families in the mass *aliya* of the 1990s.

Towards the end of 2016, following a “roots trip” to Poland, Fania searched Yad Vashem’s Central Database of Shoah Victims’ Names, and discovered a Page of Testimony in memory of her father Nisan, filled out by



■ *Newly united cousins Fania Balakai and Henia Borenstein Moskowitz hold a picture of Fania’s father, Nisan Band*

Symcha Borenstein. At the foot of the form, Symcha noted that he was Nisan’s brother-in-law. Bewildered and curious, Fania and her son Evgeni came to Yad Vashem to find out who, they believed, had mistakenly commemorated Nisan. Sima Velkovich of Yad Vashem’s Reference and Information Services

Department, Archives Division, conducted a search of the Pages of Testimony as well as the ITS (International Tracing Service) database, where she discovered the family connection. Velkovich’s investigation of the story also revealed that Rywka and Henia were still living in Israel, and on 13 December 2016,

## Gathering Holocaust-era Effects in the FSU

Orit Noiman

■ **In September 2016, Nadezhda Kurbatova née Biletski (b. 1939, Vinnitsa, Ukraine) came to a collection day organized by Yad Vashem in coordination with the “Hessed” (Jewish Community Center) in Vinnitsa.** Kurbatova survived the Holocaust in hiding under a false identity at the children’s home of Lidiya Postolovskaya in the old city of Vinnitsa. After the war, her father Nikolai returned from the front and the two were reunited. At the collection day, during which she was accompanied by her daughter Svetlana, Kurbatova brought several family photographs and photographs from the children’s home taken in 1944.

The collection day was one of a number of such events recently conducted by Yad Vashem in partnership with the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC)

in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). The purpose of the collection days is to locate, preserve and discover the stories behind Holocaust-era items. The collection days were run by the JDC in the Jewish communities of Vinnitsa and Lvov and took place at “Hessed” institutions. Employees volunteered to collect and register the material after being trained, coached and aided by Yad Vashem representatives. Concurrently, project staff visited the homes of Holocaust survivors who could not make the journey to the designated centers. Yad Vashem’s professional team brought digitization equipment to prepare high-quality copies of the documentation.

The challenge in the Vinnitsa district was more complex. Yad Vashem received numerous inquiries from members of the community

who live in remote towns located far from the city center, and JDC representatives organized transportation from the outlying areas to the documentation center.

The collection days held in both communities were impressive in terms of both quantity and content. Over 160 people, including 67 Holocaust survivors, brought more than 1,700 items to be registered and copied. Photographs accounted for approximately half of the material, mostly documenting pre-Holocaust Jewish community life, as well as wartime photos. Copies of the documentation were transferred to Yad Vashem and catalogued, and they will be made viewable for the general public.

*The author is Head of the Collection and Registration Section, Archives Division.*

While neither Jenta nor Nisan knew of each other's fate, throughout the years, Nisan never gave up hope of finding some remnants of his family

the cousins finally met at Yad Vashem for the very first time.

At the emotional reunion, Henia described her shock when she received the call from Yad Vashem that she had a cousin who was looking for her. "At first, I thought there was a mistake," she explained. "However, today when we met, I felt a connection at first sight; my family has grown overnight. Thanks to Yad Vashem, we discovered that we are no longer alone."

"It is difficult to describe how I feel," added Fania, who shared old family pictures she had saved of her father Nisan in Poland before the war. "I am deeply moved and very happy. My father always searched for members of his family and dreamed of finding them. His dream has finally come true."

*To date, Yad Vashem has identified over two-thirds of the Jews murdered during the Holocaust. Some four million seven hundred thousand names are documented on the Central Database of Shoah Victims' Names – available online at [www.yadvashem.org](http://www.yadvashem.org) in English, Hebrew, Russian, Spanish and German. A family reunion such as this one, which occurred thanks to information filled out on Pages of Testimony, is rare. Nevertheless, Yad Vashem is committed to aiding anyone in search of lost family members. For more information, please contact: [ref@yadvashem.org.il](mailto:ref@yadvashem.org.il)*

## Collecting Names Via Social Media

■ **Yad Vashem recently launched a successful digital campaign on social media with an urgent call to action to recover the names of Shoah victims and record them in Yad Vashem's online Names Database so that they will always be remembered.** The campaign was carefully designed to reach out to anyone who might have information regarding the names of Holocaust victims through social media groups based on geographical data and interests. Videos and social media posts in English, Hebrew and Russian garnered high engagement activity and were widely shared around the world. The campaign helped spread the urgency of the message of this historic effort to record the name of each individual Jewish man, woman and child murdered in the Holocaust.

*For more information, please contact: [names.proj@yadvashem.org.il](mailto:names.proj@yadvashem.org.il)*

# Names Recovery Among Russian-Speaking Communities Worldwide

**Olga Litvak**

■ *"They refused to submit to the Nazis' [sic.] instructions to come to their command center in Odessa. The Nazis came to their house, pulled the four of them out (it was winter) and poured buckets of water on them, which froze immediately and turned them into ice statues. They froze to death slowly and in torturous agony. The neighbors saw everything through the window and told me."*

So recounted Beyla Sotulina to Nataly Chertok, a volunteer with the Moscow-based "Memory, Help, Generations" project that partners with Yad Vashem to help retrieve names of Holocaust victims. Chertok was helping Sotulina fill out Pages of Testimony in memory of her friend Luba Rabinovitch, her sister Beba and their parents.

Yad Vashem's Shoah Victims' Names Recovery Project operates around the world, and in cooperation with various Jewish organizations (communities, welfare centers, etc.) in the Former Soviet Union. Thanks to their support, an entire network of volunteers interview survivors and potential witnesses, assisting them with filling out Pages of Testimony and questionnaires for survivors and evacuees. The volunteers work with staff of "Hessed" Jewish community centers in various cities such as St. Petersburg, Lvov, Khmel'nitsky, Kherson and Minsk. Over the course of some eight months, for example, volunteer Tamara Margolina at the Jewish History and Culture Museum of Belarus (Minsk) managed to fill out some 1,700 Pages of Testimony after interviewing everyone who had joined such centers in Minsk, Gomel and other cities in the past four years.

Volunteers for the "Memory, Help, Generations" project, supported by the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, have been striving to take part in almost all of the city's events concerning Jewish life in order to capitalize on any possibility of telling about the Names Recovery Project. They also make a concerted effort to visit survivors' homes several times in order to obtain pictures of the victims. This requires them to travel to a laboratory to make high-quality copies of the pictures, and then take the originals back to the survivor's home. "In those areas of the FSU where the distances are great, the volunteers often become the only attentive listeners to the elderly people they're interviewing," says Sara Berkowitz, Head of Yad Vashem's Shoah Victims' Names Recovery Project. "The people giving testimony tell many tragic and moving memories and stories to the volunteers. The emotional burden on the volunteers' shoulders

grows heavier with each story."

Many names of Holocaust victims are obtained through cooperation with the "Return Dignity" project of the Russian Jewish Congress and the Russian Research and Educational Holocaust Center. Both are longstanding partners of Yad Vashem, and the latter erects memorials at sites where Jews were murdered in Russia. The names of the victims listed at every memorial were gathered thanks to the joint efforts of researchers and local



■ *Volunteers help fill out Pages of Testimony in memory of Holocaust victims at an event marking VE Day 2016 near the Moscow Choral Synagogue*

volunteers with the Names Recovery Project.

The project's volunteers also work with the Russian-speaking communities of other countries. Alexander Konovalchuk from Ulm, Germany not only managed to speak with almost every potential witness in the city's Jewish community, but also makes frequent trips to cities in Bavaria and interviews people from other communities.

In addition, the project has volunteers who call Russian-speakers around the world. Erica Teller, who survived the Holocaust in the Terezin ghetto at a young age, comes to Yad Vashem almost every day and handles phone calls for the project. As part of her volunteer work, she also accompanies groups of survivors visiting Germany and always tells her personal story at these meetings. "But most of all, I talk about how important Yad Vashem's Shoah Victims' Names Recovery Project is, and how relevant it still is for contemporary times," she said. "Not everyone is aware of the fact that Yad Vashem currently lacks some one million three hundred thousand names of Holocaust victims. We're determined to recover them all."

*For assistance in filling out Pages of Testimony, please contact the Shoah Victims Names Recovery Project: [names.proj@yadvashem.org.il](mailto:names.proj@yadvashem.org.il). For Russian speakers, [names.ru@yadvashem.org.il](mailto:names.ru@yadvashem.org.il)*

*The Shoah Victims Names Recovery Project is generously supported by Dana and Yossie Hollander.*

*The author is the Coordinator for the Shoah Victims' Names Recovery Project in the Hall of Names, Archives Division.*

## Avner Shalev Awarded Spanish Order of Civil Merit

■ On 15 December, Yad Vashem Chairman Avner Shalev (left) received the prestigious Spanish title of Commander of the Order of Civil Merit. On behalf of the King of Spain, Spanish Ambassador to Israel H.E. Mr. Fernando Carderera Soler (right) presented Shalev with the award at an intimate ceremony at the residence of the Ambassador, in the presence of members of the Yad Vashem Directorate and staff, family and close friends. Shalev was commended for his years of public service as Chairman of Yad Vashem, the World Holocaust Remembrance Center, and for the significant strides he has made in Holocaust education and commemoration in Spain and around the world.

The Order of Civil Merit (Orden del Mérito Civil) was established in 1926 to recognize

extraordinary service of Spanish and foreign citizens on behalf of the King and the Spanish Nation. There are several grades of this citation. Previous recipients of the various levels of the Order of Civil Merit have included heads of state, members of royalty, ministers, diplomats and senior functionaries.

Over many years, Director of the Latin-America, Miami, Spain and Portugal Desk in Yad Vashem's International Relations Division Perla Hazan has developed a rich and deep relationship with Centro Sefarad-Israel. "I view this award not only as a personal tribute to me, but also as recognition of the collective efforts of all who are involved, professionally and with much devotion, both at Yad Vashem and their counterparts in Spain," said Shalev. Recalling the Jewish people's deep connection



Photo: Daniel Babczyk

to Spain and Yad Vashem's efforts in the fields of Holocaust research, education and commemoration, Shalev emphasized the need to "continue the discourse in order to guard our human values, especially in today's politically and economically tense world."

## Agreement with the Albanian National Archives



■ On 31 October, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed between Yad Vashem and the Albanian National Archives. Yad Vashem Chairman Avner Shalev and Albanian National Archives Director Dr. Ardit Bido signed the MOU in the presence of Yad Vashem Archives Director and Fred Hillman

Chair for Holocaust Documentation Dr. Haim Gertner; Albanian Ambassador to Israel H.E. Dr. Bardhyl Canaj; and Deputy Director General for Euro-Asia at the Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs Ambassador (ret.) H.E. Mr. Zvi Rav-Ner. This milestone agreement follows an MOU signed between Yad Vashem's International School for Holocaust Studies and the Albanian Ministry of Education earlier this year, supporting educational seminars at Yad Vashem on how to educate future generations about the Holocaust. Participants of the first seminar for Albanian educators attended the signing ceremony.

"The Albanian Archives contains, among others, documents that will shed light on the rescue of Jews in Albania during the Shoah," explained Dr. Gertner. "Albanian history during

WWII was unique: A mostly Muslim country, Albania was the only European state whose Jewish population was higher at the end of the Holocaust than when it began. This was thanks to the initiative of the Albanian people who, in accordance with their core values and pan-Albanian culture, valued human life and thus came to aid, shelter and rescue many Jewish refugees fleeing from the German Nazis and their collaborators. Some of these heroic stories are highlighted in the Yad Vashem exhibition 'BESA: A Code of Honor – Muslim Albanians Who Rescued Jews During the Holocaust' [now viewable online]. We hope that this agreement will lead to a deeper cooperation between our two countries, as well as our two institutions, in order to further expose this unique story."

## "Jewish Eye" Film Festival Collection Deposited in Visual Center

■ The "Jewish Eye" Film Festival, founded by Gadi Kastel and Oded Guy, recently deposited 67 films of different genres in Yad Vashem's digital film library located in the Visual Center. All of the films, originally produced in various languages, are subtitled in Hebrew. The films present stories from diverse points of view, including *Henryk Wars – Songster of Warsaw*, (Wieslaw Dabrowski, 2007, Poland), *The Commisar* (Aleksandr Askoldov, 1967, USSR), *Sigrid & Isaac* (Anders Wahlgren, 2005, Sweden) and *Under Strange Skies* (Daniel Blaufuks, 2002, Portugal).

Veteran Israeli producers-directors Kastel and Guy directed the "Jewish Eye" Film Festival in southern Israel for 13 years. Motivated by a desire to make international cinema accessible to Israeli audiences, the duo invested in Hebrew translations of films. Recently, the Visual Center undertook a digital preservation project of the translated films, thanks to a generous grant from Yad Vashem Builder Artur Brauner (pictured), the venerable German-Jewish filmmaker, Holocaust survivor and longtime supporter of the Visual Center.



## Symposium in Memory of Prof. Elie Wiesel, z"l

■ On 6 November 2016, Yad Vashem hosted a symposium entitled: “We Must Become the Messengers’ Messengers’: The Legacy of Prof. Elie Wiesel, z”l,” in the presence of Israel’s President H.E. Mr. Reuven Rivlin and Dr. Joseph Ciechanover, Member of the Elie Wiesel Foundation for Humanity-Israel.

President Rivlin recalled Prof. Wiesel’s words at the opening of Yad Vashem’s Holocaust History Museum in March 2005. There, Wiesel charged future generations to remember what happened in order to change the world for the better. “It is no longer enough for us to sear into the consciousness of our children, our future, the images, the voices and the names,” the President said. “Remembrance must become a moral, social and ethical code. To pass on the



■ President Reuven Rivlin

message... To repair the world a little more.”

In investigating the unique qualities of Elie Wiesel as both a witness and a messenger of Holocaust remembrance, Yad Vashem Chairman Avner Shalev said: “He was one

of the first to express the need not only to relate what happened during the Shoah, but also to find and explain its significance for our generation and those to come... as a survivor, he felt a special responsibility to fight injustice. He dedicated his great talents to expressing the ethical implications of the Holocaust and to recruiting all of humanity to the moral responsibility they engender.” The event concluded with a panel discussion on the topic of “Survivors and the Memory of the Shoah,” featuring Prof. Hanna Yablonka, Dr. Shimon Azulay and Israeli poet Agi Mishol.



■ Prof. Elie Wiesel, z”l

## Marking 78 Years Since Kristallnacht

■ “The day after, I met a friend and we went to the synagogue together. We found it in ruins and strewn with wreckage. Being pious Jews, we picked up as many prayer books and torn pages as we could, kissed them devotedly and put them back on the remaining tables and shelves.”

From the testimony of Felix Rinde, a child in Vienna in 1938

On the eve of 9 November 2016, Yad Vashem held a public symposium marking 78 years since the *Kristallnacht* pogrom. Dr. Na’ama Shik, Director of the e-Learning Department in the International School for Holocaust Studies, addressed the audience on, “How Do You Tell a Child Goodbye? Mother, Father and Child: The *Kindertransport*,” and actress, playwright and director Sarah von Schwarze gave a presentation entitled “Between Two Worlds.”

## Symposium for Military Attachés

■ On 7 December 2016, Yad Vashem held its first-ever symposium for 14 military attachés from different countries. Yad Vashem Chairman Avner Shalev delivered the opening remarks, and Yad Vashem Academic Advisor Prof. Yehuda



Bauer gave a lecture about US Army policy during WWII. The participants later took a guided tour of the Holocaust History Museum and received a behind-the-scenes visit of the Yad Vashem Archives.

## Yad Vashem Participates in Chelmno Ceremony

■ On 8 December 2016, the Chelmno extermination camp memorial in Poland held a memorial ceremony marking the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the arrival of the first group of Jews deported to the camp. During the ceremony, Yad Vashem Chairman Avner Shalev and Tzipi Zilberman, daughter of the late Szymon Srebrnik, a survivor of the camp, spoke to the audience via a live feed from Yad Vashem’s Holocaust Art Museum. Excerpts from Srebrnik’s testimony, which are displayed in the Holocaust History Museum, were screened at the start of the ceremony in Chelmno. The ceremony was broadcast live on Polish television.

## Concert in Memory of Jewish Composers Murdered in the Holocaust

■ On 21 November 2016, Yad Vashem held a special event marking the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of the Terezin ghetto. The evening began with a musical guided tour of the Holocaust History Museum, during which participants passed by six stations and heard live music with brief explanations. The event concluded with a special concert at the Yad Vashem Auditorium, featuring pieces written in the Terezin ghetto by Jewish composers



who were murdered in Auschwitz, along with additional compositions by Holocaust victims. The pieces were performed by soprano Alexandra Wilson and conductor and clarinetist Dan Rapoport.

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

During October 2016–January 2017, Yad Vashem conducted some 270 guided tours for more than 3,800 official visitors from Israel and abroad. These guests included heads of state and local government, ambassadors, mayors, NGO officials, and military and cultural attaches. Following is a small selection of our honored guests over these four months:

■ **Prime Minister of the Russian Federation H.E. Dr. Dmitry Medvedev** visited Yad Vashem on 11 November 2016 as part of his official state visit to Israel. The Prime Minister was greeted by Yad Vashem Chairman Avner Shalev and accompanied by several members of his government.

“It is very important for us to understand the nature of the devastation of the Holocaust,” remarked the Prime Minister. “It is chilling to see the sheer magnitude of horrors suffered by the victims of an entire nation, the Jewish people. The memory of the six million Jews who perished in the Holocaust – an example of the indifference and the terrible crimes of the twentieth century – should be forever etched in the history of mankind.”



■ During his tour of Yad Vashem on 24 January, **Prime Minister of Croatia H.E. Mr. Andrej Plenković** (left) viewed the Oscar awarded to Croatian film producer and Holocaust survivor Branko Lustig for *Schindler’s List*, which is displayed in Yad Vashem’s Visual Center. “We are determined to strengthen our engagement in promoting values of mutual respect, understanding and tolerance,” he said. “My dedication to this fight [against] every form of hate, racism and Holocaust denial has been reinforced by today’s visit.”



■ **President of Poland H.E. Mr. Andrzej Duda** (right) visited Yad Vashem on 17 January 2017 accompanied by his wife Agata Kornhauser-Duda and former Israeli Ambassador to Poland and former Chairman of the Yad Vashem Council Prof. Szewach Weiss. In the Yad Vashem Guest Book, the President wrote: “Yad Vashem presents the Holocaust and the tragedy of the Jewish people from the widest perspective... What happened [during the Holocaust] is impossible to grasp but the message of Yad Vashem shows us all the dangers of hatred and what it can lead to.” Following the visit, Ms. Kornhauser-Duda was presented with documentation regarding Jewish members of her family, some of whom survived the Holocaust, and some of whom were murdered during the Holocaust.

The visit of the President followed the visit in November 2016 of **Polish Prime Minister H.E. Ms. Beata Szydło**.



■ **Portuguese Foreign Minister H.E. Prof. Augusto Santos Silva** (left) visited Yad Vashem on 24 November 2016. In the Yad Vashem Guest Book, Minister Silva wrote: “I pay my deepest respects to all the Jewish men, women and children who were the victims of the Holocaust. Our duty is to work together... to avoid any repetition of this horrific evil.”



■ **President of Guatemala H.E. Mr. Jimmy Morales** (right) and his wife Patricia Marroquin were guided through Yad Vashem on 28 November 2016 by Director of the Hall of Names Dr. Alexander Avram. “Humanity cannot surrender to actions that threaten its very existence,” said President Morales. “The Government of Guatemala joins the condemnation of the unacceptable acts undertaken during the Holocaust, when innocent people fell victim to persecution and destruction without any reason.”



■ **Romanian Foreign Minister H.E. Dr. Lazăr Comănescu** visited Yad Vashem on 17 November 2016. An ongoing educational agreement between Yad Vashem and Romania has brought hundreds of teachers and community leaders to participate in seminars at Yad Vashem’s International School for Holocaust Studies. Additionally, the Romanian leadership of IHRA (International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance) is an example for other European nations of how to confront and come to terms with their history of perpetration and collaboration in the persecution of Jews. The Foreign Minister of Romania committed to support several additional programs, including the retrieval of Romanian Shoah victims’ names.



■ **Also among our honored visitors:** President of Sierra Leon H.E. Dr. Ernest Bai Koroma (10 January 2017); Belgian Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Security and

Interior H.E. Mr. Jan Jamboon (16 November 2016); Prime Minister of Swaziland H.E. Dr. Barnabas Sibusiso Dlamini (20 December 2016); Prime Minister of Fiji H.E. Mr. Josaia

Voreqe Bainimarama (7 November 2016); Prime Minister of Jamaica H.E. Mr. Andrew Holness (12 January 2017); Foreign Minister of Uruguay H.E. Mr. Rodolfo Nin Novoa

■ On 30 October 2016, **Italian President H.E. Mr. Sergio Mattarella** (center) was guided through Yad Vashem by Director of the International Institute for Holocaust Research Dr. Iael Nidam Orvieto. “The wound of the Holocaust remains open for all of us who respect life and cherish human values,” the President said. “Every victim is a loss for humanity... Yad Vashem belongs not only to Israel and the Jewish people, but to the entire world.”



■ **The Governor General of Canada H.E. Mr. David Johnston** (right) and his wife Sharon were guided through Yad Vashem on 2 November 2016 by Director of the Yad Vashem Libraries Dr. Robert Rozett. In the Yad Vashem Guest Book, the Governor General wrote: “We are humbled to visit Yad Vashem, which is filled with interesting stories of loss and life, but also of hope and determination.”



(1 December 2016); **Serbian Foreign Minister H.E. Mr. Ivica Dačić** (5 January 2017); and **Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of the Czech Republic H.E. Mr. Jan Hamáček** (16 November 2016).

## New Benefactors

### Sara and Rolando Uziel

■ **Rolando Uziel was born in Casablanca, Morocco in 1936.** In 1945, he immigrated with his family to Mexico. After completing his architecture studies at Harvard University in the US, he returned to Mexico in the 1950s and joined the family jewelry business, becoming a pioneer in the field.

Parallel to his commercial activity, Rolando Uziel is very active in the Jewish community of Mexico. Between 1974 and 1976, he served as treasurer for the Sephardi community of Mexico, and between 1976 and 1978 as President of the Sephardi Community. He has been a member of the Sephardi community Government Board for many years, and sits on the Board of Governors of Hebrew Tarbut College. He also generously assists Keren Hayesod, Keren Kayemet and other Israeli institutions.

Rolando and Sara Uziel have four daughters and six grandchildren. The couple's

recent contribution to Yad Vashem endowed “The Garden of Contemplation” and “The Garden Opposite the Children’s Memorial,” as well as a classroom in the International Seminars Wing of the International School for Holocaust Studies. Yad Vashem expresses its deep appreciation for the Uziels’ continuing friendship and support.



■ *Yad Vashem Chairman Avner Shalev (center) with Sara and Rolando Uziel*

### Belgian Couple Recognized as Righteous

■ **On 21 November, relatives of Benno Gerson and Anni Goldberg, Jewish children who were saved during the Holocaust by Joseph and Marie Andries, gathered at Yad Vashem for a ceremony honoring the late Belgian couple as Righteous Among the Nations.**

Benno and Anni were young children when their family moved from Germany to the Netherlands following the *Kristallnacht* pogrom in November 1938.

When the deportations from Belgium began in 1942, Ludwig and Pepi Gershonowitz decided to separate from their children in order to save them. Seven-year-old Anni and five-year-old Benno were brought to the home of Joseph and Marie Andries in Anderlecht. On 24 September 1942, Ludwig and Pepi were arrested and deported to Auschwitz, where they were murdered. Several months later, Joseph and Marie Andries moved with the children to Sint-Pieters-Leeuw, where they remained until the end of the war. When Joseph and Marie separated, the two children remained with Marie, who continued to care for them lovingly. Life was simple, and Marie sometimes received help from her relatives, the Rampelbergs, who provided her with some additional food.

After the war, contact was established with a relative of the Gershonowitz family in the United States, and in 1947 Anni and Benno left Marie Andries’ home and sailed to New York. In 1983, shortly before Marie Andries passed away, Benno travelled to Belgium to visit his rescuer one last time.



■ *Holocaust survivor Benno Gerson and relative of the Righteous Dr. Francoise Rampelberg in the Garden of the Righteous at Yad Vashem*

Accepting the certificate and medal on behalf of the late Joseph and Marie Andries was Dr. Francoise Rampelberg, who travelled especially from Switzerland to attend the ceremony. Dr. Rampelberg, who only recently discovered the courageous actions of her grandparents’ cousins, said: “The medal and certificate are proof that brave people with a conscience did exist during those dark times. They attest to the fact that friendship can triumph under even the most dangerous circumstances... they represent symbols of hope for the future.”

Benno Gerson and his nephews, Serge and Stefan Goldberg, sons of Anni Goldberg z”l, traveled from the United States to participate in this rare event. While Gerson admitted he did not remember much from the war period, he described his memories of his “*mamak*,” Flemish for mother, with love and affection. “The risks she took to protect us are beyond my understanding. No one deserves this honor more... I’ve had a wonderful life because of Marie and Joseph Andries. They gave me the gift of life.”

# Friends Worldwide

## USA

■ On 13 November 2016, the **American Society for Yad Vashem** hosted its Annual Tribute Dinner at the Pierre Hotel in New York City. This year's event, chaired by Yad Vashem Benefactors **Rose** and **Philip Friedman** and **Mark Moskowitz**, paid tribute to the Righteous Among the Nations and the Jews they saved during WWII. American Society Chairman **Leonard Wilf** welcomed 500 of Yad Vashem's most dedicated partners, young leaders and distinguished guests. **Michael Bernardi**, actor in Broadway's *Fiddler on the Roof*, moderated the event.



■ American Society Chairman Leonard Wilf with family members of American Righteous Among the Nations, Pastor Chris and Regina Edmonds and Mary Jean Gunden

The Leadership Award was presented to American Society Founder and Yad Vashem Benefactor **Sima Katz**. Katz's granddaughter **Rebecca Levy** shared her grandmother's harrowing journey of survival during the Holocaust with the help of the Lithuanian Christian Žilevičius family, later recognized as Righteous Among the Nations.

**Master Sergeant Roddie Edmonds** and **Lois Gunden**, the fourth and fifth Americans ever to be recognized as Righteous Among the Nations, were honored at the Dinner. **Mary Jean Gunden** spoke of the bravery and compassion of her



■ Left to right: Rebecca Levy, Rita Levy, Dinner Honoree Sima Katz, Matthew Levy, David Levy

aunt, who saved the lives of dozens of Jewish children in France. **Pastor Chris Edmonds** told the story of his father's awe-inspiring service while imprisoned in the German Stalag IXA POW Camp, where he boldly saved the lives of hundreds of American Jewish soldiers.

The evening's featured speaker was **Sara Pechanac**, the daughter of the first Muslim woman to ever be recognized as Righteous Among the Nations for sheltering the Jewish Kavilio family from Nazi persecution in Sarajavo, Yugoslavia. Sara and her family now live in Israel and she works in the Yad Vashem Archives.



■ Dinner co-chair Mark Moskowitz



■ Dinner co-chairs Rose and Philip Friedman



■ American Society Board Members Gale and Ira Drukier, Marilyn and Barry Rubenstein



■ American Society Executive Director Ron Meier with Yad Vashem Pillars Sharon and David Halpern

■ During his visit to Yad Vashem, **Dr. Sol Messinger**, a child survivor of the Holocaust and passenger aboard the German ocean liner MS *St. Louis*, unveiled a plaque in the memorial cave in honor of his parents who survived the Holocaust and in memory of his family members who were murdered during the Shoah.



■ Governor of Maryland **Larry Hogan** (left) and his friend **Leonard Attman** (center) met with International Relations Division Managing Director **Shaya Ben-Yehuda** (right) during their visit to Yad Vashem on 23 September.



■ On 5 January 2017, Yad Vashem Benefactors **Harry** and **Danielle Karten** and their son **Jonathan** visited the Partisan's Panorama, which they generously supported.



■ Three generations of **Adam** (third from right) and **Daniella** (left) **Pfefer's** family visited Yad Vashem to unveil a plaque in memory of Adam's grandparents, **Benjamin** and **Sally Levine, z"l**, who were murdered in the Shoah. The family also participated in a special activity in the International School for Holocaust Studies.



■ Yad Vashem mourns the passing of Yad Vashem Pillar and American Society for Yad Vashem Board Member **David Mitzner**.



David Mitzner was born in Warsaw in 1915. After helping some friends flee the Nazis, he was sent to a Soviet labor camp in Siberia, where he remained in captivity for almost eight years. His parents, sister and brother were murdered in the Holocaust. In 1949 he immigrated to the US, reuniting with his sister Rozia, the only other surviving member of his family. David married Ruth z"l in 1952 and developed RIDA Development Corporation, a successful real estate development company, spanning the US and Poland.

David and Ruth were deeply committed to the Jewish people, Israel and its future. As Pillars of Yad Vashem, they generously supported the refurbishment of Warsaw Ghetto Square on the Mount of Remembrance.

David chronicled his many memories and achievements in his memoir, *Nesim All Around Me*.

Yad Vashem extends its heartfelt condolences to his sons Jacob and Ira, daughters-in-law Marilyn and Mindy, five grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. May his memory be a blessing.

■ Yad Vashem mourns the passing of its dear friend, Yad Vashem Benefactor and American Society for Yad Vashem Board Member **Jona Goldrich**.



Jona Goldrich was born in 1927 in Lvov, Poland. After the Nazi occupation in 1941, his father was able to arrange safe departure for Jona and his brother Avraham. His parents and older brother did not survive the Holocaust. He managed to reach *Eretz Israel* in 1943. In 1951, he immigrated to the US, where he married Doretta. In Los Angeles, he established a thriving real estate development company.

Jona Goldrich was devoted to his family and to many Jewish causes – most importantly, Holocaust remembrance and education. Yad Vashem extends its heartfelt condolences to Doretta, his daughters Melinda and Andrea and his grandchildren. May his memory be a blessing.

■ On 4 November 2016, the American Society's Young Leadership Associates (YLA) hosted a Fall Shabbat Dinner at Congregation Kehilath Jeshuran in New York City. Incoming YLA Co-Chairs **Daniella Pomeranc** and **Josh Gelnick** announced a new YLA initiative to support seminars for Israeli soldiers at Yad Vashem. Lily Safra Chair of Holocaust Education and Director of Yad Vashem's International School for Holocaust Studies **Dr. Eyal Kaminka** spoke to the 80 young professionals in attendance about tailoring Holocaust education for millennials.

■ On 11 November 2016, **Jeff** and **Esty Stein** brought their extended family to Yad Vashem to mark their son **Gabriel's** bar mitzvah. During their visit, the family visited the Holocaust History Museum and Yad Vashem's Synagogue, where Gabriel participated in a Bar Mitzvah Twinning Ceremony in which he remembered a child victim of the Holocaust.



■ Following the success of last year's "Salute to Hollywood" Gala held by the American Society for Yad Vashem, on 1 November 2016 the Society opened a new office in Los Angeles. The new West Coast Director of Institutional Advancement **William Bernstein** has been meeting with current donors and friends to spread the word about Yad Vashem's inspiring work and attract new sources of support. Together with National Executive Director **Dr. Ron Meier**, Bernstein and his colleagues at the new office, Development Associate **Brooke Spencer** and Development Assistant **Donna Elyassian**, welcomed dozens of friends to their office open house on 5 January 2017.

Meanwhile, at the Society's headquarters in New York, Meier has spent the last year engaging a growing development team to expand its national reach. Since joining the Society at the start of 2016, Chief Development Officer **Eillene Leistner** is assisting development efforts across the country. Director of Planned Giving **Chris Morton**, Major Gifts Officer **Emily Snyder** and Development Assistant **Aaron Fineberg** joined the team, and after a record-breaking year, both in terms of events and fundraising, the American Society looks forward to a robust 2017, partnering with more US friends to support the vital work of Yad Vashem. For more information, please see: [www.yadvashemUSA.org](http://www.yadvashemUSA.org)



■ At the LA Office Open House: **Sheryl Pressberg**, American Society Executive Director **Dr. Ron Meier**, **Michael Koss**, **Kenneth Pressberg**



■ **William Bernstein** with **Rabbi Baruch Hecht** from Chabad of Brentwood affixing the mezuzah in the new LA office

# Friends Worldwide

■ Yad Vashem mourns the passing of Yad Vashem Builder **Naomi Warren**.



Naomi Warren was born in Wolkowysk, Poland. In 1942, she was deported with her husband Alexander Rosenbaum, mother Chasia Salman Kaplan and brother Mark Kaplan. Her husband and mother did not survive the Holocaust. Naomi was interned in Auschwitz, Ravensbruck and Bergen-Belsen before being liberated in 1945.

She made her way to the US, where she was reunited with her father who had survived the war in Siberia. She and her husband Martin Warren, also a Holocaust survivor, created the International Trading Company, an imported meat business. After Martin's tragic death in 1960, Naomi raised their son and two daughters alone.

Naomi Warren devoted her life to education and the Jewish community, and together with her family was dedicated to Yad Vashem's mission.

Yad Vashem extends its heartfelt condolences to her children Helen and Andrew Spector, Geri and Jim Roper, and Benjamin and Joy Warren, her grandchildren and great-grandchildren. May her memory be a blessing.

■ Yad Vashem mourns the passing of Yad Vashem Guardian and American Society for Yad Vashem Board Member **David Chase**.



David Chase was born in 1928 in Sosnowiec, Poland. When he was only 11 years old, the Nazis invaded Poland. He survived Auschwitz, Sachsenhausen and Mauthausen before escaping a death march in the spring of 1945. He lost his parents, sister and many other family members in the Holocaust. After settling in Hartford, CT in 1946, David met and married Rhoda. Together they devoted their time to philanthropy and generosity, both in their local community and around the world. Among the beneficiaries of their loyal support is the American Society for Yad Vashem.

In 1983, David pioneered the fundraising campaign to build the Valley of the Communities at Yad Vashem with his three close friends, Eli Zborowski z"l, Sam Skura z"l, and David Feuerstein.

Yad Vashem extends its heartfelt condolences to Rhoda, their children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. May his memory be a blessing.

## THE NETHERLANDS

■ On 16 November, 2016, the **Friends of Yad Vashem in the Netherlands** organized a symposium marking 25 years of its activities, which garnered much attention in the Dutch media. Director of the French-Speaking Countries and Benelux Desk in Yad Vashem's International Relations Division **Miry Gross**, as well as many well-known Dutch speakers, dealt with the subject of teaching the Holocaust in schools today. The newly appointed Israeli Ambassador to the Netherlands, **H.E. Mr. Aviv Shir-On**, also attended, accompanied by members of his staff. **Joop Levy**, who led the Friends of Yad Vashem in the Netherlands for over 15 years, was honored for his ongoing dedication to Holocaust remembrance and education.



■ *Left to right: Miry Gross, Betty Lievendag (Netherlands Friends), Israeli Ambassador to the Netherlands H.E. Aviv Shir-On, former President of the Dutch Parliament and President of the National Remembrance Committee Gerdie Verbeet, Netherlands Friends Honorary President Joop Levy*

■ **David and Marnie Nagel** (second and third from right) visited Yad Vashem for the first time on 25 October 2016 with their three children **Ariel, Jason and Michael**, where they were hosted by Director of the American Desk in Yad Vashem's International Relations Division **Michael Fisher** (right). Their tour included the Holocaust History Museum, the Hall of Remembrance and the Children's Memorial.



## LIECHTENSTEIN

■ An event marking International Holocaust Remembrance Day was held on 24 January 2017 at the City Theatre of Schaan, Liechtenstein. Some 150 guests attended the event, including Liechtenstein's Minister of Infrastructure, Environment and Sport **Marlies Amann-Marxer**; Director of the German-Speaking Countries Desk, Yad Vashem's International Relations Division **Arik Rav-On**; MPs; and Chair of the **Society of Friends of Yad Vashem in Liechtenstein Dr. Florian Marxer**. The event also featured video-recorded testimonies of Holocaust survivors.



■ *Netherlands Friends incoming President David Simon*



■ *Left to right: Director of the Anne Frank Foundation Ronald Leopold, TV personality and author Ad Van Liempt, journalist and author Guus Luijters, Dr. Bart Wallet (Amsterdam University), Chief Rabbi of the Netherlands Binyomin Jacobs*

## FRANCE

■ The theme of the Annual Paris Gala Dinner was “Keeping the Memory Alive: Transmission and Education.” The goal of the event, established by Chairman of the **French Friends of Yad Vashem Pierre Francois Veil** (pictured addressing the audience), was to enable groups of educators within “The framework of villes et villages des Justes Parmi les Nations de France” to be trained at Yad Vashem’s International School for Holocaust Studies during 2017. Director of the French-Speaking Countries and Benelux Desk in Yad Vashem’s International Relations Division **Miry Gross** elaborated on the subject and described the activities of Yad Vashem’s International School for Holocaust Studies.



## SPAIN

■ **Debora Vilaboa** (second from left) was joined by her family during her visit to Yad Vashem.



■ Spanish Ambassador to Israel **H.E. Mr. Fernando de Carderera** (second from right) visited Yad Vashem together with his wife **Victoria** (right), where he was presented with the Yad Vashem Key by Yad Vashem Chairman **Avner Shalev** (second from left) and Director of the Latin America, Miami, Spain and Portugal Desk **Perla Hazan** (left).



## MEXICO

■ **Sonia and Walter Krinsky** were joined by their family and Director of the Latin America, Miami, Spain and Portugal Desk **Perla Hazan** on the occasion of the bar mitzvah of their son **Ariel** (center).



■ **Sylvaine Akerman** (center) visited Yad Vashem together with her husband **Claude Franco** (second from right) to receive the 2016 Avner Shalev Yad Vashem Chairman’s Award for Artistic Achievement in Holocaust-Related Film on behalf of her late sister, Director **Chantal Akerman**, for the film *No Home Movie*. She was joined by **Perla Hazan** (right), Director of the Visual Center **Liat Benhabib** (second from left) and **Mimi Ash** from the Visual Center (left).



■ **Ruben Bross** (second from left) was joined by his family and friends during their visit to Yad Vashem.



■ Huixquilucan Mayor **Enrique Vargas** and his wife **Romina Contreras** (center, with the wreath) were joined by **Perla Hazan** (second from left), **Daniel Liwerant** (left) and **Dalia Wilk** (fourth from left) during their visit to Yad Vashem.



## COSTA RICA

■ **Vivian and Philip Unger** (third and fourth from left) were joined by their friends **Jeannette** and **Jorge Paris** (second and third from right) and Director of the Latin America, Miami, Spain and Portugal Desk **Perla Hazan** (left) on the occasion of the unveiling of a plaque in honor of **Tzvy** and **Miriam Gotlieb** in the Memorial Cave.



■ **Jaime Tischler** visited Yad Vashem to unveil a plaque in honor of his parents who survived the Holocaust, as well as members of his family who were murdered during the Shoah.



# Friends Worldwide

## GERMANY

■ An event commemorating the *Kristallnacht* pogrom took place on 9 November 2016 in Frankfurt-on-Oder City Hall, in cooperation with the State Government of Brandenburg, the Municipality of Frankfurt and Yad Vashem. The event was attended by some 200 guests, including the Mayor of Frankfurt; the former Mayor of Berlin; Director of the German-Speaking Countries Desk in Yad Vashem's International Relations Division **Arik Rav-On**; educators; and members of the media. The Chief Cantor of the Berlin Synagogue performed cantorial pieces.

## AUSTRIA

■ International Holocaust Memorial Day was marked on 30 January at the City Hall of Linz, in cooperation with the **Friends of Yad Vashem in Austria**. Mayor of Linz **Klaus Luger** (left) and the Austrian Friends Chair **Günther Schuster** (center) greeted the guests. The highlight of the event was a reading from the diary of **Etty Hillesum**, who was murdered in Auschwitz in 1943. At the conclusion of the event, Mayor Luger received the highest award of the Austrian Friends of Yad Vashem, honoring his great personal involvement in the promotion of Holocaust remembrance.



## SOUTH AFRICA

■ In October 2016, **Caro Wiese** (second from left) and **Lynda Loubser** (second from right) visited the Holocaust History Museum and Children's Memorial. They also toured the Holocaust Art Museum with Museum Curator and Art Department Director **Eliad Moreh-Rosenberg** (left) and Director of the English Language Desk, International Relations Division **Searle Brajtman** (right).



## SINGAPORE

■ The first Yad Vashem Dinner in Asia was held on 8 December 2016 in the Jewish Community Center in Singapore. The Dinner was co-chaired by **Philip Ong**, a local Singaporean businessman, and Director of the English Language Desk in Yad Vashem's International Relations Division **Searle Brajtman**. Over 100 guests attended this ground-breaking event. The keynote speaker was Auschwitz survivor **Eva Slonim OAM** (pictured), who movingly described her experiences during the Holocaust and stressed how her fellow inmates in the concentration camps implored her to give testimony about what happened, so that the world would learn from these experiences and not allow them to happen again. During her stay in Singapore, Slonim also spoke at various other venues, including a local Jewish school that invited children from other schools to hear her. Both Jewish and non-Jewish clergyman offered blessings at the event.



## UK

■ During their visit to Yad Vashem on 14 November 2016, participants in the UJIA Women's Mission Possible attended a lecture on women in Auschwitz by Director of the e-Learning Department at the International School for Holocaust Studies **Dr. Na'ama Shik**. They also heard Holocaust survivor **Claudine Schwartz-Rudel** give her testimony while visiting the exhibition "Stars Without a Heaven: Children in the Holocaust."



## AUSTRALIA

■ On 26 December 2016, **Greg Rosshandler** (left) met with Director of the Yad Vashem Archives and Fred Hillman Chair for Holocaust Documentation **Dr. Haim Gertner**, and viewed the Restoration and Digitization Laboratories. He also visited the Artifacts Collection with Director of the Museums Division **Vivian Uria** (center) and Director of the Artifacts Department **Michael Tal** (right).



■ The Yad Vashem travelling exhibition "I Am My Brother's Keeper" is a tribute to the Righteous Among the Nations. The exhibition was adapted for Australia with the support of the Roth Family and opened on 6 December 2016 at the Sydney Jewish Museum. Left to right: **Stanley Roth AM**; Director of the English Language Desk, International Relations Division **Searle Brajtman**; grandson of Righteous Among the Nations **Chiune Sugihara**, **Chihiro Sugihara**; **John Roth**



## MIAMI: SPANISH SPEAKERS

■ **Anat** and **Abraham Garzon** were joined by their children **Shirel**, **Eitan** and **Liam** during their visit to Yad Vashem.



## ISRAEL

■ On 17 November 2016, a ceremony was held at Yad Vashem recognizing the generous and long-standing support of **Dana and Yossie Hollander**. Dana and Yossie have been firm partners of Yad Vashem's mission, and their steadfast and continuous support over the past decade has enabled Yad Vashem to hold numerous meaningful activities in the field of Holocaust remembrance.

The Hollanders are central partners in Yad Vashem's Shoah Victims Names Recovery Project, and are also the entrepreneurial spirit behind the multimedia learning curriculum "Echoes and Reflections" – the largest and most comprehensive educational program on the Holocaust in the US today.

During the ceremony, Yad Vashem's Dana and Yossie Hollander Campus for Holocaust Education, Research and Documentation was dedicated, followed by an emotional ceremony in the Yad Vashem Synagogue at which Yad Vashem Chairman **Avner Shalev** addressed

the gathering, and Dana and Yossie Hollander spoke on behalf of their families.



■ *Yad Vashem Chairman Avner Shalev presents Dana and Yossie Hollander with the Yad Vashem Key*

This special day ended with a "behind-the-scenes" visit to the Yad Vashem Archives, led by Archives Director and Fred Hillman Chair for Holocaust Documentation **Dr. Haim Gertner**. Dr. Gertner gave the guests an overview of the diverse activities of the Archives Division and presented current challenges in the field

of Holocaust commemoration. The couple was shown Pages of Testimony memorializing family members who were murdered during the Shoah, as well as papers documenting the lives of the Podhorzer, Brief and Hollander families during and after the Holocaust. All of the material was collated in a book that was presented to the family members at the ceremony, which caused great interest and delight, especially for Yossie Hollander's mother, **Genia**.



■ *Left to right: Yossie and Dana Hollander, Avner Shalev, Yossie and Dana's daughter Carmel and her husband Ido Yosef*

■ Senior staff of the Azrieli Foundation-Israel, headed by the Foundation's Director General **Offi Zisser**, took a guided tour of the Holocaust History Museum in November 2016. The Azrieli Foundation has generously supported educational and research endeavors at Yad Vashem for many years. Artifacts Department Director **Michael Tal** also gave the group a "behind-the-scenes" look at a number of special items from the Holocaust period that commemorate the life of the people to whom they once belonged.



## Christian Desk with ICEJ and The Museum of the Bible

■ During the Feast of Tabernacles 2016, a decade of partnership between Yad Vashem and the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem (ICEJ) was marked together with thousands of Christian visitors from around the world.



■ *Left to right: Rev. Malcolm Hedding; ICEJ Executive Director Dr. Jürgen Buehler; Director, Christian Friends of Yad Vashem Dr. Susanna Kokkonen; International Relations Division Managing Director Shaya Ben-Yehuda*

■ The Africa-Israel Initiative (AII) is an Africa-wide Christian lobby founded to educate African Christians about Israel as well as to support the Jewish state. In November 2016, AII hosted an international gathering of leaders in Nairobi, Kenya. As several African leaders have participated in the Christian Leadership

Seminars at Yad Vashem, **Dr. Susanna Kokkonen** was invited to speak at the event.



■ *Dr. Susanna Kokkonen with African seminar graduates Bishop Samuel Malambo and Shalom Koronge, and AII Vice-President Bishop Joshua Mulinge*

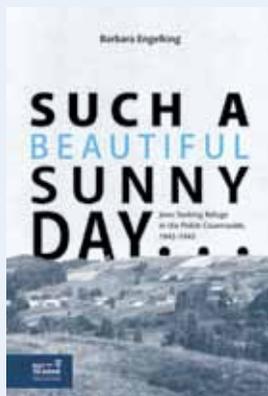
■ The International Christian Leadership Seminar for 26 pastors and leaders worldwide took place at Yad Vashem's International School for Holocaust Studies at the end of November 2016. The seminar was sponsored by the Museum of the Bible, Washington DC.



# The International Institute for Holocaust Research: Publications

## *Such a Beautiful Sunny Day... Jews Seeking Refuge in the Polish Countryside, 1942-1945*

Barbara Engelking  
NIS 174 NIS 128



■ This groundbreaking study sheds light on the struggle of the Jews who escaped to the Polish countryside and the threats and challenges they faced. Many of them encountered a hostile environment of local Poles ready to denounce them to the Germans or participate in manhunts, and in cases where they found refuge with Polish families, the dangers for both the Jews and their rescuers grew more acute as time passed. Based on a large number of documents, the book tells the formerly untold account of Jewish struggle for survival in a complex landscape of fear, betrayal and death.

■  
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## *Yad Vashem Studies, Volume 44:2*

Editor: David Silberklang

NIS 80 NIS 60



■ The latest volume of *Yad Vashem Studies* opens with an article analyzing the late Prof. Elie Wiesel's contribution to the field of Holocaust research. Five research articles and three review articles focus on Eastern Europe – both during the war and in current research and commemoration – and three review articles cover broader perspectives on the Holocaust. The research articles investigate Jewish, local and German sources, as well as trends in current research in Poland and Holocaust remembrance in former Communist countries.

*For a closer look at two of the articles in this volume dealing with the seizing of Jewish property during WWII, please see p. 18.*

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