

YAD VASHEM

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"Do No Harm"

Medicine and the Holocaust ([4-23](#))

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Luba Blum-Bielcka
(1906-1973), Head of the
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Warsaw ghetto. Courtesy
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"WHITE COATS IN THE GHETTO"

JEWISH MEDICINE IN POLAND DURING THE HOLOCAUST

Leah Goldstein

During the summer months, [*White Coats in the Ghetto: Jewish Medicine in Poland during the Holocaust*](#) – a research study by Dr. Miriam Offer, Senior Lecturer in the Holocaust Studies Program at Western Galilee College – was published in English. The book traces the work of the medical staff and leaders of the Warsaw ghetto during the Holocaust, and how they dealt with professional, moral and logistical challenges in the fields of medicine and ethics, within a broad historical context.



Nurses at work in the Warsaw
ghetto's ophthalmology
department
Yad Vashem Archives

In a special interview for *Yad Vashem Jerusalem*, Dr. Offer recounts the extensive research process she conducted for the book, the challenges she encountered and the discoveries, and its relevance to the contemporary world.

What is your background, and why did you decide to research this topic?

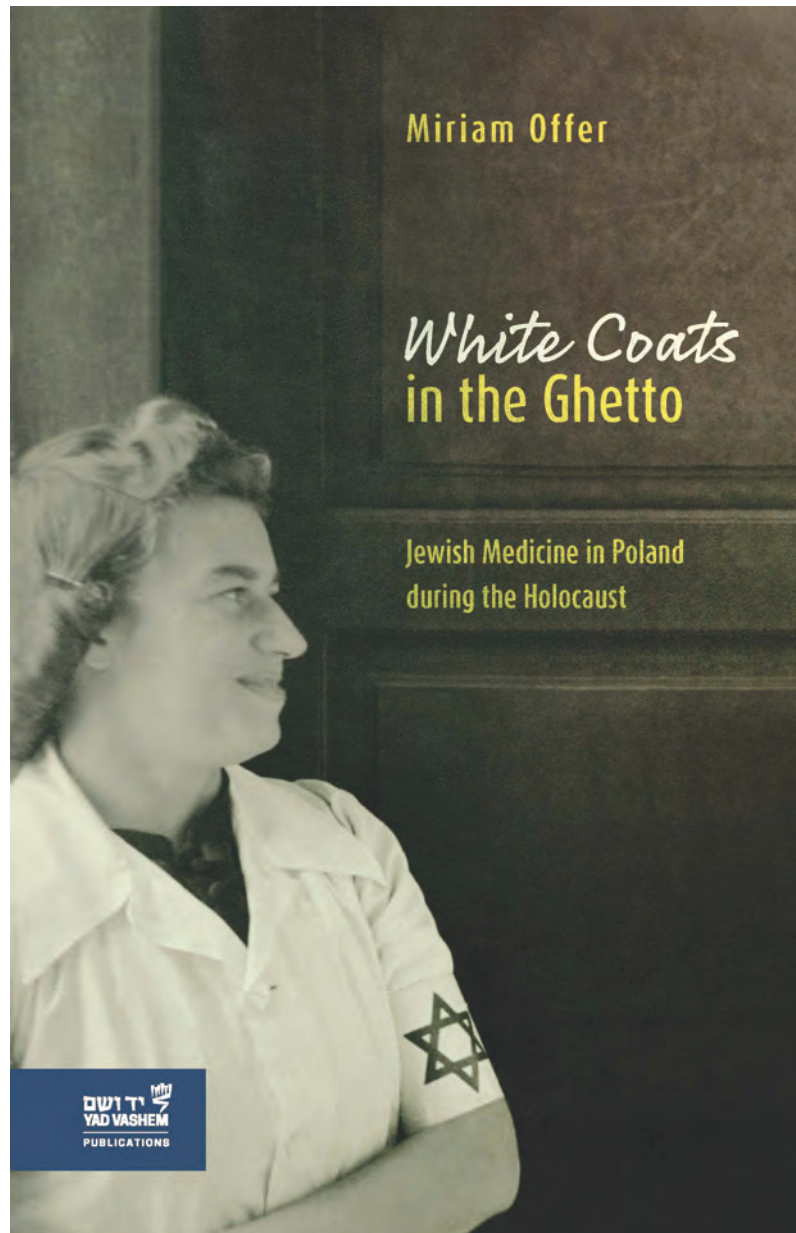
Growing up in a home with parents who experienced firsthand the

events of the Holocaust [her mother was born in Hungary and sent to Auschwitz, and her father was drafted into the Polish army and fought for the defense of Warsaw] – and when one's grandparents and most of one's family were murdered in the extermination camps – there is an emotional need and intellectual curiosity to investigate the development of the most difficult event in history. When I entered academia, my

in-laws, survivors of the [Šiauliai \(Shavli\) ghetto](#) in Lithuania, told me about a diary from that ghetto written by Dr. Aharon Pick, which lay for decades in a drawer in the home of his only son, Tedik (David), in Kibbutz Netzer Sereni. The events he described in the medical context led me to focus my Master's thesis on "Medicine and Physicians in the Šiauliai Ghetto."

As part of my doctorate, I expanded my research on Jewish

"WHITE COATS IN THE GHETTO" JEWISH MEDICINE IN POLAND DURING THE HOLOCAUST



medicine in the Holocaust. The pioneers of research in the field were the doctors who were there. They documented the difficult medical reality and studied the morbidity that spread through

the ghettos, to find cures for patients and to commemorate the crimes using scientific tools. Thus, very valuable documentation was left behind on morbidity and medicine in the ghettos.

After the Holocaust, Dr. Mark Meir Dworzecki, a physician and historian who survived the Vilnius ghetto, led the field of medical research during the Holocaust in general and Jewish medical activity in particular. He wrote extensively in the field, and doctors who survived the Shoah, or who had emigrated before the war, in Israel and in the Diaspora, contributed to the commemoration and documentation project — so I had an uncommon basis for inspiration.

At first, I thought to conduct a comparative study between several ghettos in different areas under German occupation. However, after collecting a great deal of material on medicine in the Warsaw ghetto, it seemed that the scope and importance of the material needed separate processing. Isaiah Trunk was among the first to present research on aspects of health and illness in the Warsaw ghetto, and in the 1990s it was Charles Roland's outstanding study that presented a comprehensive picture of medicine in the ghetto. Equipped with these and many studies, I spent several years collecting archival materials, mainly at Yad Vashem and the Ghetto Fighters' House in Israel, as well as in the archives of the ZIH [Jewish Historical Institute] in Warsaw and YIVO in New York.

Despite all efforts, many of the patients could not be saved due to the dehumanizing conditions the Germans imposed on the Jews. Nevertheless, the medical staff and the ghetto leadership acted out of a perception of responsibility for the health of the general public

White Coats in the Ghetto would not have been published without the help of the International Institute for Holocaust Research at Yad Vashem, which supported me with a scholarship and the guidance of Prof. Dan Michman, [Head of the Institute, and the Incumbent, John Naimann Chair for Holocaust Studies] and of course the professional and dedicated work of the staff in Yad Vashem's Publication Department.

On what documents did you base the study?

The issue of morbidity and medicine is so central in "ordinary" daily life, and all the more so in the conditions prevailing in the ghettos. Therefore, in many archival documents a great deal of reference can be found related to the medical issues. These

include, among other things, statistical reports on morbidity and mortality; reports sent to the Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) by the Jewish health organization "TOZ," which also operated in the ghetto; memos sent to the Germans; testimonies and reports written by medical and healthcare staff — nurses, doctors, and hygienists; advertisements published in the ghetto; minutes of meetings; the underground press in the ghetto; and diaries, memoirs and testimonies collected after the Holocaust.

What were the difficulties you had to deal with? Did you encounter any unexpected issues?

The difficulties were many, and there was no shortage of crises. This study was written over a

number of years during which I devoted myself entirely to the research, from morning to night. For me, it was a kind of life mission. The research required deciphering documents in different languages — Polish, Yiddish, German — collecting and processing a great deal of material, and comparatively examining the issue in broad contexts, such as genocide, Eastern European Jewry, the Holocaust, and medical ethics under siege and existential threats.

Though challenging, the collection, translation and processing of these documents were also accompanied by special surprises, such as discovering new diaries written in the Holocaust — for example, the notebooks of gynecologist Dr. Adolf Polishuk, and a comprehensive report by the TOZ.

What have you learned about this subject, and what do you think still needs to be researched?

It is important to note that this study actually highlights some unique patterns of Jewish society coping with the Holocaust. The research shows that amid the difficult conditions prevailing in the Warsaw ghetto, there was nevertheless a rather hierarchical and disciplined health and medical system, which posed challenges

to public health according to modern concepts: sanitation, vaccinations, isolation of infected persons, and more. Inpatient and outpatient services, laboratories, and even a first aid station were also established. It is clear that despite all efforts, many of the patients could not be saved due to the dehumanizing conditions the Germans imposed on the Jews. Nevertheless, the medical staff and the ghetto leadership acted out of a perception of responsibility for the health of the general public in the ghetto. Although the results, of course, were very limited.

Usually in cases of persecution and genocide, murder and extermination occur in a rapid period of time, in which we generally witness the collapse of the medical system of the persecuted society; the services provided, if any, rely mainly on external assistance of international organizations. Not so in the Warsaw ghetto. The medical system there did not only deal with emergency medicine or the care of patients, but it also continued during this difficult period with "routine" activities: studies, advanced training and research. This was set up by the Jews themselves — that is, the persecuted society — and not by outside forces. Along with legal activity, authorized partially by the Germans mainly because of their obsessive fear of epidemics spreading outside the ghetto,

The Jewish community in Poland had developed a medical system designed to serve the three-and-a-half million Jews who lived in independent Poland

the Jews also initiated a series of risky underground endeavors, including scientific studies of great importance on hunger and typhus, as well as the establishment of an underground academic medical faculty in the ghetto for some 500 students. The study also shows that there was a kind of medical network in the General Government [an area of German-occupied Poland] by activists of the TOZ, who provided assistance from the central branch in Warsaw at various times to other communities and ghettos in the area.

Another important thing I learned is that the speed of organization of the Jewish medical frameworks that arose in Warsaw and other ghettos did not come "out of nowhere," but rather relied on an infrastructure of Jewish medicine that had developed between the two world wars. The Jewish community in Poland had developed a medical system designed to serve the three-and-a-half million Jews who lived in independent Poland.

This system was based on the principles of public health that developed in modern countries and were also adopted in Jewish society. In 1931, there were about 4,500 independent Jewish physicians in Poland, who made up about 56 percent of all independent physicians in the country. Despite all the limitations and difficulties, the medical and healthcare system in the Warsaw ghetto clearly reflected a modern society, where there were about 800 doctors. All of these factors, along with the Jewish tradition that emphasized the saving of life as a supreme value, motivated the medical teams in the ghettos to make efforts under impossible conditions in order to alleviate the suffering of the Jews in the ghetto and save lives as much as possible.

The behavior of doctors as individuals was not significantly different from the behavior of individuals in other positions in the ghetto: They were all faced with unprecedented moral tests.



The reality there, like any human reality, was complex. Alongside many brave, heroic acts, some

medical staff behaved immorally — described extensively in the book. Collectively, however, the medical

and health system in the Warsaw ghetto is a unique phenomenon, unparalleled in history.

Much remains to be studied in this field of Jewish medicine and the Holocaust, for example: writing biographies of individual doctors; aspects of gender, including the contribution of women in the medical and health professions to the establishment of medical systems in the ghettos; comparative research on medicine in many unexplored ghettos; and issues of *Halachah* [Jewish Law] and ghetto medicine.

How is the book relevant to the modern world?

Chapters in the book, such as those devoted to epidemics, education, and medical research, or the chapter on ethical dilemmas, constitute important and relevant material to today's global society. Along with the suffering and dehumanization, one can learn about the power of the human spirit and the medical profession to maintain a value-based and professional commitment to patients even in difficult and extreme conditions. This is in stark contrast to what led to bio-racial ideas among doctors, scientists and the healthcare system in Nazi Germany, who were full partners "in white coats" to the horrific crimes and genocide that took place during the Holocaust.

"DO NO HARM"

MEDICAL ETHICS AND THE HOLOCAUST

Leah Goldstein

Examples of Nazi Germany's sweeping disregard for human rights in the name of "medical research" were recently discussed at an online panel entitled ["Do No Harm: Medical Ethics and the Holocaust."](#)

In 1937, a medical conference took place in the southwestern German town of Tübingen, for the German Society for Racial Research. Among the "eminent" physicians attending that conference were Prof. Eugen



Fischer, Professor of Medicine and Director of the Institute of Anthropology, Human Heredity, and Eugenics at the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute (KWI) in Berlin, who had been appointed by Adolf Hitler as rector of the Frederick

Wilhelm University of Berlin (today called Humboldt University) some four years earlier; and Prof. Otmar Freiherr v. Verschuer, a physician and biologist who headed the Institute for Genetic Biology and Racial Hygiene in KWI's Institute

The Nazi Doctors Trial at an American military court, October 1946 - August 1947. Nuremberg, Germany
Yad Vashem Archives



Future "Mengele twins" Ewa and Miriam Mozis, Porc, Romania
Yad Vashem Archives

Nazi experimentation on victims was never aimed at proper research, but rather solely at torturing and murdering innocent victims

of Anthropology, Human Heredity and Eugenics. At this gathering, the participants discussed meaningless racist theories, which would lead to some of the worst

atrocities against humankind the modern world had ever witnessed. Also at that conference was a young Dr. Josef Mengele, Verschuer's protégé, who was

exposed to so-called "scientific theories" on twins, dwarfism and other human phenomena — that would later earn him the infamous nickname "The Angel of Death."

Earlier this year, the *New York Times* published an article entitled "In Israel, Modern Medicine Grapples with Ghosts of the Third Reich," telling how Arab surgeon Dr. Madi el-Haj obtained permission to use an anatomy atlas prepared by Austrian Nazi party member Dr. Eduard Pernkopf, using illustrations of the bodies of Nazi victims, to operate on the shattered leg of Dvir Musai, a Jewish teenager whose leg was shattered in an explosion.

These and other examples of Nazi Germany's sweeping disregard for human rights in the name of "medical research" were discussed at an online panel entitled "Do No Harm: Medical Ethics and the Holocaust." Viewed by hundreds of scholars, medical professionals and other interested parties around the world on 1 July 2020, the panel comprised oncologist Dr. Benjamin Gesundheit, a physician who holds a doctorate in bioethics from the University of Toronto; and Prof. Dan Michman, Head of Yad Vashem's International Institute for Holocaust Research and Incumbent of the John Najmann Chair for Holocaust Studies. It was moderated by the Resesarch Institute's Senior Historian Dr. David Silberklang.

Dr. Gesundheit has been lecturing for many years on the [history of medical ethics](#) during the Holocaust at medical training

Hitler's aim, to shape a new world order based on racial principles and eugenic methodology, was aided and abetted by professionals in all fields

institutions throughout Israel and abroad. His response as to whether any use may morally be made from Nazi experimentation on victims was that most of the experiments were useless and all were malicious — the appalling activities were never aimed at proper research (there were never "control groups," for example), but rather solely at torturing and murdering innocent victims. However, he argued, if any good can be garnered from published findings, such as Pernkopf's atlas, he argued that perhaps they could be justified, although he stressed his absolute rejection of giving the authors any credit, be it on the cover of the book or as recognized medical professionals. His presentation focused on the bioethical messages that may be learned from medicine under Nazi dictatorship, and he proposed

the establishment of annual lectures on Holocaust memorial days presenting medical ethics, in collaboration with Yad Vashem and other experts and scholars.

As an historian and academic, Prof. Michman pointed out that although it lasted only 12 years and 98 days, the period of the Nazi regime was historically significant because the Holocaust was a watershed event in human history from many perspectives. The abominable crimes that took place during this period — and in such an extremely short time span — could only have happened, he argued, with the collaboration of a broad variety of enablers, among them lawyers, accountants, logistical experts and medical practitioners. Hitler's aim, to shape a new world order based on racial principles and eugenic methodology, was aided

and abetted by professionals in all of these fields, who willingly kept Jews out of their domains, and enthusiastically took upon themselves Nazi racist laws as the new "legitimate norm," thus justifying stepping out of the moral and ethical norm accepted the world over.

When asked whether the Holocaust and medical ethics should be made a compulsory course for student doctors and nurses, Prof. Michman pointed out that as Holocaust awareness is growing worldwide, this would be a useful topic to include in a variety of Holocaust seminars, regardless of the audience. Although it was an extreme event, it could, he claimed, be used as a point of departure for critical thinking, and indeed, also used to examine the flip side — the incredible work performed by Jewish medical professionals for their fellow persecuted brethren during the Shoah. Examples of this can be seen in many publications, including in Miriam Offer's new book [White Coats in the Ghetto](#) (published by Yad Vashem in Hebrew and English): Many Jewish doctors did not abandon the sick for the sake of personal rescue, in spite of the danger they faced in contracting life-threatening diseases; heroic actions were even undertaken by those who were forcefully employed in selections and experimentation.

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"Images of Nazi medical experiments should never be displayed for the 'shock factor,' but rather only on a basis of carefully considered necessity."

Prof. Dan Michman

Prof. Michman also mentioned the [excellent courses on the topic](#) currently being taught with the assistance of experts at Yad Vashem's International School for Holocaust Studies.

Dr. Gesundheit noted the importance of learning from history, and suggested that an "intelligent and meaningful" course could be taught, which would include a look at prewar medical history as well as antisemitism (as an example, Emmanuel Kant's use of the term *"Euthanasie des Judentums"* — Euthanasia of Jewishness"); Nazi ideology and its consequences; and the postwar Nuremberg doctors' trial, Helsinki Declaration, UN declarations and more. He emphasized that at such

a course he would encourage the reading of survivor testimony, and ask the students to reflect critically on how the experiences of those who lived through the Shoah may influence their own lives, both personally and professionally.

The final question posed to the panelists was about using images of Nazi medical experiments in both the professional and public domain. Dr. Gesundheit accepted that for medical students perhaps some images and certain filmed testimonies could be carefully considered for use, but only as a tool to illustrate the meaningless and fake research they claimed to cover, and the weak claim by perpetrators of having no choice but to perform them. Prof.

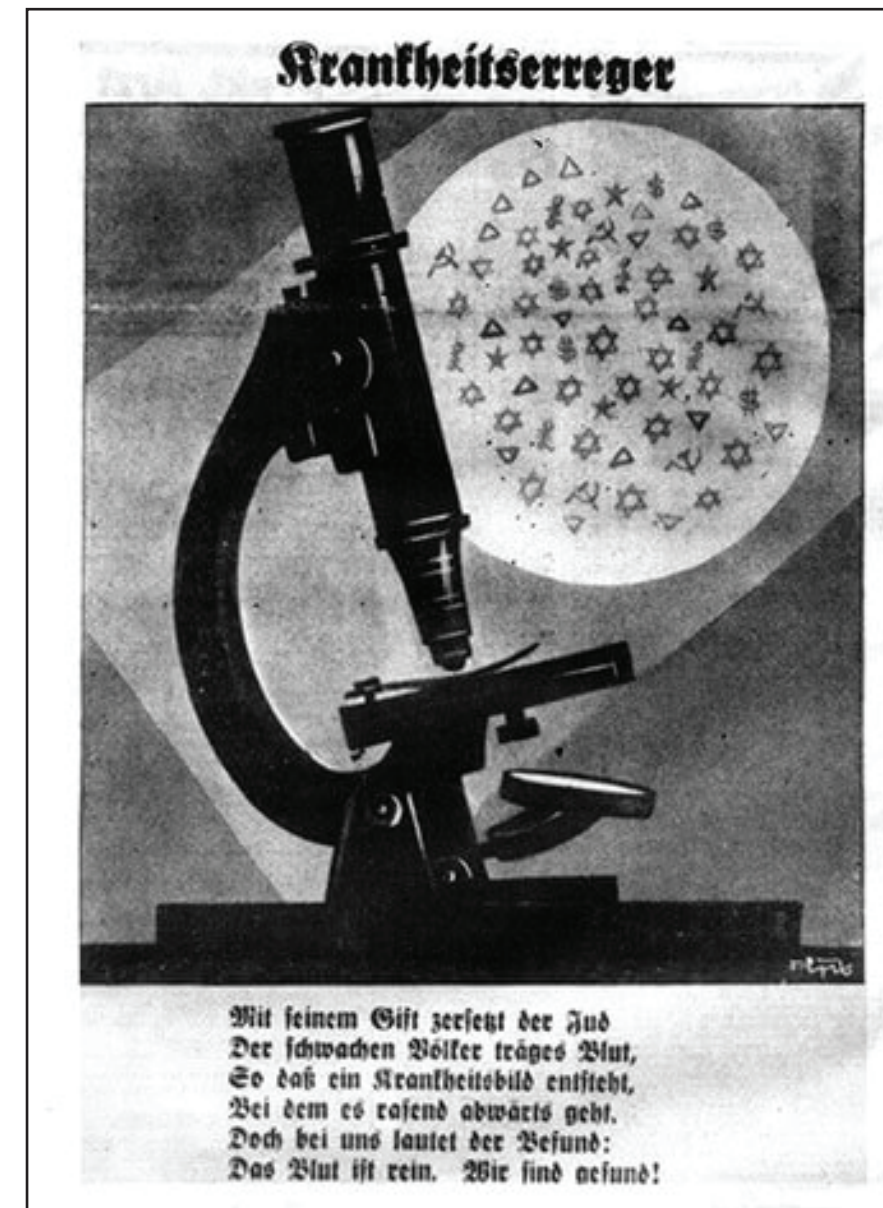


Image from [Der Stürmer](#), the Nazi newspaper, dated 15 April 1943, of a microscope revealing "germs" through symbols for the British pound and the American dollar, and for Jews, communists, and homosexuals

Michman argued that images should never be displayed just for the "shock factor," which left audiences traumatized and perplexed, but rather only on a basis of carefully considered necessity.

A fascinating discussion followed, covering topics such as the culpability of bystanders and the distortion of the topic in the hands of nefarious groups and individuals. The suggestion of Dr. Gesundheit, to use the following quote as

a preamble to the so-called "Hippocratic Oath," resounded with all the participants: "I swear by the memory of the victims of the Holocaust and the victims of perverted medical science..."

"BEYOND THE BOUNDARIES OF GOOD AND EVIL"

COURSE AT HADASSAH MEDICAL SCHOOL

Rinat Ribak

Yad Vashem's course on doctors during the Holocaust is held at The Hebrew University-Hadassah Medical School as part of the "Humans and Medicine" program, which requires third-year medical students to choose two courses dealing with aspects of medicine and the humanities and social sciences.



A ta meeting held on 24 March 1943, at which doctors and members of the Jewish leadership gathered in Šiauliai, Lithuania, to discuss a decree banning births imposed on ghetto residents, Dr. Belcher asked: "Can pregnant women be forced to have an abortion?" One of the Jewish leaders in the ghetto clarified the

dilemma: "What can we do when the ghetto is in such danger? If the risk was only to the family of the newborn, we could leave the matter to the responsibility of the person concerned, but this could endanger the entire ghetto. The results could be dire."

In one of the final sessions of the course "Beyond the Boundaries

of Good and Evil: Doctors in the Holocaust," which has been held in collaboration with Yad Vashem at Hadassah Ein Kerem Medical School for a decade, third-year students meet Shulamit Imber, Pedagogical Director of the International School for Holocaust

A maternity ward in the Warsaw ghetto run by the Jewish Health Organization TOZ
Yad Vashem Archives



Studies at Yad Vashem and Fred Hillman Chair in memory of Janusz Korczak, for a discussion on "A Profession for Leaders: Jewish Physicians during the Holocaust." During the discussion, students are required to present their personal position regarding courses of action proposed to those women in the Šiauliai ghetto. "Reviewing the event in Šiauliai teaches us every year how relevant this course is to contemporary medical students," says Sarit Hoch-Markowitz, Director of the Department of Teacher Training in Israel at the International School. "There is a lively debate in the classroom about the positions presented back in the 1940s, and the need to relate it to contemporary reality. The course feedback throughout the years also repeatedly sharpens the importance of dealing with dilemmas from the Holocaust period among those who intend to engage in the medical professions."

Explains Dr. Alex Goral of Hadassah: "The idea behind the program is that exposure to medical issues in the context of the humanities and social sciences will allow those who become doctors in a few years to better deal with complex situations."

"Our course has become the most sought after among those offered to the students, because we focus on the fact that doctors are an integral part of our lives,"

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When we speak about a terrible period of disease and death, we understand that the role of the doctors was tremendous.
Shulamit Imber

adds Imber. "In our world, they have an authority that we accept as a given. When we speak about a terrible period of disease and death, we understand that the role of the doctors was tremendous."

The course introduces students to the broad connection between medicine, science and the Holocaust. On one side stand the Nazis and their doctors who were tools in the hands of a murderous ideology; on the other, the Jewish physicians who, by virtue of their proficiency and status among the Jewish communities, were able to influence, even if only slightly, the fate of their Jewish brethren. The variety of sessions focus on questions of morality, responsibility and ethics in the work of physicians.

For students taking part in the course, the broad overview of the subject of medicine during the Holocaust is extremely significant. "As future physicians, we need to remind ourselves over and over

again our belief in preserving human life," wrote T., a fourth-year student in the final paper she submitted last year. "We must remember the patient's dignity and right to his or her body, and the value of equality — to treat everyone who needs it, regardless of religion, race, gender, economic status, etc. I believe that all people, and especially doctors, should ask themselves every day whether they have maintained in their work the values they believe in. The moral deterioration of society in general, and of physicians in particular, can quickly become a slippery slope, so the medical community must be critical of themselves and their actions on a regular basis."

The author is responsible for the course "Beyond the Boundaries of Good and Evil: Doctors during the Holocaust," and is one of the lecturers. She works in the Department for Teaching Training in Israel, International School for Holocaust Studies.

GRADUATE SPOTLIGHT

ROSA RIOS-CORTES AND ESTEBAN GONZÁLEZ-LÓPEZ | SPAIN 

Rosa Rios-Cortes MA and Dr. Esteban González-López MD, PhD, both graduates of Yad Vashem educational seminars, designed and run a course on the Holocaust and medical ethics for Spanish medical students.

In 2011, the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, Spain called on faculty members to create elective courses concerning human rights and combating all forms of discrimination. These elective subjects were designated as complementary curricula to be included in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). Combining their personal interests in history and medicine, Rosa Rios-Cortes MA and Dr. Esteban González-



Rosa Rios-Cortes and Esteban González-López

López MD, PhD, both graduates of educational seminars at Yad Vashem's International School for Holocaust Studies, submitted a proposal for a course, entitled "The Holocaust: A Reflection from Medicine." The course was accepted and began to be taught at the University's Medical School in September 2012. "We have been

teaching the course for the last nine years, for an average of 60 students annually," explains González-López. "We firmly believe that learning about the Holocaust can help teach healthcare providers professional and ethical values such as tolerance and non-discrimination."

The course comprises eight modules: historical frameworks

(1918-1945), a workshop on how to analyze written and audio-visual documents, the role of doctors and nurses in Eugenics and the so-called "Euthanasia" program, Jewish doctors in ghettos, Nazi doctors in concentration and extermination camps, medical experiments in camps, the medical and psychological consequences

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“Because we believe that visiting authentic sites creates a unique learning environment, we have also organized and guided three study trips on the topic of Holocaust and Medicine to Auschwitz, Krakow and Germany.” Rosa Rios-Cortes

faced by Holocaust survivors, and lessons from the Holocaust for modern-day medicine.

At the International Conference on Holocaust Education held in Yad Vashem in 2012, they delivered a presentation about their experiences teaching Medicine and the Holocaust in several Spanish universities.

“The goals of our course are to compare the characteristics of current professionalism with actions carried out by doctors during the National Socialist period, to analyze the significance of the Holocaust in the creation and development of rules regarding human testing during research, and to develop respectful attitudes towards gender, culture, health and other differences,” explains Rios-Cortes. “Because we believe that visiting authentic sites creates a unique learning environment, we have also organized and guided three study trips on the topic of Holocaust and Medicine

to Auschwitz and Krakow (2013 and 2014) and Germany (2017). Places where medical experiments or killing of disabled persons were conducted have a particular meaning for medical students. These are sites where the values we want to transmit in our course can be both learned and taught. We have also organized encounters for our students with Holocaust survivors in person.”

The two professors conducted research among the students regarding their opinions on bioethical issues before and after the courses held in 2014-2016. The results showed how the course contributed in a concrete manner to upholding and developing principled professional values.

“Analyzing the actions carried out by Nazi doctors and their collaborators offers a valuable tool for providing insight into the ethical dilemmas that today’s doctors and nurses may experience in their working lives,

including research limitations, beginning- or end-of-life decisions, and the influence of economic and political issues on their work,” concludes González-López. “Our students are encouraged to reflect on some of the topics covered in Yad Vashem’s [recent webinar on Medical Ethics and the Holocaust](#),

such as the use of tainted eponyms in the medical language or what to do with Pernkopf’s *Atlas of Anatomy*. It is our contention that Holocaust and Medicine can be a new paradigm for teaching ethical values to healthcare professionals and should be incorporated into their curricula worldwide.”

“It is our contention that Holocaust and Medicine can be a new paradigm for teaching ethical values to healthcare professionals and should be incorporated into their curricula worldwide.”

Dr. Esteban González-López



A group of medical students from Madrid's Universidad Autonoma visiting Block 10 in Auschwitz, where the Nazis conducted their “medical experiments.”

Courtesy: Esteban González-López

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NO BALM FOR THEIR WOUNDS

ELDERLY SURVIVORS IN THE WAKE OF THE HOLOCAUST

Leah Goldstein

“The young persons will push their way out in to the world; the early middle-aged will make the best of what life has to bring them with some remains of energy. But those over sixty, who really look over eighty and ninety, are facing an endless wait for their end.”

“Report of Visit to Berlin, 19-22 October 1945,” 24 October 1945. Wiener Holocaust Library, Henriques Papers



83-year old Simon Trampetter cutting off the yellow Star of David from the jacket of his 84-year old friend and fellow survivor Joseph Keller on 27 January 1945, Kerkrade, [Limburg] The Netherlands
Courtesy: USHMM

When one speaks of survivors today, the image that comes to mind is of the very old, in their twilight years, the majority struggling with physical and/or cognitive challenges. However, at the end of the war, most survivors of the Holocaust were in the 18-40-year age bracket, given the unprecedented life-threatening hardships they were forced to endure.

Yet, liberation also revealed certain groups of older survivors

who had managed to survive in hiding — for example, as spouses of non-Jewish citizens, or passing as “Aryans” in Germany. Some also remained alive after fleeing to the Soviet interior, or as inmates of the Theresienstadt ghetto, where they were allowed to work until the age of 65. As in many other survival stories, luck played a major part in being able to live out the war years.

What happened to this group of refugees after the war? Did they encounter different challenges than their younger peers? How

did Jewish and other support organizations relate to them? And which paths were open to them for the next stages in their lives?

As part of the “Zoom into Research” ongoing online lecture series presented by Yad Vashem’s International Institute for Holocaust Research, Prof. Dan Stone of Royal Holloway, University of London, gave a fascinating presentation of a topic relatively under-investigated in Holocaust historiography: “Elderly Survivors in the Wake of the Holocaust.”

While young adults took advantage of visas to the Land of Israel and the West to begin their new lives, the older-aged group of survivors engendered very little interest

Prof. Stone’s interest in the topic stemmed from research he has undertaken for many years on the International Tracing Service (ITS — now Arolsen Archives), and he was invited by the Research Institute’s [Diana and Eli Zborowski Center for the Study of the Aftermath of the Shoah](#) to speak about his findings.

Prof. Stone began by outlining what he defined as “the elderly” after the Holocaust. Based on life expectancy at that time, as well as recorded testimonies, photographs and self-descriptions, he arrived at the figure of 55 years or older. Interestingly, many of the photographs captioned “elderly man/woman” in a DP camp, for example, may not have actually indicated precise age, but rather the shocking appearance of younger adults who had undergone extreme physical deprivation. As one survivor described himself: “I am a homeless old man, without a roof over my head, without a

family, without any next of kin. Do I look like a human being? No, definitely not. Disheveled, untidy, destroyed.” Nevertheless, records kept by refugee organizations do indicate that there were a number of refugees, in particular from Germany, with dates of birth between 1870 and the 1880s.

Like the documentation on children after the war, it is relatively easy to find material concerning the care of elderly survivors, but rarer to read how they themselves viewed their survival, and their future. One of the best sources in this regard is the Rose Henriques Archive at London’s Wiener Holocaust Library. Hailing from an eminent London Jewish family, Henriques volunteered for the Jewish Relief Unit, part of the Jewish Committee for Relief Abroad (JCRA), which carried out vital relief work amongst the surviving remnant of Jewry in Germany after the war. Travelling to Germany at the war’s end, she

wrote of the appalling lack of care for the elderly survivors: While varying psychological and physical rehabilitation therapies for survivor children were debated, and young adults took advantage of visas to the Land of Israel and the West to begin their new lives, the older-aged group of survivors engendered very little interest or funding.

Many elderly survivors had neither the inclination nor the energy to begin life anew abroad, and for lack of an alternative, were institutionalized in nursing homes that struggled to provide even the most basic necessities. By the early 1950s, care for them became even more urgent, as DP camps began to close. The refugee issue now became one more concerned with *Gemeinde* — the communities of so-called “free livers,” endeavoring to settle down in Germany. “Unless there is a miraculous change in their composition and disposition,” Henriques warned, “they are not fated for a very long life... For all their days, I am afraid, the *Gemeinde* will need the help and encouragement of their more fortunate Jewish brethren abroad.” In another missive, she delivered a stern caution: “These pitiful remnants of thriving communities are quite unable, for the most part, to make both ends meet and our work in Germany cannot conclude until they are properly cared for.”

Kassel, den 31.5.1947

Verzeichnis von Personen, die aus dem Kz., aus Arbeitslagern usw. wieder nach K a s s e l zurückgekehrt sind. F 18-110-BB

Familien- und Zuname	Geburts-tag	Geburtsort	jetzige Anschrift.
Mame	geb. d. d. d. d.	geb. d. d. d. d.	present address
1.) Abramowitsch, Bella	7. 5. 1928	Polen	Brasselsbergerstrasse 28
2.) Berentz, Rudolf	14. 7. 1917	Bad Wildungen	Zentgrafenstrasse 128
3.) Blank, Ida	12. 11. 1877	Rotenburg/F.	Albrechtstr. 41
4.) Breiding, Lotte	22. 5. 1879	Kassel	Querallée 21
5.) Buchwalter, Ludwig	10. 3. 1919	Polen	Brasselsbergerstr. 28
6.) Cassel, von Ilse	19. 12. 1916	Breslau	Rengershäuserstr. 20
7.) Durra, Erwin	20. 9. 1920		Goetheplatz 34
8.) Edisburg, Sylvia	1. 5. 1923	Lublin	Brasselsbergerstr. 28
9.) Eljasiewicz, Abram	18. 4. 1912	Podembice	Zentgrafenstr. 156
10.) Eisenberg, Moses	3. 10. 1912	Bensburg	Neue Strasse 25
11.) " Bella	1. 7. 1918	Polen	"
12.) Fogel, Salomon	22. 7. 1920	Polen	Brasselsbergerstr. 28
13.) " Rosa	25. 5. 1920	Polen	"
14.) Garfinkel, Josef	5. 7. 1908	"	"
15.) Geisler, Johann	1. 3. 1908	Büdingen	Leipzigerstr. 375
16.) " Anni	11. 12. 1912	Minden	"
17.) " Maria	11. 5. 1931	Berleburg	"
18.) Garfunkel, Alexandra	28. 8. 1919	Lettland	Goethestrasse 150
19.) Georta, Rudolf	18. 11. 1924	Neuhof	Zentgrafenstr. 86

Holocaust survivor Rabbi Richard Feder, who would later become Chief Rabbi of Bohemia and Moravia, recorded some of the saddest testimonies as to the emotional state of the elderly survivors after the Holocaust. “We old people are completely desolate,” he wrote in his book *Jewish Tragedy: The Last Act*, published in Czech in 1947. “We have lost our brothers and sisters, children, grandchildren — everything that was dear to us, everything that made life beautiful... there is no balm that could heal these wounds.”

Desolation and loneliness, concluded Prof. Stone, is what comes through the most when investigating this group, despite efforts like that of the JRU to care for them. They may not have been the largest section of the survivor population, but they did exist and deserved the most devoted attention and support after the war — which all too often they did not receive.

This event was held as part of the activity of the Diana and Eli Zborowski Center for the Study of the Aftermath of the Shoah.

List of people who returned to Kassel from concentration camps, labor camps, etc., 31 May 1947
ITS Digital Archive, Wiener Holocaust Library, London

The 50th volume of “Yad Vashem Studies” (due out in 2022) will be dedicated to the experience and fate of the Jewish elderly before, during and after the Holocaust. The volume will include contributions from scholars in a range of fields, including history, psychology, sociology, anthropology, literary studies and gerontology.



Holocaust survivor and artist Yehuda Bacon speaking at Yad Vashem's 2018 International Educators Conference

AN UNBREAKABLE BOND

Leah Goldstein

WITNESSES,
EDUCATORS AND THE
GENERATIONS TO COME

Years before Yad Vashem's International School for Holocaust Studies opened its doors in the early 1990s, educational staff realized the importance — if not centrality — of firsthand witness testimony in Holocaust teaching and commemoration.

On the eve of his retirement from Yad Vashem after more than thirty years of dedication to the development of impactful educational seminars across the globe, Ephraim Kaye, Director of the Jewish World and International Seminars Department at the International School, gave an overview of the development of this critical component of Holocaust education.

When did survivors first start to join in the efforts of Yad Vashem to educate about the Holocaust?

In 1988, I arrived at what was then Yad Vashem's Educational Department, which had a staff of just five [today the International School has over 150 permanent staff, excluding external guides]. Already while teaching in high school I had begun to introduce survivors to the classroom. Back then, they were the parents of students of mine, and some of the boys I taught had never heard their

parents talk about their wartime experiences. I learned that the idea of survivors engaging with students had to be handled correctly; they needed to be guided as to what was appropriate to talk about, and most

importantly, to allow for a dialogue with their audience.

How did the training course for survivor witnesses begin?

In the early 1990s, my colleague



Ephraim Kaye embraces Holocaust survivor Frieda Kliger in the foyer of the Reading Room, Yad Vashem, June 2018



Holocaust survivor Mirjam Bolle being interviewed at the World Holocaust Forum, Yad Vashem, January 2020

Shulamit Imber [now the Pedagogical Head of the International School, and Fred Hillman Chair in Memory of Janusz Korczak] began to develop Yad Vashem's educational philosophy of age-appropriate and culturally targeted programs. Our then-department head Shalmi Bar Mor approached me with the idea of developing the proposal of Holocaust survivor Hana Greenfield z"l to "break the silence" of Holocaust survivors, most of whom rarely gave public testimony outside of the courtroom, even decades after the end of WWII.

Seminar participants who meet with survivors are forever changed, inspired to pass on messages of hope, faith and resilience to audiences the world over

What do these courses include?

We invited psychotherapist Moshe Harel Sternberg from the Amcha organization, which provides psychological and social support to Holocaust survivors and the Second

Generation, to help develop a five-day course that included lectures, tours of the Yad Vashem campus, and tools to enable survivors to tell their story in a concise and effective manner. It was a very delicate

process balancing the enormous need of the survivors to tell all of their story, as a monologue, with the necessity to relate shortened versions according to time, place and events, so that the audience is given the chance to digest their words and ask questions.

Sternberg also encouraged the survivors to develop a kind of "visiting card" — a short and informational introduction to themselves, so that those engaging with them may view them as real people, with histories, family connections and careers that extend beyond their Holocaust years. Over time, some 450 survivor witnesses have attended our training courses, where they learned to trust our experience as educators, and adhere to our guidelines in order to ensure as effective an encounter as possible for all of our audiences.

How do audiences generally react to hearing firsthand testimony?

After so many years developing Yad Vashem's world-class educational seminars, I can honestly say that there is nothing that comes close to really internalizing events of the Holocaust like hearing a survivor speak and interacting with them. I've seen people literally break down in tears, embrace or hold hands with survivors, and even laugh with them: They create bonds

they never would have thought possible — even those who hail from countries with very few Jewish residents such as China, or regions with racial tensions such as South Africa. The kaleidoscope of stories they hear, from survivors who hailed from countries across Europe and North Africa, leaves an impression that I believe lasts forever in their minds and hearts. Beyond the

The survivors develop a kind of "visiting card," so that those engaging with them may view them as real people beyond their Holocaust years

obvious imperative to learn the facts of the Holocaust and the creative and vital pedagogical tools to teach it in their own classrooms, seminar participants who meet with survivors are forever changed, inspired to pass on messages of [hope, faith and resilience](#) to audiences the world over.

How are the seminars also important for the survivors?

The seminars give the survivors the chance to tell about their

experiences, and a purpose to both their survival and the lives that they rebuilt here in Israel. You would be amazed at the lengths they will go to in order to join our seminars either in Jerusalem, or abroad — some have flown as far as New Zealand, and many have joined students on their traditional roots trip to Poland before or during their national military service. As one survivor told me, "Yad Vashem is filled with life — soldiers, visitors and educators. That is why I need to give testimony." Our survivor witnesses are a true community we have built together.

What will happen when these kinds of testimonies are no longer feasible due to the absence of survivor witnesses in the world?

There is no doubt that the face of Holocaust-related seminars, as well as commemoration ceremonies and media interviews, will change forever once survivors are no longer available to give their precious, irreplaceable, firsthand testimonies before live audiences. But Yad Vashem has been preparing for this eventuality for some years, through gathering artifacts, artwork and documentation that are the "silent witnesses" to the atrocities of the Holocaust, as well as with its flagship educational video series ["Witnesses and Education."](#) Developed by the International School's e-Learning Department, this unique series takes Holocaust

>> AN UNBREAKABLE BOND

WITNESSES, EDUCATORS AND THE GENERATIONS TO COME



Holocaust survivor Avraham Carmi giving a workshop at the Conference for Israeli Educators, Yad Vashem, July 2015

survivors back to the locations in which their prewar lives developed, their wartime experiences took place, and their new lives were rebuilt. The videos have proved to be extremely effective in classrooms and courses around the world, either as whole units, or broken up into shorter segments to illustrate a particular Holocaust-related theme or episode. This is certainly what I would call “the next best thing” to meeting a survivor in person, although obviously that bond is much harder to engender via a screen.

Nevertheless, we are still taking full advantage of the fact that they are

still with us, and creating chances for people to hear them speak. Every meeting with a survivor — in person or online — is a blessing. As Prof. Elie Weisel remarked, “When you listen to a witness, you become a witness.”

In which ways has Yad Vashem adapted its partnership with survivors in the Coronavirus era?

Just like our department, I know that many other members of Yad Vashem staff in the different divisions have made a concerted effort to keep in touch with our survivor witnesses during this difficult period, to let them know we

are concerned, and to try to help them in any way possible.

A few of them have been able to master the technology and join us for online seminars, interviews and memorial ceremonies — which are reaching thousands of participants around the world, including other survivors. This is how we close the circle — the unbreakable bond between the witnesses, the educators and the generations to come.

CONVERSATION WITH A SURVIVOR: RENA QUINT



firsthand, and put forward a range of questions to her at the end of the lecture. Besides practical issues such as how she eventually learned the name of her real parents, audience members were keen to learn what kept her going during those terribly difficult years, if there was a point at which she no longer felt like a child due to everything that happened to her, how she has dealt with the past, and what messages she had for future generations.

Rena, in turn, was deeply moved to address and interact with the diverse international audience. “Zoom is a new platform for me, and it is working out well,” she later commented. “I am able to speak to people all over the world, many of whom never had the chance to visit Israel and Yad Vashem. It is more important than ever to tell about what happened during the Holocaust. I feel that I owe it to the victims, who cannot speak for themselves. I want to make sure they are never forgotten.”

Hundreds of participants from around the world — including Italy, Greece, New Zealand, Finland, Poland, South Africa, Mexico, UK, USA, Canada, Portugal, Belgium, Hong Kong, Ireland, Argentina, Puerto Rico, Latvia, Brazil, Austria and India — joined a [special virtual conversation with Holocaust survivor Rena Quint](#) to mark the Jewish New Year, Rosh Hashanah.

Rena was born as Freida “Freidel” Lichtenstein in 1935 in Piotrków, Poland. In 1939, the Nazis occupied her hometown, forever altering the course of her life. By 1942, both of Rena’s parents had been murdered and she was left alone — an orphan — forced to endure horrific suffering in the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp. After liberation, Rena was adopted by a Jewish couple in the United States, and she went on to become a devoted mother and educator. For over thirty years, Rena has dedicated herself to telling her remarkable life story of survival and resilience, including details of the fascinating search for her identity.

Those who joined the event were fascinated to hear Rena’s story

"TORCHBEARERS"

MARTIN AND ILANA MOSHAL

ENDOW THE MOSHAL SHOAH LEGACY CAMPUS

Renowned philanthropists Martin and Ilana Moshal recently endowed the Moshal Shoah Legacy Campus at Yad Vashem, as well as the Archival Repository in the David and Fela Shapell Family Collections Center, where all of Yad Vashem's original archival documents will be preserved for eternity.

The Moshal Shoah Legacy Campus is expected to be completed in 2023 on the Mount of Remembrance in Jerusalem. The Campus will house the David and Fela Shapell Family Collections Center, expected to

be completed by 2022, which will consist of four underground floors containing Yad Vashem's unrivalled collections of Holocaust-era archival materials, artifacts and artworks and conservation laboratories, as well as a gallery

endowed by the Wolfson Foundation on the ground floor; the already completed Joseph Wilf Curatorial Center; the renovated David and Ruth Mitzner Auditorium and its temporary exhibitions lobby; the new Family and Children's



Architectural rendering
of the new Moshal Shoah
Legacy Campus
Courtesy: Skora Architects
Rendering: Gilad Lan

Exhibition Gallery; the Legacy Sculpture Garden; and the Legacy Plaza.

Martin Paul Moshal, an entrepreneur and philanthropist, was born in Durban, South Africa in 1970. He graduated from the University of Cape Town with a degree in Business Science, and has been engaged in the development and commercial expansion of a range of businesses. Today, Martin is a successful long-term investor and is involved in several technology companies, including a number of start-ups.

Martin firmly believes that there is no secret formula for success, other than hard work, motivation, a lot of patience and no small amount of luck. "I was lucky enough to have been given two things that, more than anything else, helped me on the road to success: a good education, and the support and encouragement of my family to believe in myself."

In 2009, Martin founded the Moshal Scholarship Program, which currently supports 967 financially disadvantaged university students in Israel, South Africa and Ukraine, and has 616 alumni. He believes that inequality in education caused by financial circumstances is one of the greatest ongoing tragedies, and that education is the most effective route out of poverty. The values of the Moshal Scholarship Program include hard



Yad Vashem Torchbearers
Martin and Ilana Moshal

work, perseverance, integrity, respect, community and the "Pay It Forward" principle of contributing to the Program and wider society. Martin encourages his scholars to give back to others however they can, whenever and wherever they have the opportunity.

Martin has made significant contributions to Israel not just through his scholarships, but also by supporting technology companies through the SigmaLabs start-up accelerator and the Bar-Lev High Tech Park, which will bring 5,000 jobs to the Western Galilee. In 2017, Martin received an Honorary Doctorate from the Technion-Israel Institute of Technology, and in 2018 he was awarded an Honorary Fellowship by The Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

Martin's wife Ilana, a children's clothing designer by profession, was born in Jerusalem in 1979. At the age of 11, she moved to South Africa with her family. Ilana's paternal grandparents survived the Shoah, but three of Ilana's great-grandparents and her great-uncle were murdered during the Holocaust. Martin and Ilana have four children: Joseph, Zoe, Nellie and Bella.

The Moshal's generous endowment is in memory of Ilana's relatives, distant cousins of the Moshal family and all others who were murdered in the Shoah; and in support of the vital role Yad

Vashem plays in preserving the physical evidence of the Holocaust in order to remember the past and thus shape the future. In the words of Martin Moshal, "We are immensely honored to be allowed to play our small part in the continued work of such an important institution. Yad Vashem is vital not just for Israel and the Jews of the Diaspora, but also for all humanity."

Chairman of the Yad Vashem Directorate Avner Shalev stated, "I particularly want to note the outstanding generosity of Martin and Ilana Moshal, who have enabled us to establish The

commitment... is the true foundation of Yad Vashem's unique, universal and healing impact in this turbulent world."

Especially with the passing of the generation of survivors — witnesses to the horrors of the Holocaust — the preservation of their stories and memories, as well as those of the six million Jewish victims, must be ensured for generations to come.

The Moshals' donation is the third-largest donation in the history of Yad Vashem, and it is Yad Vashem's distinct privilege to welcome Martin and Ilana Moshal as its first "Torchbearers." Yad

The Moshal's generous endowment is in memory of Ilana's relatives, distant cousins of the Moshal family and all others who were murdered in the Shoah; and in support of the vital role Yad Vashem plays in preserving the physical evidence of the Holocaust

Moshal Shoah Legacy Campus. Their remarkable commitment to Yad Vashem is the epitome of the special partnerships that we enjoy with our leading friends around the world. This inspiring

Vashem expresses its heartfelt appreciation to the Moshal family for their strategic donation, in particular during these difficult and uncertain times.

FLYING TO REMEMBER

Simmy Allen

Seventy-five years after the end of WWII, the Israeli Air Force (IAF), under the leadership of Maj. Gen. Amikam Norkin, participated in a joint commemorative flypast mission together with the German Air Force over the skies of the notorious [Dachau concentration camp](#). The flypast was part of a larger joint exercise between the German and Israeli Air Forces.

The IAF pilots took more than the memory of the six million Jewish men, women and children murdered during the Holocaust on the mission. Yad Vashem, the World Holocaust Remembrance Center, agreed to loan an original artifact from its collections to make this historic journey back to Germany: a belt once worn by Holocaust survivor and former Dachau prisoner Peisach Smilg.

Smilg was born on in October 1896 to Eliezer and Sara Rivka Smilg in Kėdainiai, Lithuania. An astute youngster, he studied in *cheder* and spoke several languages, including Hebrew, English, German, French, Russian and Lithuanian.

Joint flypast by the Israeli and German air forces over the site of the Dachau Concentration Camp, August 2020



Prior to WWI, Eliezer ran a family farm in the city of [Šiauliai](#).

With the outbreak of the war, Peisach's plans to study pharmacy changed, and he began working on the farm. He proved to be a successful businessman, expanding the family's business by ordering better quality seeds from Germany. Later, he opened a small lemon-juicing factory. Nevertheless, the majority of his time was devoted to volunteering in community affairs. He was an active member and leader of

the [Maccabi](#) youth movement in Šiauliai, as well as a member of the Hapoel Hamizrachi Zionist political movement.

In 1941, when the Germans invaded the country, the Jews of Šiauliai were relocated to the ghetto erected in the city. In July 1944, Peisach and his brother Jacob were deported to [Stutthoff concentration camp](#) and around a month later, on 18 August — 76 years to the day before the historic flypast — they were transferred to Dachau. The only item Peisach had

with him from his life before the war was a belt, which he managed to hold on to until liberation. At that point, the two brothers were the sole survivors of their extended family.

In 1948, Peisach and Jacob Smilg immigrated to the newly established State of Israel together with their wives, Sarah and Paula. Peisach Smilg passed away in 1992. His daughter, Esther, donated her father's belt to Yad Vashem for posterity, in order that future generations might learn about her

The only item Peisach had with him from his life before the war was a belt, which he managed to hold on to until liberation



father's personal story and about the Holocaust.

Ahead of the flypast, Esther Smilg and several other Holocaust survivors and Second Generation members met with Yad Vashem Chairman Avner Shalev and IAF Commander Norkin in Tel Aviv. Among them was Holocaust survivor and former Dachau prisoner [Abba Naor](#); and Aviva Plash, whose husband was a prisoner in Dachau and whose grandson was one of the pilots participating in the flypast.

In addition to passing over Dachau, the IAF flew above the Fürstenfeldbruck Airport near Munich, where nine Israeli athletes were brutally massacred by Palestinian terrorists during the 1972 Summer Olympic Games. In light of this, Yad Vashem also provided the IAF with a replica of a drawing created by Munich-born Holocaust survivor Hellmut Bachrach-Barée, **Death March:**

Dachau to Tölz, which is displayed in Yad Vashem's Holocaust History Museum.

With the ascent of the Nazis to power, both Hellmut and his father Emanuel were barred from working as artists. In November 1944, Hellmut was arrested, and deported to two sub-camps of the [Buchenwald concentration camp](#) at Stassfurt. With the liquidation of the camps in early April 1945, he was sent to Buchenwald, where he joined the death march of some 4,500 prisoners to Dachau. In May, the prisoners arrived at Bad Tölz. Throughout the death marches, Bachrach-Barée recorded his experiences in drawings, including the one taken on the flypast. Created in May 1945, the artwork depicts several Jewish prisoners being led on a death march by a Nazi guard. Following the Allied victory, he was liberated and returned to Munich, where he continued to draw, concentrating

The belt worn during the Holocaust by Peisach Smilg
Yad Vashem Artifacts Collection

mainly on horses, landscapes and portraits. He died in Munich in 1969.

"The stories of Peisach Smilg, Hellmut Bachrach-Barée and thousands of others, all told through the numerous letters, documents, photographs, artifacts and artworks housed on the Mount of Remembrance, serve as everlasting witnesses to the horrors of the Holocaust," said Avner Shalev. "Even as Holocaust denial and distortion continue to plague global society both in the physical and digital worlds, Yad Vashem's mission is unchanged — to ensure that the Shoah is never relegated to the annals of history, and continues to remain relevant today and for generations to come."



The artwork depicts several Jewish prisoners being led on a death march by a Nazi guard

Hellmut Bachrach-Barée
(1898-1969),
**Death March: Dachau to
Tölz**, April 1945
Yad Vashem Art Collection

A STORY IN THE MAKING

THE HOLOCAUST
IN LATVIAN CINEMA

Liat Benhabib and Mimi Ash



Yad Vashem's
Visual Center

The fourth season of Yad Vashem's Film Club presented online screenings between May and August 2020 to audiences of thousands, each with an introduction by filmmakers, academics and critics.

Yad Vashem's [online film catalogue](#) includes some 100 titles produced in Latvia or dealing with the Holocaust of Latvian Jews. Among them are important films by Boris Maftzir, Lukáš Přibyl and others — the esteemed creators of "The Latvian

New Wave," whose films deal with the nation's plethora of historical scars. Directors like Viesturs Kairišs and Liepāja-born Laila Pakalniņa are associated with the same wave of contemporary Latvian art cinema.

One of the best known Latvian films of recent times is *The Mover*

(Dāvis Sīmanis Jr., 2018). It tells the story of [Jānis Lipke and his wife Johanna](#), who were recognized by Yad Vashem in 1966 as [Righteous Among the Nations](#), and are considered national heroes in Latvia. *The Mover*, which was submitted by Latvia

***The Mover* tells the story of Jānis Lipke and his wife Johanna, who were recognized by Yad Vashem in 1966 as Righteous Among the Nations**

for the Academy Awards, was also featured in the fourth season of Yad Vashem's "Film Club" — which this year was operated online, due to the national shutdown in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Jānis Lipke was a hard-working day laborer who worked during the war for the German Air Force," explained Masha Pollak-Rozenberg, Director of the Guiding Department in Yad Vashem's International School for Holocaust Studies, before the screening of *The Mover*. "He was put in charge of transporting Jews and used his position to save dozens of people. He and his wife Johanna sheltered Jews on their farm, and even hid Jews in the basement of their home. His actions during the Nazi occupation regime put him and his family in great danger."

Latvian cinema has existed in the international arena since Latvia's independence in 1991, and documentaries dealing with the Holocaust have been produced in Latvia from its early days. Among them is a film by the renowned Ukrainian-

born Sergei Loznitsa, a high-profile documentary filmmaker as well as a successful director of feature films. His film, *The Old Jewish Cemetery*, deals with the Jewish cemetery in Riga, which was established in 1725 and was in use until the end of the 1930s. During the war, it became a place for the mass burial of Jews murdered in the Riga ghetto. Today the cemetery is neglected and abandoned and is a meeting place for local youth, drunks, and American tourists. In his film, Loznitsa describes the loss of Jewish culture.

Loznitsa's revered teacher was Hertz Frank, who immigrated to Israel from Riga in 1992, and died in March 2013 in Jerusalem. Until his death, which came suddenly during the making of his latest film, he was invited to present his award-winning films at international festivals, and to teach at universities and film schools. Frank was one of the founders of the Riga School of Poetic Documentary Cinema, but in Israel, like many new immigrants, he failed to be accepted by the local

establishment, and only after his death did he gain the recognition he deserved. In his film *The Jewish Street*, Frank recounts the memories of Latvian Jews about the Riga ghetto and the mass murder in the surrounding forests.

Indeed, a look at Latvian cinema could not be complete without mentioning a short film marked "Liepāja 1941," the only filmed documentation of mass murder during the Holocaust — one minute and 39 seconds to be precise. In this short sequence, Jews are seen getting off a truck and being led to a sand dune, on the edge of which are groups of Nazi soldiers and Latvian collaborators. They raise their rifles and shoot. The Jews fall into the ditch and sand is thrown on them. This unique documentation, filmed by Nazi naval soldier Reinhard Wiener, was accidentally captured on Wiener's camera while on a trip to the beach. This sequence became not only a historical document, but also served as evidence at the Eichmann trial, where it was first presented.

The fifth season of the Yad Vashem Film Club, a joint endeavor by Yad Vashem's Commemoration and Community Relations Division and Visual Center, is due to begin in March 2021, and will also be in an online format.

RESCUE BY JEWS IN WARSAW

Leah Goldstein

”

“For a Jew hiding out on the ‘Aryan side,’ the front line runs along the city’s streets and squares, although they are a long way from bullets and bombs... The front line accompanies an escapee every step of the way, whether he stops in a store to buy some bread, or before a stall to buy a book, or in a gateway to tie up a loose shoelace, or finally on the stairs in front of a stranger’s door before he manages to run to the apartment which will swallow him up and which will give him shelter that day.” Szymon Gliksman

In her publication [*Such a Beautiful Sunny Day: Jews Seeking Refuge in the Polish Countryside 1942-1945*](#) (Yad Vashem Publications, 2017), Prof. Barbara Engelking, an eminent scholar of the Holocaust in Poland, tells a story of Jewish struggle for survival in a complex landscape of fear, betrayal and death. In the latest volume (48: 1-2) of [*Yad Vashem Studies*](#), which is now under the new editorial directorship of Dr. Sharon Kangisser Cohen, Prof. Engelking looked at the lesser known phenomenon of Jews helping other Jews hide out on the “Aryan side” in Warsaw.

“After the liquidation of the Warsaw ghetto, a total of around 20,000 Jews were in hiding, for longer or shorter periods, on the city’s so-called ‘Aryan side,’” explains Prof. Engelking. “Some of them had never moved into the ghetto; some had escaped by one way or another; and others had come to the capital counting on the fact that a large city would provide them with greater anonymity and thus increase their chances of survival. Survival was possible if you had a number of resources — and not just material ones, such as money and possessions to sell. Non-material resources included courage, determination, an awareness of danger and quick reactions; biological assets (a ‘good appearance’); cultural basics, such

A girl from Krakow who was hidden on the ‘Aryan side’ of Warsaw.
Yad Vashem Archives



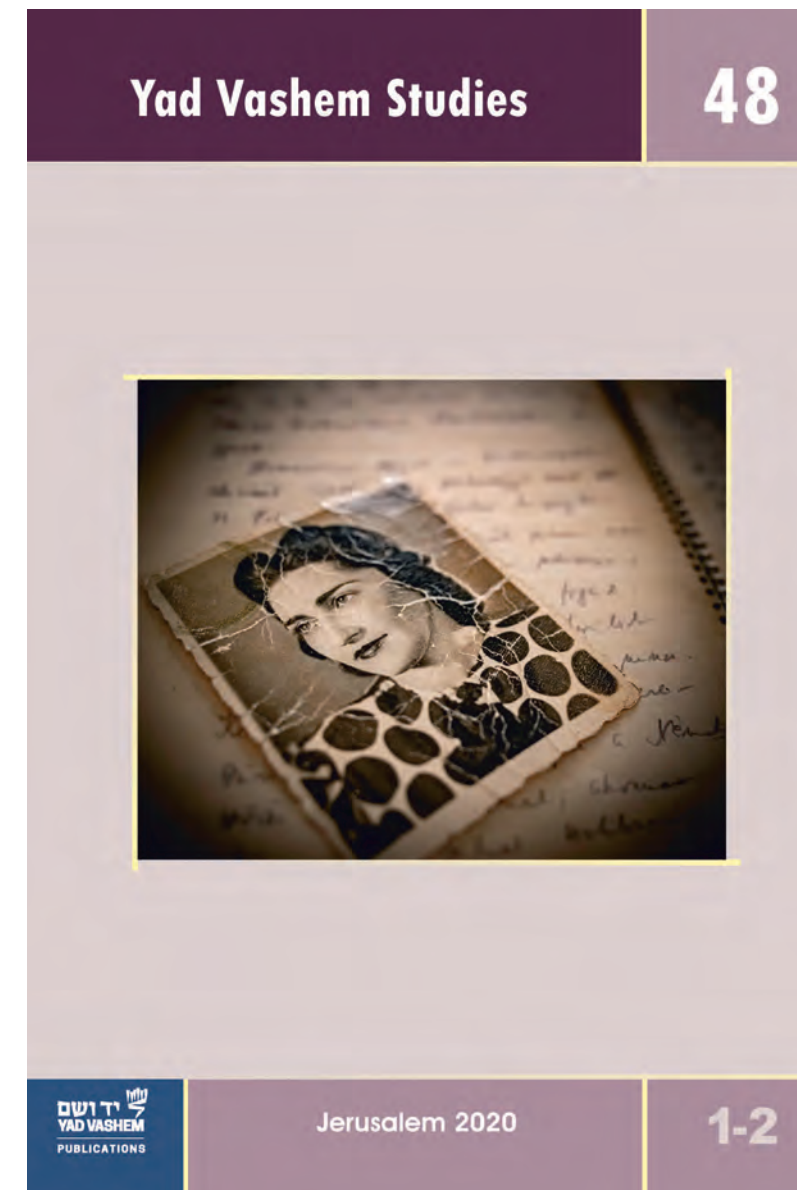
Prof. Engelking's article shows how Jews hiding out in Warsaw handled a great many problems on their own, how much they helped one another, and just how much they did not fit the stereotype of passive victims



Marit Avron while she lived with a Christian family on the "Aryan side" of Warsaw
Yad Vashem Archives

as a very good command of Polish, and a knowledge of customs and the Catholic religion; and a social network, such as family, friends, and contacts. Survival did not depend on having all of these resources, or even most of them, but survivors' accounts usually relate to a combination of some of them."

In her article, Prof. Engelking presents several stories of survival in Warsaw that focus on one of these resources; namely, social ties among Jews in hiding. The examples she brings are of Jews helping one another within the framework of spontaneous networks, unconnected with any institution or organization, and are based on ties linking family members, friends, or neighbors from one small town. They present self-sufficient Jewish help, which operated more or less without any Polish involvement — or, to be more precise, without any conscious Polish involvement. Poles may have played a passive role in Jewish activities — they rented out apartments, offered employment, and sold documents — yet they were often unaware that they were dealing with Jews. The Jews were the active ones seeking help, while the Poles were the passive ones who had access to resources needed for survival, which were often bought from them.



Many Jews in hiding assumed additional danger by helping their families, friends, and complete strangers, taking far greater risks than Poles who were helping Jews, since they were not being hunted on the streets by the *shmaltsovniks*

(wartime extortionists). Prof. Engelking's article shows how Jews hiding out in Warsaw handled a great many problems on their own, how much they helped one another, and just how little they fit the stereotype of passive victims.

In her testimony, for example, Madzia Teichner recalls a Jew from Krosno, Mosze Haftel, who, as Jan Krupiński, took advantage of his "Aryan" appearance and did not go into hiding. He was thus able to do a great deal of good for his fellow Jews, producing forged papers for them. It was that much easier for him, since he was also a printer by trade. Haftel not only made her forged documents, but then stayed in touch with Madzia, supporting and helping her at critical moments. After the outbreak of the Warsaw Uprising in 1944, he took Madzia, her young son Gabriel, and her friend Wanda Rozenberg to Kraków and then to Zakopane, where they sat out the occupation.

One of the more well-known illustrations of survival thanks to Jewish solidarity and mutual assistance is a group of over a dozen orphans aged between eight and sixteen who sold cigarettes on Trzech Krzyży Square. "Most of these children had been involved in smuggling into the ghetto beforehand, and they knew all the hiding and crossing places; they were independent, plucky, and knew how to run away fast," explains Prof. Engelking. "They got by in various ways, singing on the streetcars and on the street, buying and selling, peddling newspapers, vodka, moonshine, and anything they could to German soldiers going on leave."

The children met on the streets, recognized one another, and helped each other through difficult patches; they shared information about friendly people and safe houses. Over time, Józef Zysman, who worked for the Jewish National Committee (ŻKN), became interested in them and, after breaking down their initial mistrust, began helping the children, supporting them financially, finding them somewhere to stay for the night, and getting them false identity papers. “We were very excited about the papers,” recalls Peretz Hochman. “We would walk around the square and at every opportunity we would let our papers drop on the ground so that young Poles could see that we were not just any old ragamuffins or Jews.”

Most of the “cigarette kids” survived thanks to mutual assistance, intuition, and acquired experience. The camaraderie of fate, reciprocal trust, and solidarity were the group’s key resource in helping them to survive.

Aid was extended not only to family, friends or prewar neighbors, but also to complete strangers. This solidarity is even more astonishing given that it took place under circumstances of enormous risk, as contact with other Jews increased the danger considerably. Irena Meizel, who

lived on the “Aryan side” as Janina Lewandowska, testified that Jews in the area had to behave as if they did not know one another at all. “If you bumped into your best friends and acquaintances on the street, you looked the other way and did not make eye contact, so as to avoid the suspicion that you knew each other.”

Nevertheless, Janina Pańska, a Jew who helped a great many in hiding, had “a truly ‘Aryan’ appearance and name, thanks to which she hardly needed forged papers, since all that had to be changed was her religion from Jewish to Roman Catholic.” She worked as a courier for over a dozen Jews who never came out of hiding, selling off their belongings hidden in a number of places, and supplying them with food, money, medicine and books.

“The realization of the potential peril arising from contact between Jews in hiding imposed a

need to take even greater care,” comments Prof. Engelking. “Thus, the courage of those Jews who risked their lives providing aid not only to those close to them, but also to complete strangers, deserves great respect. There were those who even did it with panache and on a large scale.” One spectacular example of such aid was the actions of Wilhelm Bachner, an engineer from Bielsko. Speaking fluent German and with a “favorable appearance” and an engineering degree from the University of Brno, he was hired immediately by a fast-growing architectural and building firm in Dresden, which was seeking lucrative military contracts. Bachner convinced his boss that materials from demolished buildings could be bought cheaply in the ghetto, and with the appropriate pass he shuttled between the ghetto and the “Aryan side,” delivering false

identity papers and work permits, and bringing out trapped Jews. As the firm began to need additional construction workers and office staff, Bachner subsequently employed a great many Jews at its offices. Surviving a number of close calls and unforeseen threats, he displayed courage, daring, steely nerves and self-control.

By fighting the Nazi enemy on this front through helping other Jews, Bachner, Pańska, Haftel and countless others

displayed exceptional bravery, determination and a will to resist. They often found unexpected reserves of courage within themselves. Not the passive subjects of aid by Poles, they were active, resourceful people, brave and full of initiative, who saved not just themselves, but also members of their own families and others — even strangers — all linked by a common fate. Although the threat of death lay at every step, they risked their own lives in order to save other

Jews, and their stories serve as an inspiration to all.

The publication of this volume of “Yad Vashem Studies” was made possible through the generous support of Mrs. Johanna (Hannie) Catherina Kiprono Biwott in memory of the members of her community in Amsterdam who did not survive the Holocaust.

Warsaw ghetto wall
Yad Vashem Archives



FINDING THE RIGHT FORMULA

HOLOCAUST EDUCATION IN THE COVID ERA

Jane Jacobs

Constantly changing regulations have prompted an ongoing re-evaluation of how COVID-19 has impacted education around the world.

On a balmy late evening in August, Eliana Rapp Badihi carefully closes the door of her children's bedroom. While neighbors in her Jerusalem suburb retire for the night, Badihi, Head of the Spanish-Language Section at Yad Vashem's International School for Holocaust Studies, switches on her computer to begin facilitating a remote Holocaust education training

program. The day is just beginning for her audience: Some 300 people will be connecting from across Latin America for this professional webinar, one of dozens carried out monthly by Yad Vashem's experts since the onset of the Coronavirus pandemic. To date, training programs, lectures, panel discussions, interviews with survivors, virtual tours, and other forms of innovative online content

have been disseminated via various platforms in some 15 languages, directly reaching hundreds of thousands of participants.

"Truthfully, we didn't know what to expect when we first moved these educational activities online," reflects Dr. Eyal Kaminka, Lily Safra Chair for Holocaust Education and Director of the International School for Holocaust Studies. "The world

was in flux, and every educational organization — not just Yad Vashem — was scrambling to make virtual content available, engaging and relevant. We had no idea if we would find an audience, or if the content we offered would resonate with them at such a point in history."

Kaminka need not have been concerned: Thousands of Yad Vashem graduates, educators, friends and supporters, as well as members of the wider public worldwide, logged on to Yad Vashem's online programs from their computers, tablets and smartphones, and continue to do so.

Months into the pandemic, staff at the International School for Holocaust Studies can now investigate the effects of this unscheduled, dramatic shift in activity and consider its impact.

Creativity during Crisis

Israeli cases of COVID-19 were identified in Israel in February 2020, with the first death from the virus, 88-year-old Holocaust survivor Aryeh Even, recorded in March — just a few days after the enforcement of a national lockdown. Significant pivoting on the part of

many Israeli educational institutions was required immediately. Israeli school, student and military groups could no longer visit the shuttered Yad Vashem campus. Professional training activities for educators from Israel and courses and seminars for overseas educators were cancelled or postponed.

Kaminka recalls turning to his staff with the question of what could be done, rather than what could not. Searching for creative solutions in the face of the uncertainty brought new ideas and approaches to the fore. With Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes'



Remembrance Day just weeks away, usually the peak of the International School's annual programmatic output, the School was flooded with a deluge of requests for assistance in implementing online Holocaust education programming in Israel and abroad. Educational Technology experts in the e-Learning Department worked around the clock to adapt and create new content for widespread use. Kaminka was firm: "We wanted everyone — educators, community leaders, platoon commanders, parents at home with their kids — to have suitable, age-appropriate resources at their fingertips."

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"We wanted everyone — educators, community leaders, platoon commanders, parents at home with their kids — to have suitable, age-appropriate resources at their fingertips." Dr. Eyal Kaminka

The irony of functioning under extreme uncertainty and fear was not lost on Shulamit Imber, veteran Director of Pedagogy at the International School and Fred Hillman Chair in Memory of Janusz Korczak, who has been pioneering techniques in Holocaust education for several decades. For Imber, navigating these uncharted waters presented both

challenges and new perspectives. "Around Holocaust Remembrance Day, when I was delivering several Zoom lectures a day, I suddenly took stock of the thousands of people who had plugged in to listen to lectures on the Holocaust, who were finding depth and genuine connection with concepts about survival as an attempt to maintain values in a crumbling world," she opines. "It was as if the reality of living in a terrifying pandemic created a deepened interest in learning about the Holocaust." Imber's insights were reflected in the increased numbers of queries received from teachers

and learners, as well as online users registering for Yad Vashem's courses. With open access, an influx of interested parties could avail themselves of the programming alongside seasoned Yad Vashem graduates and educators. Another unexpected advantage of working from digital platforms was the inclusion of international experts,

who during "normal" times could not visit Yad Vashem to present a 40-minute lecture, could now deliver a guest webinar, reaching hundreds at the touch of a button.

Learning to adapt

Constantly changing regulations have prompted an ongoing re-evaluation of how COVID-19 has impacted education around the world. Kaminka notes a wealth of academic research, as well as survey data published by the UN, examining the effects of the disruption: "We are living through this historic 'experiment,' and so we are mindful of the teachers, the students, the principals and education directors, who — just like us — have taken it upon themselves to educate outside of their regular spheres of teaching and learning."

While not yet possible to ascertain conclusively the impact of the Coronavirus on Holocaust education, some ramifications are already apparent to those in the field. Prior to the pandemic, Holocaust education was perceived as a "heavy" subject, openly balked at by many teachers. "One of the ways we overcome fears of teaching about the Shoah is to create a safe setting in a classroom, developing connections between teacher and learners," says Nurit Davidson, Head of the Israeli Teacher Training Section at the International School. "We can't create this close connection over Zoom, nor can we

safely guide educational processes, so we have had to adapt." Despite the trepidation regarding new formats, Davidson's department reports a welcome upswing in the numbers of Israeli teachers registering for online training. "We seem to have found the right formula, and educators are receptive to it."

Equally enthused are the many participants from overseas, partaking of programming in various languages. "This is the closest thing to actually being in Jerusalem. You give me a lifeline!" commented an Argentinian graduate following Badihi's August webinar. Yet virtual output, while currently occupying center stage, is still no substitute for in-person programming, with Yad Vashem's experts mindful not to oversaturate learners who have already had to transfer many aspect of their life online. Further, while many unexpected advantages abound, not all of Yad Vashem's

Ongoing efforts remain in place to virtually recreate educational tours and workshops on the Yad Vashem campus



educational programs can undergo this transfer successfully. In some countries, for example, there is not sufficient online capacity, meaning that cohorts of overseas educators may not be reached until the pandemic wanes.

Ongoing efforts remain in place to virtually recreate educational tours and workshops on the Yad Vashem campus, "but we have to acknowledge the limitations," says Masha Pollak-Rozenberg, Director of the International School's Guiding Department, which typically welcomes tens of thousands of students from Israel and abroad through the doors of the school annually. "Young people seek to connect to Yad Vashem through the campus itself. There is only so much that a virtual experience can create, in terms of connection. These solutions remain temporary."

While so many fervently hope that teaching and learning will soon

once again resume normal "pre-pandemic" life, Kaminka ponders whether the educational landscape will be forever altered, and whether this is a desirable outcome. "This new reality has taught us how to seize the unprecedented, to grasp at opportunities. I don't want that creativity to fade. Our subject matter teaches of overcoming insurmountable odds: I hope that our current lived experience will be reflected in the way we teach the Holocaust, once COVID-19 is behind us."

Yad Vashem gratefully acknowledges its many generous partners, who have upheld their support for its educational undertakings during the challenging COVID-19 period.

The author is International Relations Section Head, International School for Holocaust Studies.

THE STRUGGLE BETWEEN LIGHT AND DARKNESS

JEWISH FESTIVALS DURING THE HOLOCAUST

Yona Kobo

Marking the festivals in prayer and song and performing customs as much as conditions, time and place would allow, in the ghettos and the camps and in hiding, gave Jews something to hold onto, a feeling of continuity and hope for the future, as part of the ancient tradition and as a link in the chain of generations past.



A boy playing
with a dreidel on
Hanukkah, Berlin,
Germany, 1930s
Yad Vashem Archives

“It was the eve of Hanukkah, and we took a potato, cut it in half and made a hole in the middle. We stole some oil from the machines we worked on, we

pulled thread out from a blanket and made it into a wick — and that is how we lit the Hanukkiah [Hanukkah menorah], in the window overlooking the river,

where there were no houses or anything, no possibility of being seen... we sang ‘Maoz Tsur’ [O Rock of Ages — a traditional Hanukkah song]. We knew the blessings off by heart... and then what did we get? A tiny saucer of real potato soup... we treated it like ice-cream, we licked it to make it last.”

So describes Edith Rotschild (née Weiss) the lighting of Hanukkah candles in the slave labor camp of Oberhohenelbe in the Sudetenland. Rotschild, who was born in Balassagyarmat, northern Hungary in 1923, had been sent to Oberhohenelbe from Auschwitz, where the women were forced to make radio components, light bulbs and weapons.

Rotschild’s testimony is one of many about the festival of Hanukkah during the Holocaust that may be viewed in the online exhibition [“Hanukkah — The Festival of Lights”](#) on Yad Vashem’s website. Hanukkah, which symbolizes the struggle between light and darkness, the battle of the few against the many, and the Jewish victory over the Greek conquerors, held an even greater meaning during the Holocaust. The poem “Maoz Tsur” that Rotschild and her friends sang in the camp illustrated the historical struggle of the Jewish people throughout the generations, and their ultimate salvation — which echoed within the hearts of the prisoners as a

The poem “Maoz Tsur” that Rotschild and her friends sang in the camp illustrated the historical struggle of the Jewish people throughout the generations, and their ultimate salvation



Hanukkah menorah in Kiel, Germany, in a window of a prewar Jewish home with the Nazi banner visible in the background
Yad Vashem Archives

longed-for miracle that would save them too from their suffering.

Celebrating the Jewish festivals during the Holocaust was a significant challenge for the persecuted Jews. The decision to take charge of their own time, often without knowing the date, in order to remember the upcoming festivals, allowed them to preserve their spiritual essence and act as human beings.

“Hanukkah — The Festival of Lights” is one of a series of online exhibitions that present the many ways in which Jewish festivals were marked in Europe and North Africa before, during and after the Holocaust — the latter in DP camps and children’s homes that were established after the war. The exhibitions are based on Holocaust-era items housed in the Yad Vashem Archives and Collections: photographs, artifacts, testimonies, documents and works of art.

The online exhibition [“And You Shall Tell Your Children,”](#) for example, includes stories of Jews who wished to mark Passover during the Holocaust. It presents Passover *Haggadot* (texts for the order of the *seder* celebrated on the eve of Passover), among them one that was copied and illustrated by Ephraim-Ze’ev Yacqont while in hiding in Belgium.



Jewish New Year's greeting card from the ghetto, Łódź, Poland, 1940
Yad Vashem Archives

[“Marking the New Year”](#) illustrates episodes from the High Holy Days — days of atonement, forgiveness and renewal of hope for a better future. The exhibition, which was recently updated with ten new stories, features greeting cards and wishes for the Jewish New Year — Rosh Hashanah. Each message carries with it the fate of those who sent or received it. One of the greeting cards was

[written and illustrated by Mojsze Treschtschanski](#) for his caregiver, Emilie Reinwald, in September 1943 in the Theresienstadt ghetto. “Redemption and happiness for the New Year,” he wrote, a short while before they were both transported to their deaths in Auschwitz.

The unique way of keeping Jewish tradition during the Holocaust is perhaps best expressed by 13-year-old Fanny (Zipporah) Dasburg in



Children during a Purim celebration in the Łódź ghetto
Yad Vashem Archives

The exhibition, which was recently updated with ten new stories, features greeting cards and wishes for the Jewish New Year — Rosh Hashanah

the [greeting card](#) that she wrote to her parents in the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp in September 1944. “We will have a happy and sweet New Year even without apple and honey [the traditional food for Rosh Hashanah],” she wrote, and concluded with a prayer: “May peace come quickly in our days, and may we speedily return home with all the family. May you be inscribed for a good year.”

FREE ONLINE COURSE: TEACHING THE HOLOCAUST IN TODAY'S WORLD

Can young people grasp the enormity of the history of the Holocaust? What are the challenges that Holocaust educators face? How do we teach about the Holocaust in a world without survivors?



On 26 October, Yad Vashem, together with the Centre for Holocaust Education at University College London (UCL), launched a new online course, available to the public free of charge over the FutureLearn e-Learning platform, entitled [“Teaching the Holocaust: Innovative Approaches to the Challenges We Face.”](#) The three-week course presents video lectures by historians and educators from both Yad Vashem

and UCL, as well as survivor testimonies, original documents and artifacts from the Yad Vashem Archives, new pedagogical research by UCL, and more.

The first part of the course explores the history of the Holocaust by focusing on major themes such as Jewish life before the war, the roots of antisemitism, the development and implementation of the “Final Solution,” as well as liberation and the survivors’ return

to life. The second and third parts delve into educational dilemmas, and offer practical solutions for teaching the Holocaust in a world fraught with challenges. The participants are also given the opportunity to apply the materials they have learned by developing their own classroom material.

To receive more information about the course, please [click here](#).

VISITS AT YAD VASHEM

Despite the limitations imposed by the Coronavirus epidemic, three important visits took place at Yad Vashem over the summer months:



The Prime Minister of the Hellenic Republic (Greece) H.E. Mr. Kyriakos Mitsotakis (right) was accompanied on his visit to Yad Vashem on 17 June by Israel’s Minister of Intelligence Eli Cohen and Director of the Righteous Among the Nations Department at Yad Vashem Dr. Joel Zisenwine. Following a memorial ceremony in the Hall of Remembrance and a visit to the Cattle Car — Memorial to the Deportees, Prime Minister Mitsotakis toured the Garden of the Righteous Among

the Nations, where he viewed the plaque honoring his grandmother’s sister, Evangelia Georgiadou. Dr. Zisenwine presented the Prime Minister with a facsimile copy of the certificate honoring Georgiadou’s wartime rescue of Yvette Ventura, the daughter of her Jewish friend Bianca.



On 7 September, Croatian Foreign Minister Gordan Grlić Radman toured the Holocaust History Museum and the Children’s Memorial, and participated in a memorial ceremony in the Hall of Remembrance. In the Yad Vashem Guest Book, the Foreign Minister wrote that on his first visit to the Mount of Remembrance, he was “astounded at the magnitude of the sacrifice and the suffering of the Jewish people,” and praised

the Righteous Among the Nations, who “serve as an inspiration to all, especially to us political and public figures, obliging us to educate, recognize, prevent and condemn any kind of antisemitism, while strongly promoting genuine commitment against any kind of discrimination, hatred or violence.”



Italian Foreign Minister H.E. Mr. Luigi Di Maio visited Yad Vashem on 29 October. During his tour of the Valley of the Communities, he visited the wall dedicated to the Jewish communities of Italy decimated by the Nazis and their collaborators. He also participated in a memorial ceremony in the Hall of Remembrance, visited the Children’s Memorial and signed the Yad Vashem Guest Book. “Here, we recall the abyss of the Shoah,” he wrote. “The attempted extermination of the Jews of Europe has become a duty to build a better future.”

STANLEY AND BEA TOLLMAN: NEW YAD VASHEM PILLARS

Yad Vashem Benefactors Stanley and Bea Tollman recently decided to double their previous commitment to Yad Vashem. The Tollmans believe that if a cause is worthy of a donation of a million dollars, if it is in need of additional funding and one can afford to support it, then one should.

Although Stanley Tollman's father and much of his family left Riteve (Rietavas, Lithuania) for South Africa well before the outbreak of WWII, his grandparents and wider family remained in Lithuania and were murdered by the Germans

and their local collaborators. It took time for the information to trickle out over the years, since initially Stanley's parents and much of the South African community chose not to talk about their personal losses and the horrors of the Shoah. Despite this,

the idea that a whole family — indeed, an entire Jewish community — could be destroyed, continued to trouble Stanley.

On their travels over the years, Stanley and Bea were privileged to meet with many survivors — including

— ” —

“Yad Vashem is at the forefront of the fight against hatred and antisemitism.”

Stanley Tollman

Elie Wiesel, Primo Levi and Samuel Pisar — and their unimaginable pain made a huge impression. The necessity of commemoration remained with them, especially as Stanley learned more about his family's roots and fate. Stanley and Bea began their Holocaust-related philanthropy by initially supporting The Cape Town Holocaust and Genocide Centre, and later Yad Vashem — first with a plaque in memory of the Jews of Riteve, and later becoming Yad Vashem Benefactors in 2015.

From their first visit to the Mount of Remembrance in the early 1970s, Stanley and Bea have observed the evolution of Yad Vashem from an institution primarily dedicated to collecting documentation and for the commemoration of survivors to The World Holocaust Remembrance Center it has become today. With groundbreaking research, unparalleled collections and multidimensional educational activities in Israel and

abroad, the Tollmans believe that Yad Vashem has a truly global impact.

Although the details, scope and focus of Yad Vashem's activities may have changed, for Stanley and Bea Tollman the purpose of commemoration has not. “The Holocaust is an eternal reminder of the evils of antisemitism, and it is our constant duty to confront this deeply troubling phenomenon head on,” says Stanley. “I literally had to fight my way through the Catholic boarding school I attended, yet still today, and despite periodic lulls, the latest incarnations of antisemitism are again on the rise.

“Just because we weren't there, it doesn't mean we don't have an obligation to remember,” he continues. “We see the surveys showing how many young people don't even know what happened in the Holocaust. Yad Vashem is at the forefront of the fight against hatred and antisemitism — if we don't step up now and support Holocaust remembrance and education, who will?”

Yad Vashem is deeply grateful to Stanley and Bea Tollman for their ongoing generosity and worthy example, and is honored to recognize them as Yad Vashem Pillars.



Yad Vashem
Pillars Stanley
and Bea Tollman

NEW BENEFACTOR: HANNIE BIWOTT

Hannie Biwott recently decided to generously support the academic journal of Yad Vashem's International Institute for Holocaust Research, *Yad Vashem Studies*.

The deportations of Dutch Jews to the death camps started in the summer of 1942. Over the following year, Jews throughout the Netherlands were arrested, rounded up, incarcerated and deported. Jewish institutions, among them hospitals, were surveilled by the Germans. On the night between 21 and 22 January 1943, all patients and staff of a Jewish psychiatric institution

in Apeldoorn were arrested and deported directly to Auschwitz. The news of this barbarous act spread immediately and reverberated throughout the remaining Jewish community in the country.

Hannie Biwott (née ter Laare)'s mother was due to give birth in the Jewish hospital of Amsterdam on that same day, 22 January. However, while experiencing contractions, in fear of arrest she escaped through

the back of the hospital as Germans entered the front doors. Hannie was born on 8 February in the same hospital.

In August 1943, the bulk of the remaining Jews were deported from Amsterdam. As Hannie's mother stood in her doorway to be collected, a neighbor, risking his life, argued with the soldiers that there were no Jews in the building. The exhausted soldiers crossed Hannie and her mother's names off the list, declaring them dead. That is how they survived, not, as may have been thought, because Hannie's blonde hair belied her Jewish identity.

From September 1944, trains into Amsterdam were halted, and the "Hunger Winter" began. Food was strictly rationed and the population



teetered on starvation. Risking her life, Hannie's mother would sneak out of Amsterdam at four o'clock in the morning despite the curfew and without her yellow star and her pass marked with a "J" — an act strictly forbidden to Jews and punishable by death. She traded in all she possessed and begged for a little milk to keep Hannie alive. By doing so they survived the following harsh months until liberation.

In 1957, Hannie's family immigrated to Australia. In 1965, as a qualified secondary teacher, Hannie resigned from teaching in Australia and, forgoing her dream of migrating to Israel, followed her

Kenyan husband and moved to his homeland, where she started a new life. During the 54 years she lived in Kenya, teaching and running a perfumery business and bringing up her two mixed-race children, Hannie encountered both full acceptance from a variety of Kenyans, as well as racism, tribalism, intolerance and rejection from others, inside and outside of the country.

With her children and her grandchildren clearly on the road to success, Hannie is dedicating the remainder of her life, in Israel, to educating others to lead a life of tolerance with an understanding of other races and religions. She

Hannie is dedicating the remainder of her life, in Israel, to educating others to lead a life of tolerance with an understanding of other races and religions

intends to continue bringing a group of Kenyan teachers twice a year to Israel, not as pilgrims, but to learn about the Land of Israel, its people, its achievements, its culture, its history and its religion.

Hannie Biwott recently decided to generously support the academic journal of Yad Vashem's International Institute for Holocaust Research, [Yad Vashem Studies](#). This ongoing philanthropic gesture will ensure that Yad Vashem is able to continue to publish wide-ranging Holocaust-based research. In her own words, Hannie says: "I wish to support Yad Vashem's mission partly to remember the past, and partly in the hope that with time it will bring this message to the world: Intolerance leads to injustice, the consequences of which cannot be foreseen."

U S A

The **American Society for Yad Vashem** recently launched its three-part “Lessons from our Parents” conversation series, which was developed with the intent of showcasing how survivor experiences have profoundly and positively impacted their children’s and grandchildren’s lives, and made them into the leaders they are today.



The [first conversation](#) featured **Daniel Lubetzky**, Founder and Executive Chairman of KIND snacks, in conversation with **Lawrence Burian**, Executive Vice President at Madison Square Garden. As a proud child of a Holocaust survivor, Lubetzky shared insight into the meaningful ways his father Roman had a great impact on his own development and shaped him into the person he is today.



The [second in the series](#) presented Chairman of the Board of the American Society for Yad Vashem **Lenny Wilf** and **Mark Wilf**, both Yad Vashem Benefactors, real estate developers and owners of the Minnesota Vikings, in conversation with Lawrence Burian. First cousins Lenny and Mark spoke about the centrality of family as a lesson they learned from their parents, as well as the critical importance of the State of Israel.



The [third conversation](#) in the series focused on Second Generation member **Lawrence Bacow**, President of Harvard University, again in conversation with Lawrence Burian. Bacow proudly identifies as a child of immigrants and of a Holocaust survivor. He is committed to openness, service and inclusiveness; a credit to the way he was raised.



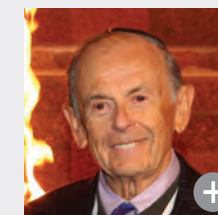
On 9 September, Yad Vashem signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the University of Notre Dame and its global network, including the University of Notre Dame at Tantur, located in Jerusalem. This agreement underscores Yad Vashem’s endeavors to increase and encourage advanced Holocaust education and research

across the world. The agreement was signed by Yad Vashem Director General **Dorit Novak** (left) and Vice President and Associate Provost for Internationalization at the University of Notre Dame, **Michael Pippenger**. The signing of the agreement was initiated by Director of the US Desk in Yad Vashem’s International Relations Division **Jeremy Weiss** (right).

U S A



On 24 September, [“A Conversation with Holocaust Survivor Rena Quint,”](#) initiated and led by the International Relations Division’s US Desk, was aired on the Zoom online platform. Over 780 people registered for the lecture, which so far has had some 2,000 views on Yad Vashem’s YouTube channel.



Yad Vashem mourns the loss of Holocaust survivor and Yad Vashem Friend **Andrew Burian z”l**.

Andrew was forcefully taken from his home at the age of 13 and imprisoned, first in the Mateszalka ghetto in Hungary, and then in the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp.

Andrew survived both the Auschwitz-Birkenau and Mauthausen concentration camps, as well as the infamous death march evacuations of each camp. After liberation from

Gunskirchen, he reunited with his father and brother, and eventually immigrated to the United States, where he met and married Ruth.

Andrew was committed to remembering and educating about the Holocaust. His memoir *A Boy from Bustina: A Survivor. A Son. A Witness*, which will continue to educate and inspire future generations, was released by Yad Vashem Publications in 2016.

Yad Vashem expresses its deepest condolences to Andrew’s widow Ruth, children Matilda (Marvin) Anhalt, Saul (Jennifer) Burian, and American Society Board Member Lawrence (Adina, incoming American Society Board Co-Chair) Burian, his grandchildren and great-grandchildren. May his memory be for a blessing.

LATIN-AMERICA, SPAIN, PORTUGAL AND MIAMI



On 13 September, Director of the Latin-America, Spain, Portugal and Miami Spanish-Speaking Desk in Yad Vashem’s International Relations Division **Perla Hazan**, together with the International School for Holocaust Studies, organized a virtual visit to the Holocaust History Museum. **Haya Feldman Glus**, Educational Coordinator, Spanish and Portuguese Speakers Section at the International School, was the

guide in a very meaningful and moving visit, in which some 400 people from Argentina, Chile, Costa Rica, Brazil, Mexico, Colombia, Guatemala, Venezuela, Panama, Spain, Portugal, Miami, Venezuela and Israel participated. The event was in memory of Holocaust survivor and Yad Vashem Builder **David Yisrael z”l**, former President of the **Venezuelan Association for Yad Vashem**.

MEXICO



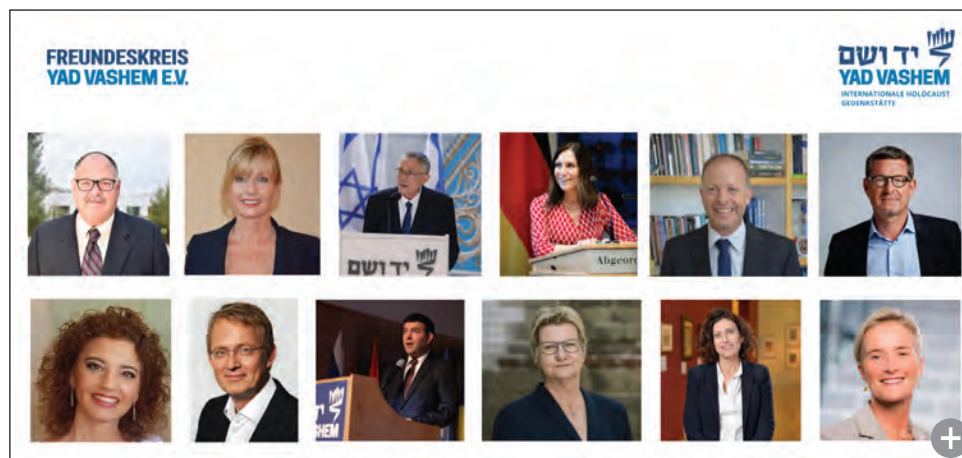
On 30 August, the **Mexican Association for Yad Vashem** organized an online lecture given by guide **Menashe Zugman**, entitled “The Massacre of the Liepaja (Latvia) Community.” The lecture focused on the extermination of this small Jewish community in the “dunes of death.”

ARGENTINA



On 29 September, Director of the Latin-American, Spain, Portugal and Miami Spanish-Speaking Desk in Yad Vashem's International Relations Division **Perla Hazan**, participated together with **Eliana Rapp Badihi** and **Haya Feldman Glus** from the International School for Holocaust Studies in a virtual visit to the renovated Holocaust Museum in Buenos Aires.

GERMANY



In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the **Society of Friends of Yad Vashem in Germany**, under the chairmanship of **Kai Diekmann** and Director **Ruth Ur**, launched a six-part online lecture series, entitled “Behind the Scenes at Yad Vashem.” The series is a unique opportunity for audiences to hear a range of experts from Yad Vashem talk about the challenges they face in their work. Speakers included Yad

Vashem Division Directors **Shaya Ben Yehuda**, **Dr. Haim Gertner**, **Iris Rosenberg** and **Dr. Eyal Kaminka**, and Department Directors **Yossi Gevir** and **Eliad Moreh-Rosenberg**. Each session is introduced and moderated by a well-known German public figure. All the presentations are in English and are recorded for future use. For more information, please contact **Dr. Lena Krauss**, info@yad-vashem.de.

CHRISTIAN FRIENDS OF YAD VASHEM WITH ICEJ



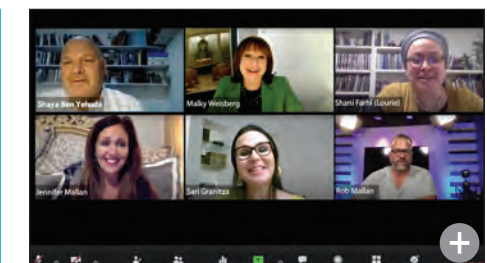
This year, the **International Christian Embassy Jerusalem (ICEJ)** held its Feast of Tabernacles virtually, with over 7,500 participants from more than 100 countries around the world. The **Christian Friends of Yad Vashem** were proud to take part in the weeklong online Feast, with memorable segments, including presentations by Managing Director of the International Relations Division **Shaya Ben Yehuda**, Christian Friends Director

Sari Granitza, Holocaust survivor **Tswi Josef Herschel** and the International School for Holocaust Studies' Pedagogical Director, and Fred Hillman Chair in Memory of Janusz Korczak **Shulamit Inbar**; clips from this year's Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes Remembrance Day Torchlighter stories; and a short clip from the historic [Fifth World Holocaust Forum](#) that took place in January at Yad Vashem.



Through its “Artifact of the Week” newsletters, the **Christian Friends of Yad Vashem** presents

the stories behind Holocaust-era personal belongings, which were donated to Yad Vashem for safekeeping by victims' families, Holocaust survivors and their offspring. In times of rising antisemitism worldwide, it is imperative to share these stories with friends and partners, and in that way honor the victims and survivors of the Holocaust.



Following its first worldwide webinar mini-series entitled “Antisemitism,” the Christian Friends of Yad Vashem presented a second webinar mini-series on the topic of “Faith during the Holocaust” – in place of its annual Christian Leadership Seminar canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

This series was generously sponsored and hosted by seminar graduates **Pastors Rob and Jennifer Mallan**, was designed especially for the Fall Feasts of 5781. The three lectures, presented by Managing Director of the International Relations Division **Shaya Ben Yehuda**, Head of the Division's Visits and Ceremonies Section **Malky Weisberg**, and Head of the Pedagogy Section in Yad Vashem's International School for Holocaust Studies **Shani Farhi (Lourie)**, illustrated the beauty and importance of Jewish holidays, and how they were marked by Jews across Europe even in the darkest and most difficult of times.

YOUR SUPPORT HELPS MAKE A DIFFERENCE

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

To make tax-deductible donations:

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