

# JERUSALEM Yad Vashem

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*And suddenly from afar a light glimmered-  
Behold a gate! The two knocked on the gate.  
But the story did not end here and no angel came down.  
There is only one Nation! One Reich! One Fuhrer!  
Against one child,  
Weeping in the forest.*

*Natan Alterman*

*(From "The Tale of Two Children Who Wandered Through the Woods.")*

*Children in the Holocaust  
A Special Issue for Remembrance Day*

*pkz.e*

The birth of each child brings with it the birth of a new, unique world.

The Shoah witnessed the brutal, untimely deaths of 1.5 million worlds, of 1.5 million Jewish children who were robbed by the Nazis and their accomplices of the opportunity to cultivate an identity or appreciate the meaning of their lives. This issue, dedicated to Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Day, attempts to relate to facets of that stolen childhood, of the cruel reality they faced, and of the brief moments of light in the Jewish child's life during the Holocaust. As you will see, no two lives were identical, and when we speak of 1.5 million, it is not a statistic but rather 1.5 million stolen worlds. In "Discovery" we relay the story of a unique orphanage and the biographies of a few of its children who survived by the skin of their teeth. The article on children's diaries demonstrates the importance of a diary as a means of gaining, in these expressions of anguish, a child's perspective. In "Podium" we learn of research being conducted on the children who had assumed Christian identities in order to survive, and the problems which naturally ensued.

You will be introduced to the torch lighters who were children during the Holocaust, and you will have a glimpse at a coming exhibition of children's games and creativity during the Holocaust. A survivor, who was a ten year old child in Auschwitz, will provide a first-hand account of his life. Finally, we include a special report from Switzerland on Jews, including many children, who were turned away from the Swiss border during the war.

Yad Vashem  
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**Cover: Mother is gone** by Samuel Bak, painted in 1945 when he was twelve. (The Yad Vashem collection)

# “MOTHER CAN I CRY YET?”

Approximately 1.5 million children perished in the Holocaust. This year, on Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Day, we will be reading long lists of names of murdered children at the "Unto Every Person There is a Name" ceremonies. A few faded photographs of children are all that are left to us, and from their questioning and accusing eyes bursts forth the cry of the hundreds of thousands who never reached maturity and were not granted the privilege of living their lives, of dreaming, loving, playing and laughing. A child in the Theresienstadt Ghetto wrote:

"The sun has made a veil of gold  
 So lovely that my body aches  
 Above, the heavens shriek with blue  
 Convinced I've smiled by some  
 mistake."



Two dresses belonging to seven year old Gaby Klipper from Vienna. On April 1, 1943 she was incarcerated in the Theresienstadt Ghetto. On September 6, 1943 she was deported in Transport No. 385 to Auschwitz where she perished. (The Yad Vashem Collection)

Children suffered a particularly cruel and difficult fate during the Holocaust, whether they were hiding in forests or interned in ghettos and camps. Their parents and close family could not provide the security and protection all parents wish to lavish on their children. The little child did not remember life beyond the ghetto walls and never saw an open field, a blooming tree, a lake, animals. He never heard a story, or the notes of a song bearing joy and hope. In times of distress, isolation and despair, children were the weakest and most vulnerable of all. Boys and

girls could not understand why everyone was melancholy, why everything was forbidden, why their every request and plea was answered with "no" and "we don't have any"...why it was so cold and the hunger pangs never abated.

On November 14, 1941, historian Emmanuel Ringelblum wrote in his Warsaw Ghetto diary:

"The first frosts have already appeared, and the populace is trembling at the prospect of cold weather. The most fearful sight is that of freezing children. Little children with bare feet, bare knees and torn clothing, stand dumbly in the street weeping...when the first snows fell, some seventeen children were found frozen to death on the steps of ruined houses."

The souls of the children yearned for the world of childhood and for all the things "normal" children did. Dawid Rubinowicz a boy from a village near Kielce, Poland, wrote in his diary in August, 1940:

"During these war days, I study by myself at home. When I remember that I used to go to school, I feel like crying."

Like all children, even children in the ghettos and camps experienced moments of gaiety, mischief and fun. As soon as there was even a short lull in the tension or a temporary remission

from hunger, laughter would be heard, squabbles broke out between different groups, balls made of tattered rags were rolled around, and in the dark corners of cramped rooms, little girls would hug their dolls and tell them stories about beautiful clothes, about roses

## Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Day, 1997, is Dedicated to Those who were Children During the Shoah

which bloomed in the city parks and about the big wide world.

Children did their utmost to survive, either individually or in groups, but the time came when the murderers pursued and caught up with every Jew. Children who were not fit for forced labor were the first victims. The many deportations to the death camps included transports of children - children from Lodz, from Paris and from other places.

Despite the relentless onslaught of the killing machine, thousands of children were saved: children who were adopted by or found refuge with moral people of conscience, "Righteous Among the Nations." Children were hidden in convents, or survived alone in forests and villages, on the run, wandering from place to place like wild animals. Children were forced to remain completely silent for long periods of time, and were not allowed to so much as laugh or sob for many long

months. After liberation, one little girl asked her mother: "Mother, can I cry yet?"

For these children who survived, there remained the task of returning to their Jewish identity, to society and to faith in mankind and in a life filled with fears and crises. But so, so many children were

doomed to perish, and no one is left to mourn them. Nothing remains either of their life or their death.

**Professor Yisrael Gutman**  
**Chief Historian**  
**of Yad Vashem.**

*A toddler's slippers  
from Buchenwald.  
(The Yad Vashem Collection)*



# A WARM HOME

## ON 11 PRUSA ST.

*Now at Yad Vashem: A Rare Collection of Children's Testimonies from the Children's Home in Otwock, Poland*

By Bezalel Amikam

A rare collection of children's testimonies on the Holocaust given at the end of the Second World War has recently appeared at Yad Vashem. This comprehensive collection of personal human dramas was recorded in first person and preserved for years by Francesca Oliva who established an orphanage, as the war was ending, for Polish Jewish children, who were victims of the war. These personal stories, exposed for the first time, reveal the terrible tragedy experienced by these abandoned, refugee children who successfully avoided detection by the Germans and their accomplices. Francesca Oliva died before she completed her book, whereby the invaluable documents were passed on to Yad Vashem and consequently came to light.

Francesca Oliva escaped the Germans by carrying false papers declaring an assumed Aryan identity. She went into hiding in Kielce until January, 1945 when she returned to Warsaw with the faint hope of tracing any surviving family. Her disappointment was immediate upon finding her destroyed and abandoned house. She writes, "I found nothing. I was alone in the world. It was suggested to me to search in the town of Otwock, but there too, I found no one. Local Poles slammed their doors in my face and glared at me as though I was a fearsome ghost." Francesca,

on the verge of departing from these hostile surroundings, spotted a soldier, and with him a group of skinny, shrivelled children. She recalls, "When the soldier noticed me staring, he stopped and addressed me: 'These Jewish children are running loose, it's dangerous. Take care of them.' I tried to explain to him that I was a stranger here, a guest with no hosts and without a home of my own, but the soldier insisted. He pointed to a derelict house with no windows and said, "You can live here and care for the children." Finding it impossible to remain indifferent, Francesca relented. With ten frightened children, she despairingly entered the building on Prusa Street 11, and prepared it for their first night. A chill that penetrated their bones entered through the broken windows. But luck came her way when she discovered a Red Army base adjacent to the town. Brigadier Dr. Ochovsky, the base medic, was Jewish. He immediately responded to Francesca's requests for aid, instructing his soldiers to supply the home with food and to make repairs to the building. The doctor, himself, treated the sickly children and helped them recover.

At the beginning of March, 1945, the children's home was officially recognized by the Central Jewish Committee of the Jews of Poland. Funding arrived through the Joint Distribution Committee. Following a short period of management by a Doctor Krokoschka, Luba Blum-Bielicka stepped in as manager for the next four years. As time passed, over 100 children, mostly alone, from villages and towns took shelter in this warm and secure home. Many had minimal education, while others had none as a result of the war. A devoted and unique staff of educators provided the children with a basic education and helped them fit into the regular school framework.



*The Otwock Home in the early days. Zulecka Goldmintz and David Mudrick are among the children. Francesca on the top.*

The orphanage remained in use until 1949. Most of the children immigrated to Israel and built new lives. The dozens of pages of testimony, collated in a large carton of files, are currently being studied by Dr. Shmuel Krakowski of Yad Vashem, who believes that Francesca Oliva's material should be published.



*The education and administrative staff of the Home. Fourth from the right: Luba Blum-Bielicka At far right: Francesca Oliva.*

The testimonies were recorded by both Oliva herself and the young survivors. They include their personal accounts of their past and of the fate of their friends who did not survive. This collection of documents about children contributes significantly to the understanding of the children's perspectives of their world during the Holocaust. According to Dr. Krakowski, "This material is invaluable for researchers in subjects such as history, psychology, literature, etc." Throughout the magazine, you will encounter three testimonies recorded by Dov and Halina Kornblum, Zulecka Goldmintz and David Mudrick upon their arrival at the home.



*A lesson in apiculture at the Home*

# LOVE IN THE ORPHANAGE

**D**ov (Wladek) Kornblum was seven when the Second World War broke out. His childhood scenery included the cordoned off and crowded, Warsaw Ghetto. His mother, Lonia (née Milebond), worked in the educational establishment of Janusz Korczak, and his father, Szlomo, was a well-known Yiddish author whose books found their place in every respectable Jewish library. Both parents were active in the Bund. In 1942, Dov's mother was deported to the death camp of Treblinka. His father died in the Warsaw Ghetto uprising. Prior to his death, the father arranged for shelter in a Christian home in a suburb of Warsaw for his two sons. The hiding place, guarded by a dog, was a small storeroom in the yard where potatoes were kept. In his diary, Dov records his growing attachment to the loyal animal, his only friend. From a slit in the storeroom door, he managed to pet its head. "The dog was highly intelligent. When strangers approached the closet, the dog moved away as though hinting that there was nothing interesting which should draw

attention. It understood that by growling and showing its teeth, it would give me away."

For two years Dov hid in the narrow storeroom, and following the war he reached the Otwock Children's home. His wife Halina was among the children of the orphanage. Halina Starkman's father died during the massive deportation of Warsaw's Jews. Halina, her mother and another eleven Jews succeeded in avoiding the Nazi's savage hunt for Jews in the ghetto streets, and found shelter in the Christian section of the city. Young, Aryan-featured Halina assumed the dangerous responsibility for purchasing food with the scarce funds of those in hiding. She was extremely cautious in her methods and managed to supply food for the entire group. At the end of the war, her mother was not able to care for her adequately, and Halina made her way to the Jewish orphanage for refugee children. Dov immigrated to Israel in 1948, Halina in 1950, and the two were married in 1955.

**Bezalel Amikam**



*A shared history: Dov and Halina, age thirteen in Otwock in 1946. On the left: The Kornblums today at home in Ramat Aviv, Israel.*



## DEATH ON THE WAY TO SAFETY:

### *Zulecka Goldmintz*



"I am happy. I'm on my way to Israel. There are many children here and we feel good together. I'm learning Hebrew and preparing for the trek." This short, optimistic letter from Francesca's collection leaves us dangling as the author wrote no more. Zulecka, 11 years old, sent it from Rome to Francesca Oliva in Poland. Zulecka Goldmintz was three years old when the war broke out. Zulecka, whose father had died, lived a miserable life in the Warsaw Ghetto with her older brother and mother. With the declaration of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising, mother and daughter hoped to survive by hiding in a bunker, huddled in with many others. The brother, who participated in the uprising, slipped through the German lines to the Christian side. Meanwhile, Zulecka held her mother's cold, lifeless hand and silently wept. Her courageous brother risked his life and returned to the demolished, smoke-filled ghetto to search for his mother and sister. In the bunker of death, he discovered Zulecka weeping. Zulecka's life was saved. At the end of the war, she reached the orphanage at Otwock. She departed for Israel via Italy, but, tragically, Zulecka became a victim of the crowded, subhuman conditions on the boat and died on her way to the promised land.

**Bezalel Amikam**



Yitskhok Rudishevsky

"EVERYTHING SHOULD  
BE WRITTEN  
DOWN...BECAUSE  
EVERYTHING WILL BE TAKEN  
INTO ACCOUNT"

## Children's Diaries Written During the Holocaust Reflect the Living Nightmare of Their Daily Lives

By Roberta Chester

**“** *I am sitting at the window and preparing myself for the Mincha prayer. I look out, and see that all is red, the whole horizon is red. The sky is covered with bloody clouds, and I am frightened when I see it. I say to myself: "Where do these clouds come from?" They come from the seas of blood. These seas have been brought about by millions of Jews who have been captured, and who knows where they are ... We are the bleeding clouds, and from the seas of blood have we come. We have come to you from the place where your brothers are, to bring you greetings from your people. We are witnesses.*”

These lines from his diary were written by sixteen year old Moshe Flinker in Brussels where he and his family, who had left Holland, were hiding. Moshe's diary and the other diaries kept by children who experienced the Holocaust, are a witness, just as their young authors intended. Moshe became increasingly aware of the historic importance of his diary and his responsibility to leave a record for the future.

*Moshe's entire family was deported to Auschwitz on the eve of Passover in 1944. Moshe and his parents were killed, but his sisters survived and returned to their hiding place in Brussels where they found Moshe's diary.*

According to Professor Avner Ziv, professor of psychology at Tel Aviv University, "adolescents who write diaries are more sensitive, introverted and have a rich inner life. Above all, these are the children who are gifted with the ability to express themselves." Regardless of background and country of origin, these children who were hungry for food were equally hungry for paper and pencil, a place to write and a safe spot to hide these pages so the world would eventually read their testimony.

Certainly this is true of fourteen year old Yitskhok Rudishevsky, engaged in collecting the folklore of the Vilna Ghetto, who knew that documenting material would be tremendously significant in the future when he wrote that "...everything should be written down, even the most gory, because everything will be taken into account.... Our ghetto research

circle is actively at work....we shall obtain a valuable historical study."

Young Yitskhok's diary, a moving and articulate testimony to that commitment, provides us with a detailed evocation of life in the Vilna Ghetto where the Jews maintained a rich educational, cultural and spiritual life despite the constant threats of imminent annihilation. Although he writes "we are like animals surrounded by the hunter" and "everything is so sad in the ghetto," Yitskhok, who has numerous and tedious domestic chores, also tells us he "...feels somehow happy that I can study, read, develop myself."

*Yitskhok, an only child, and his parents were murdered at Ponary. The diary, written in Yiddish, was discovered by his cousin when she returned to the hiding place their families had shared.*

Unlike Yitskhok's diary which reveals a young man of sophistication and worldliness, Dawid Rubinowicz, a twelve year old from a small town in Poland, reveals a perspective that is primarily concerned with the daily

YITSKHOK RUDISHEVSKY



struggles and suffering of his immediate and extended family. Like Yitskhok, though, Dawid expresses incredulity over the senselessness of the random brutality to which he was a witness:

**"A peasant from Krajno came to tell us our former neighbor's daughter had been shot because she'd gone out after 7 o'clock. I can scarcely believe it, but everything's possible. A girl as pretty as a picture - if she could be shot, then the end of the world will soon be here."**

*Dawid and his parents were executed at Treblinka. His diary was found after 7 o'clock. I can scarcely believe it, but everything's possible. A girl as pretty as a picture - if she could be shot, then the end of the world will soon be here."*

These young witnesses whose diaries miraculously survived when they, too often, did not, provide us with primary resource material necessary to deepen our understanding. This task is all the more obligatory in honor of their superhuman effort to write these pages. In an environment in which childhood was a liability, the diaries provide an insight into the impact of war on children; describe their response to the trauma in the microcosm of the family unit and the macrocosm of the community; tell us about the differences between diaries written in Western Europe, where the Jews were more assimilated into the dominant culture vs. Eastern Europe where Jews had lived in shtetls for hundreds of years and were more often betrayed and brutalized by the gentile peasant population; portray the differing perspectives of younger and older adolescents, those from rural villages and big cities and those with secular and religious backgrounds. Above all, they teach



Mary (on the left) with her sister

us about the capacity of the human spirit to survive and find meaning in documentation.

Unlike adolescents keeping diaries in other times and places for whom the diary is a confidante under lock and key, these children - living in *extremis* - wanted their diaries read so the world would know the truth about the horrors to which they and their families were subjected. Whereas adolescents are more likely to be concerned with the pleasures and passions of the present, these children of the Holocaust looked to the future as the time when justice would prevail. Fifteen year old Mary Berg, living in Warsaw during the Nazi occupation ends her diary by writing:

**"I will tell everything about our sufferings and our struggles and the slaughter of our dearest, and I will demand punishment for the German murderers and their Gretchens in Berlin, Munich and Nuremberg who enjoyed the fruits of murder, and are still wearing the clothes and shoes of our martyred people."**

*Mary Berg and her mother, both American citizens, were released in a prisoner exchange and eventually settled in America. Mary smuggled her diary out of the Warsaw Ghetto.*

For these children, telling everything was their way of resisting oppression. According to Dr. Naty Cohen, a lecturer of Yiddish literature at Bar-Ilan University and the Associate Editor of Yad Vashem Studies, "For these children, regardless of their country of origin, writing these diaries was an act of rebellion and the one thing they could do freely." Charlotte Veresova resists being a helpless victim when she writes:

**"But I won't give up. I am not a bug, even though I am just as helpless. If something starts, I'll run away. ...what could I lose? It would be better to be shot while trying to escape than to be smothered with gas... I'll not give up... without resisting! ...I want to live. I want to go back home, for after all I've done nothing to anyone, so why should I die? It's so unjust!"**

*Charlotte, who was deported from a small town in Czechoslovakia, survived Theresienstadt where she began her diary at age fourteen.*

Helga Pinsky-Pollack, age thirteen from Austria who was imprisoned at Theresienstadt, was able to find humor in her situation. "I caught six fleas and three bedbugs today. Isn't that a fine hunt? I don't even need a gun and right away I have supper."

*Helga survived Theresienstadt, where she began her diary at age twelve, and three other*



Moshe Flinker

*camp to become an artist of international acclaim.*

What is striking about these diaries is the degree to which these children, in an attempt to make sense of the world in which they lived, demonstrated acts of compassion. They did all they could to rise above their own terror and ease the suffering of others. Writing from Theresienstadt, Helga says:

**"...1,500 children will arrive tonight. They are from Poland. We are making toys and little bags and nets for them, etc... The children came at three this morning. They are full of lice. They only have what they are wearing. We are collecting things for them."**

Moshe Flinker writes (in Hebrew as a measure of solidarity): "All day long, thoughts of my people never leave my mind, not even for a minute." Although Moshe Flinker lost his life, he never lost his compassion which seems to get stronger and stronger as his diary ends in mid-sentence.

Moshe, Helga, Dawid, Yitskhok, Charlotte and Mary make us aware that their reality was a nightmare of separation from their parents, hunger, death of family and friends, and constant fear, thereby providing us with another perspective on this period of our history. Slowly, we are finding the answers to many of our questions, but there is one which will always evade us, the measure of which is infinitely poignant. How many diaries were beyond recognition in the rubble, and how many pages gave their testimony to the wind.

# WE WERE CHILDREN DURING THE SHOAH

*The Individual Stories of the Six Torch Lighters of the 1997 Holocaust  
Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Day at Yad Vashem*

By Bezalel Amikam

## *Noga Davidof*



The Greek town of Kavalla turned into a living hell for Jews. In 1943, the Jews were sent to the death camps. Noga, and her sisters were saved by their neighbors who hid the girls in the basement in

jars covered by tobacco leaves. Daily, the eldest sister, 12, went out to work in the tobacco factory, leaving her sisters behind. Hunger drove the two younger sisters to sneak out and sit on the pavement waiting for handouts. One day, a soldier kicked Noga's sister and caused her permanent injury. In 1944, upon liberation, the girls were told about their parents and family and of the murder of 4,000 Kavalla Jews. She immigrated to Israel in 1945.

## *David Salz*



David Salz was born in Berlin in 1929. His father was executed in 1939. His mother taught him such basics of survival as cooking and sewing. In 1943, his mother, a forced laborer in Seimens,

was arrested. David dressed himself in layers of her clothes so that he could bring them to her in the Gestapo headquarters. There he was badly beaten but the clothes saved him. His mother was deported to Auschwitz and David followed. 13 year old David pretended to be 17 and was sent to the labor camp of Buna, Auschwitz and in January 1945, he was sent on a death march to Nordhausen - Dora from which he escaped. In 1946, he joined the Youth Aliya and immigrated to Israel.

## *Naomi Kalsky*



Ten year old Naomi Kalsky was incarcerated with her family in the Lvov Ghetto. One day her mother didn't return from forced labor. Naomi witnessed her ill father die from starvation and

lack of medical treatment. Naomi's younger sister, Rosa, was kidnapped in an *Aktion* and sent to her death. Her baby brother was savagely murdered. Naomi survived by smuggling and selling food to the ghetto. Following a long period of wandering, she settled with a peasant family and worked in the fields. She was forced to take part in a Christian ceremony, but she secretly vowed to remain Jewish. In 1948, she immigrated to Israel.

## *Esther Pasker Gelbelman*



In July 1941, the German army entered Kishinev. The Gelbelman family fled but was caught. They were marched to Domanevka and then to Bogdanovka where they were incarcerated in pig pens. On December 21, 1941, the German soldiers set the pens alight and shot anyone who attempted to escape, including Esther's older brother. Their mother was badly beaten and died at the 15 year old's Esther's feet. The survivors were then dragged to a giant pit to be slain. Suddenly, the murdered brother's fiance told the German soldiers that her fiance had gold. Esther's and the fiance's lives were saved, and they were taken to hard labor as lumberjacks. Her twin brother was murdered. Esther married after the war and immigrated to Israel in 1974.

## *Yoram Friedman*



Yoram Friedman and his family were imprisoned in the Warsaw Ghetto, from which his father escaped, Yoram, 6, was smuggled out of the ghetto. In a field he met his father, who instructed him

to change his name and taught him a Christian prayer. As the German soldiers approached, Yoram fled, but his father was shot. Yoram was apprehended by an SS officer who placed him with a German woman. While working in the field, Yoram's hand was caught in a thresher. In the hospital the gangrenous arm was severed. A peasant smuggled him out of the hospital, and Yoram found work as a cattle-boy. In 1962 he immigrated to Israel.

## *David Bergman*



David Bergman, the son of assimilated Polish immigrants, was born and raised in Paris. His father, who enlisted in the French army, corresponded with his son from the Vichy region

during the Nazi occupation. On July 16th, 1942, due to an informant, the Bergman's flat was broken into by the Gestapo and the French police. David fled to the roof, but on his return he discovered that his mother was taken, and the informant's husband was stealing the Bergman's belongings.

The eleven year old boy wandered from one hiding place to another, at times, assuming a false identity. In 1943, David crossed the Swiss border, and in May, 1945 he immigrated to Israel.



# UNTO EVERY PERSON THERE IS A *Name*

*In Israel and Abroad, Hundreds of Thousands Take Part Annually in  
Reading Out the Names of Those Who Perished*

By Jeremy Swimer

In 1989, 1000 demonstrators stood on the steps of the Dutch Embassy in Tel Aviv for twelve hours and recited names of those who died in Holland during the Holocaust. This event was the idea of Haim Roet, who was outraged by the Dutch government's announcement that it would free two Nazi criminals who had been found guilty for having had a major role in the deaths of 100,000 Dutch Jews. As Roet explains "Although the Dutch have the reputation of having been supportive, the fact remains that 80% of Dutch Jews perished in the Holocaust. That is one of the highest percentages in Europe."

In 1943 at the age of eleven, Haim Roet left his own family and hid from the Nazis in the home of a Christian family, in Amstelveen, a southern region of Holland. One year later Haim was expelled from school due to suspicions that he was Jewish and spent the rest of the war delivering bread to farmers for the father of the family, a baker. After the war, Haim, whose sisters and grandparents had been murdered at Auschwitz, was reunited with his parents and brothers. In 1949 Haim immigrated to Israel.



Haim Roet

Moved and impressed by the demonstration, Roet decided to take temporary leave from his job, and spent the next three months developing his idea into a national project together with Billy Laniado, who was then the Spokesperson of the Israel Information Center. The project's inauguration in 1990 was marked by a historic name reading ceremony in the Knesset with the participation of the then Prime Minister, Yitzhak Shamir.

Currently, the project is organized by Yad Vashem under the auspices of the Speaker of the Knesset, and in cooperation with the Israel Information Center.

The central activities take place in the



Protest at the Dutch Embassy in Tel-Aviv.

Knesset and at Yad Vashem, with the participation of the heads of state, ministers, members of the Knesset and youth. At Yad Vashem the names are read out in the Hall of Remembrance by many Holocaust survivors and their families who visit Yad Vashem on this day of commemoration, Holocaust Remembrance Day.

The reading of the names takes place throughout Israel in the local authorities, in kibbutzim, in schools and institutions of higher learning, in the youth movements and in army bases, in centers of commemoration and in the workplace. In the Diaspora, ceremonies take place in hundreds of Jewish communities as a result of the close cooperation between Yad Vashem and the Israeli Foreign Ministry, the Jewish Agency, the World Jewish Congress, the Council for Soviet Jewry and Bnai Brith.

The title of the recitation was inspired by the poem by the Israeli poet, Zelda, "Unto Every Person There Is A Name." The poem then begins with the bestowing of names by God and parents and ends as follows:

**"Unto every person there is a name  
Which he receives from the sea  
And is given to him by his death."**

Throughout his life cycle, every person has an incontrovertible right to an individual,

named identity. The Nazi regime attempted to deny this right by labelling people with tattooed numbers, executing them and piling the dead bodies into unmarked graves or cremating them in large ovens. By remembering the names of individuals, the "Unto Every Person There Is A Name" ceremony seeks to return their individuality and human dignity to the victims. Along with the names, the victim's age, place of birth and place of death are recited. Roet explains, "Six million is a cold and abstract number that's impossible to grasp. It's only when we

start to focus on individuals - six million of those individuals, each robbed of the chance to sing, laugh, study, grow and see their children grow - that we get some sense of the enormity of the tragedy." Furthermore, the public recitations provide an invaluable educational service. The memorial makes the tragedy real, bringing the events closer to younger generations, and helping children, in particular, identify and relate to their roots. The elegiac nature of the memorial is in keeping with the Jewish prayer, *Yizkor*.

As time passes and fewer witnesses remain, it is imperative that survivors of the Holocaust try to recall all the names of Holocaust victims of whom they have personal knowledge. As part of the "Unto Every Person There Is A Name" project, Jewish communities are asked to focus efforts on retrieving and registering these names in "The Hall of Names" on the symbolic "Pages of Testimony" at Yad Vashem. The Hall of Names contains millions of names of victims, and approximately 3000 names are added every month by visiting Jewish tourists and through foreign-based Jewish organizations.

The theme of this year's Remembrance Day is the fate of children during the Holocaust. Yad Vashem is currently offering guidance as to the planning of ceremonies and providing lists of children's names upon request.

# “there are no children

The toys, games and handmade crafts in the exhibition scheduled to open at the end of August reveal that those who were children during the Holocaust somehow found a way to be imaginative and creative. These items on display indicate that during the six years of the Holocaust, the children - many of whom knew no other reality - found comfort in playing and being creative as a way to escape the chaos and trauma of that world. This exhibit, currently being prepared by the Yad Vashem Museum, is recommended as an educational, non-threatening and age-appropriate introduction to the Holocaust for children. The following are some of the items which will be on display:

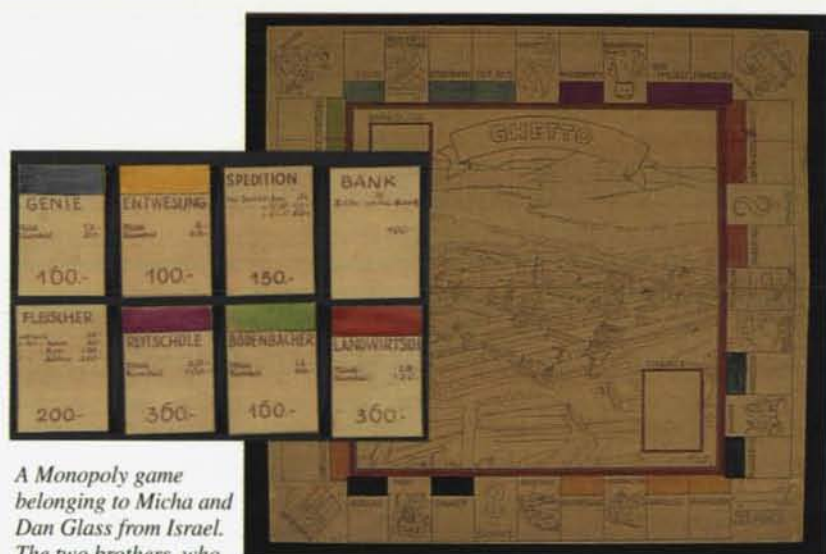
Doll and crib belonging to Claudine Schwartz-Rudel, (of Yad Vashem), who as a child escaped with her family from Paris to the unoccupied zone (Vichy). For her own protection, Claudine changed her name to Françoise and, changed her doll's name from Claudette to Françoise, as well. Her parents used the doll as a "safe" for their gold coins, which they removed at night while Claudine was asleep. They were extremely insistent that she not lose the doll. Claudine couldn't understand why they didn't realize how much she loved her doll...

The Yad Vashem Collection.



A felt heart from Theresenstadt, with the embroidered words, Emelek Aginak - A Momento for Agi.

The Yad Vashem Collection.



A Monopoly game belonging to Micha and Dan Glass from Israel. The two brothers, who were incarcerated in the

Theresenstadt Ghetto, played with this game, made by the gamemaker Pock in 1943. Its board is the layout of the ghetto itself and the surrounding stops portray scenes from the daily life of the ghetto inhabitants, including the Post Office, the workshops ("The Production"), the bank of the Jewish Administration, the cookhouses, the water tower, the bakery, etc.

The Yad Vashem Collection.



Found in Buchenwald, a doll dressed in a lace dancing skirt.

The Yad Vashem Collection.

# ish games”

Janusz Korczak



A miniature chess set from Bogdanovka. Julius Drukman, from Bukovina who survived Bogdanovka, whittled this set in 1943 from maple bark with a kitchen knife. The Yad Vashem Collection.



From Auschwitz, a handmade doll in striped prison clothes with a yellow and red star which was worn by Jewish political prisoners, Roma Alter, born in 1916, made this doll when she was a prisoner in Auschwitz. She survived the Holocaust and died in Paris in 1970, whereby the doll was presented to Yad Vashem by her family. The Yad Vashem Collection.

Roza's miniature notebook. Now she is Shoshana Meir from Kibbutz Givat Oz, Israel. Roza, was born in Slovakia, in 1933. She moved to Budapest in 1935. During the war, her father was recruited to the Labour Battalions. Roza embroidered a napkin, seen in the picture, for her mother in June, 1944. For her parents' wedding anniversary, Roza made a copybook of carton, fine paper, dried flowers and embroidered it with the word Apunak—for father. When he was sent to Mauthausen, he took it along with him and made notes. On Roza's birthday, he wrote, "May God give you a good life, my daughter Roza." He inscribed similar messages to his other children and his wife on their birthdays. On April, 3, 1945, he wrote about Mauthausen, Austria, "Dante's Inferno is the Garden of Eden in comparison to this. Corpses, Corpses, filth, and starvation." On April 18, 1945, now in Gunkirchen, he wrote, "I was wrong- that German hell is nothing compared to this—masses of corpses and endless suffering. A lot of lice, total starvation, encompassing death."

The Yad Vashem Collection.



A doll's head made of mud and clay from the Libisch Labor Camp. In 1944, Dvora Kurlandchik (Kantor) made four heads while digging canals in the muddy earth. Once, a German soldier saw these heads and gave Dvora a picture of his family so that she could make busts for him. In return, he gave her a few slices of fresh bread. A survivor of the holocaust, she died in 1973.

The Yad Vashem Collection.



A drawing by the child Nelly Toll from the Lvov Ghetto, based on her mother's story, An Incident of Luck. The seven pictures exhibited include, cars, forests, pianos, etc which appeared in stories her mother told her. Nelly Toll, an artist, who spent thirteen months in hiding with a Polish family, was to write in her memoirs: "In my artwork I composed a reality devoid of cruelty. Confronted by these scenes, I was able to preserve an image of humanity, kindness and most of all, hope, as a means of survival."

The Yad Vashem Collection.

# A MATTER

## *A New Study by Dr. Nachum Bogner Reveals the Methods of Rescue of*

By Michal Morris Kamil

“*Kol Yisrael arevim ze lazeh*” (The children of Israel are all responsible for one another) can be regarded as a particularly Jewish ethic reminding the Jew that he belongs to a people. And yet, at times, under extreme duress and danger, this ethic of mutual responsibility, which is so central to Jewish identity, may be forsaken as the price of survival. During the *Shoah*, millions of Jews were forced to face this dilemma daily. As time progressed and the probability of survival lessened, this ethic was abandoned or, at best, modified.

For the young child during the Holocaust, this dilemma was exacerbated due to the fact that he was deprived of the family situation which would have nurtured and allowed for the developing concept of “self” and a solid Jewish identity as part of the gradual maturation process. Instead, these children, who were forcibly separated from their parents, who witnessed brutal torture and murder, and who lived in a world dominated by pain, hunger and fear, had to bear the untimely burden of decisions and responsibilities years before they had achieved emotional independence. In many cases, the traumas these children experienced were linked with attempts to negate their background, and especially their Jewish roots which they regarded as antithetical to their survival. Adopting a non-Jewish identity, when possible, distanced them from the experience of fear and pain. This identity was strengthened when the children realized that their survival was due to this decision.

Dr. Nachum Bogner, of the Yad Vashem International Institute of Holocaust Studies, is involved in a complex study involving the rescue of Jewish Polish children through “borrowed” identities and their rehabilitation in Jewish society following the war. Bogner, born in East Galicia, encountered such children at the end of the war while he was in the children’s home of Lena Kichler, in Zakopane, Poland.

“I was sensitized to the distress of these children. On their return to Jewish society, many were ambivalent and thus distanced themselves; a few, aware of their Jewishness, blamed their suffering on their identities, letting out their aggression on others. I remember that the girls who continued to wear their chains with crosses enraged many

of the other children who tried to rip the chains off the girls’ necks. These children, who were regarded as different, were estranged and treated as outcasts. But, at Lena Kichler’s home, the majority of children were relatively tolerant. I became aware of the severity of this problem later on, as a member of the children’s kibbutz of the Dror Youth Movement at Bytom, Poland. The Jewish - Zionist fervor of the group brought to the fore the hostility of and towards these children. It was my role, as an “older brother” to establish a dialogue which would help them integrate their past with their present and their potential future.”

Bogner differentiates between the different age groups. “These few children, who found shelter on the Aryan side, among families, in convents, among peasants such as *Parobek* (farmhands), *Pastuck* (cattle-boys) and a small percentage who were cigarette vendors in the street, were separated from their families at different stages of development. Some were abandoned as babies. Others, slightly older, had vague recollections of their homes, of Sabbath candlelighting, for example, which waned with the passage of time. By the age of eight, most children had clear memories of their families,

of their being Jewish and of the trauma the home underwent with the outbreak of war. However, in most cases, not until the age of ten when the child is able to conceive notions of distance and time could the child fend for himself and survive on his own for long periods of time. The younger children only survived if they were found and given refuge at an early stage of their wandering.”

Throughout his research, Bogner found himself repeatedly amazed by the “superhuman” amount of energy mustered by these children to withstand the hostile elements until they found a secure, albeit temporary, base to replenish their forces. “The witnesses speak, at great length, of the enormous struggle to find stability. They are aware of the major changes that occurred, bringing them to a drastic awareness of their reality and a hastened and unnatural maturation within a very short period. It was usually during these stages, that the child was forced to make hasty decisions as to adopting a new identity.”



First row, third from left: seven year old Shlomo Gazit as an altar boy using “*Janek Karzynski*”, an assumed name.

# OF IDENTITY

## *Jewish Children Who Assumed Christian Identities During the Shoah*

According to Bogner, the Jewish Polish child, regarded as a pariah, was fully aware of his inferior position within Polish Christian society. As a "Jesus Killer", he was singled out to suffer the enmity of the surrounding society. Thus, the Christian "redeemer" provided the traumatized Jewish child, perhaps unknowingly, not only with an opportunity for survival on a physical level, but also a spiritual redemption which would include a new name, identity and a possibility for a life rid of persecution - all this at the cost of negating his entire Jewish being and past.

Bogner cites the extreme case of 'Rachela' as she chose to present herself to a Polish interviewer. At the age of twelve, 'Rachela', whose father disappeared, was separated from her mother and younger sister who took cover with an acquaintance. She recalls the peasant who hid her, and then took her to meet up with her family. As she approached them by a river bank, she witnessed her mother drowning herself and her younger sister. Abandoned in the district of Tarnow, she spotted a convent where she sought asylum. Asked if she knew a specific Christian prayer, she affirmed and was consequently baptized. She remained in the convent until the war ended. When approached by one of the Jewish organizations to return with them, she refused. 'Rachela' remained Catholic, trained as a doctor and before consenting to marry, sought the advice of the Mother Superior on whether to divulge her Jewish roots. Ignoring her advice, 'Rachela' never did. Her explanation was that she wanted to protect her sons from the terrifying evil and agonizing trauma she had undergone and that she owed her life to the convent which gave her the opportunity to start anew.

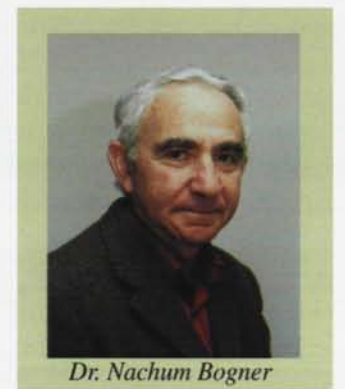
Mariana Adameczek, formerly Blima Kurchant from Charlejew in the Siedlecki vicinity, was the daughter of a poor and simple Jewish family who was hidden by a peasant in his basement. On liberation day she attempted to join up with a group of Jewish refugees, but they ignored her. She returned to the village where she experienced repeated threats to her life by local antisemites. Married to a non-Jewish local villager, this plain, nearly illiterate peasant woman became a mother of six. In 1992, she appeared at the Jewish Historical Institute in Poland to provide testimony and request recognition from Yad Vashem for the family who rescued her, as "Righteous Among the Nations." She claimed that she wanted to return to the Jewish people, but that "no one wanted her."

Bogner focuses on the problems of restitution and rehabilitation following the war. With the

growing and shocking knowledge of the extent of the *Shoah*, there was a general feeling, according to Bogner that, "Everything must be done to retrieve Jewish children, if need be, by force. The child belongs to the Jewish people. Jewish organizations world wide poured tens of thousands of dollars into the various means of retrieving children, which included redemption fees, litigation, negotiation, and according to Bogner, in extreme cases, even kidnapping."

There were two major Jewish organizations in Poland involved in this process: The Zionist Coordination, officially known as The Zionist Coordination for the Redemption of Children originating from the *HeHalutz* movement in Poland. Its founder was the emissary Arieh Sarid (Goldberg) from Israel. The religiously orientated second organization was The Committee of Jewish Communities in Poland, which was headed by the Polish Army's Chief Chaplain, Rabbi David Kahana, whose main functionary was Yishayahu Drucker, himself a Polish army field chaplain.

Bogner comments on the criticisms drawn by those active in the retrieval of children by force, "In my studies, I have come across many who until today, have terrible problems with their conscience as to the methods used to retrieve the children. Non-Jewish families, who risked their lives to save Jewish children, grew to love them, and then had them torn away from them, at times insensitively. There were many children who were reluctant to leave their new families because they knew that they had no one to go back to from their own families. Theirs was a double trauma." It is Bogner's belief that whatever the case some of these children were hurt, but the historian must study each episode individually.



*Dr. Nachum Bogner*



*An album presented as a gift to the head of the Joint in Poland, Walter Bein, by the Zionist Coordination. On the cover, (Trans) "The children who were returned to Judaism."*

# FRAGMENTS OF MEMORY: AUSCHWITZ IN A YOUTH'S EYES

“ I have an untold story which is very special and reveals a very unusual angle on Auschwitz,” says Daniel K. reaching behind his desk to press the “play” button on a portable tape player. The music is Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony*, the lyrics from Schiller's *Ode to Joy*.

*“Joy, bright spark of divinity,  
Daughter of Elysium,  
Fire-inspired we tread  
Thy sanctuary.  
Thy magic power re-creates  
All that custom has divided.  
All men become brothers  
Under the sway of thy gentle wings.”*

“This story I'd like to tell you is about something related to the concept of the universal fraternity of mankind. The choral component of this symphony was also performed by a Jewish children's choir at Auschwitz-Birkenau, a few hundred meters from the annihilation machinery of the crematoriums and the gas chambers and facing the railway ramp where the selections took place.”

“My memories are very exact, but certainly selective. I can't remember individual atrocities, I do remember those large masses of people moving from the trains and slowly being swallowed by the crematoria, day and night. And all the details of the selections like the flames burning day and night. And perhaps surprisingly, I can remember my first engagement with culture, with history and with music at Auschwitz. This has been part of my intellectual property since then - the human values that survived that particular camp, where I was brought together with thousands of other Jews from Theresienstadt.” Daniel continues:

“This is the story of the confrontation of a child with the world of Auschwitz, and this is different than a grown-up experience. It is not only my story, but the story of a group of children and teachers who lived in an island of culture and human values inside Auschwitz. Ideologies of the free world were debated and discussed there in the midst of hell. It

*Daniel K. was born on April 16, 1933, the same year that Adolf Hitler came to power. A little more than ten years later, Daniel was in Auschwitz. He now lives in Israel, where he is a professor at one of the institutions of higher learning. The following are excerpts of an interview that took place in 1995*

was a tremendous contrast. The question is how the human spirit in *extremis* can not only survive, but manifest human values which are unlimited in power.”

“But maybe I'm talking too abstractly. Part of this story is how the Nazis attempted to deceive the world about the true nature of Auschwitz and the mass annihilation of the Jews. They took, in the fall of 1943, several thousand Jews from the special ghetto of Theresienstadt, which was visited by the Red Cross and was a kind of camouflage for the Holocaust. They brought to Auschwitz a group of 5,000 Jews, then another 5,000, then another 5,000, and prepared for a possible visit by the Red Cross there. They didn't shave our heads and we kept our civilian clothes. It was an island in the heart of the annihilation camp. The Red Cross visit did not take place. I had arrived with the first transport of 5000 which they liquidated in March, 1944 to make room for the newcomers. I was among the approximately twenty people who survived.”

“A short time after we arrived, one of the

youth leaders in our group asked to establish an educational center for children and youth. His name was Freddie Hirsh. He was allowed to do it, and in a short time, the educational center became the spiritual and social center for the family camp. I would say it became the soul of the camp.”

“Education, by its very nature, is oriented towards the future. Here it was carried out in a situation in which the one absolute certainty was that there was no future. After the annihilation of the first group, there were no illusions among any inmates of the camp. They had three months, two months; they could count the days they had left. In spite of that, they went on approaching life with the same human values they had brought with them as a heritage of their former lives.”

“In this center, there was a conductor. His name was Imre. He organized the children's choir. We sang there. The rehearsals took place in a huge public lavatory barrack where the acoustics were good. It was at the end of the camp, less than a hundred meters from the crematorium. Among the pieces we were rehearsing - we never gave the final performance - was a piece talking about the brotherhood of people, peace and joy. I was then about ten and a half years old.”

“Ever since then, I've been trying to understand why this Jewish conductor chose these words and this composition to be performed there. Naive children, not understanding what they were doing, facing the greatest mass murder of mankind and celebrating the universal brotherhood of all people. Sometimes I think it was a wonderful, magnificent manifestation of the spirit of universal values, which can survive even the most inhumane deeds of man. It was a demonstration of protest and resistance of the spirit against mass crime and violence.”

“But you know, sometimes I have doubts about this interpretation. It may well be that this performance and this choice were an expression of an extreme sarcasm, an almost satanic gesture. Perhaps the only possible way for the grown-ups to confront the radical evil facing them was to radically distort human values by the use of sarcasm.”

MMK

# EDUCATION AS LOVE

Yad Vashem  
Education

## The Constant and the Eternal in Janusz Korczak's Educational Philosophy

By Gideon Greif

The memory of Janusz Korczak, born Henryk Goldschmit, has not diminished over time. Korczak, a pediatrician, was revolutionary in his attitudes regarding the relationship between the adult educator and the child. His philosophy was that childhood is not a preparatory stage in life, but rather, an integral part of life, itself.

The hundreds of volumes that have been published on Korczak over the past five decades have created a mythical aura that is not always accurate with regard to his relationship to Judaism, biographical details about his educational activities in the summer houses and orphanages, his educational principles and the interpretation of his literary works for adults and children.

Korczak's concepts and methods were adopted by many who presented him in a particular light, depending on their particular perspective. In Poland, for example, his Jewish origins and consciousness are minimized. A few years ago, in director Andrzej Wajda's biographical film, specific details were omitted, the universality of his concepts was exaggerated, and there were subtle references as to his indifference towards Judaism.

Israeli scholars, including literary and educational experts, have published numerous works during the past few years which attempt to provide an authentic profile of Korczak. They include: Yitzchak Perlis, Ada Poznansky-Hageri, Professor Yisrael Gutman, Professor Adir Cohen, Professor Shimon Sachs, Moshe Zertal (Zilbental), Yardena Hadas, Joseph Arnon, Menachem Regev, and others.

Recently, Yad Vashem, the Janusz Korczak Association in Israel, the Ghetto Fighters' House in the Name of Yitzchak Katzenelson, and HaKibbutz Hameuchad Publishing House have embarked on a joint project to publish all Janusz Korczak's written work. This

collection will contain introductions and extensive footnotes. The project's first two volumes have recently been published. The first volume contains works translated by Yonat and Alexander Sened, such as, *How to Love a Child, Educational Moments, and The Right of the Child for Dignity*. These works emphasize Korczak's unconditional love for the child, his insistence on the full rights of the child, and the need to respect and consider each child as a unique individual with special needs and particular talents. The child has the right for self fulfillment, for making and carrying out his own decisions regarding his life, and for self expression.

The adult must respect the child and understand the child's soul and his unique perspective on the world.

The second volume, *Poetic Prose*, includes six works translated from the Polish by Uri Orlev and Dov Stock (Sadan). Most were written for Korczak's radio

broadcasts which were presented by the "Old Doctor" on Polish radio between 1925-1926, and from the mid thirties until 1939. The radio programs attracted many listeners and created a devoted group of public admirers. However, during the late thirties, antisemitic groups attempted to stop his radio appearances and censure his literary works.

These two volumes present Korczak's humanistic vision, the essence of his socio-educational philosophy, and his struggle for children's rights. He believed that words have the power to become a vehicle by which the problems of both youth and adults can be solved, and thus he was so prolific in his writing.

Korczak's works reflect his attitudes towards society and the individual. Korczak's ideal world is integrative, positive, humane, tolerant, and progressive. Korczak's writings

are the immortal messages of an educator whose heart was filled with love, but whose death was in the gas chambers of Treblinka, with his children and colleagues, on August 5, 1942, at the hands of the Nazi oppressors.

### "I HAD NO CHANCE TO BE SAD" - THE TEHERAN CHILDREN



Few events that took place during World War II stirred the emotions of the *Yishuv* in *Eretz Yisrael* as deeply as the arrival of approximately 1,000 mostly orphaned, Jewish children, in February, 1943. The long journey from

Teheran, by way of the Suez Canal, to Atlit, Israel, was an unforgettable event in the history of Israel's small Jewish community. The children's integration into the new society involved a sensitive and complex process. Nevertheless, the rescue, in the midst of the Holocaust, of so large a group of children when 1.5 million children were murdered, was considered a miracle.

Yad Vashem's International School of Holocaust Studies has recently published a new book based on material presented to the archives by David Laor (Lauenberg), a former director of the orphanage in Teheran where the children stayed on their way to Israel. Written for youngsters, the book, *I Had No Chance to Be Sad*, is based on the testimony of one of the "Teheran Children," Meilech (Elimelech) Kaner. Kaner's personal recollections have been recorded by Naomi Morgenstern of Yad Vashem's Central School of Holocaust Studies, who also interviewed several other children from this unique group. The book is an important contribution to Yad Vashem's effort to provide reading materials for younger readers, and serves as an aid for both teachers and pupils to deal with the study of the Holocaust.



# SWITZERLAND:

## *Tens of Thousands of Jewish Names Disclosed Following Pressure by Yad Vashem*

By Ze'ev Ben David, Switzerland

Over the past year, archival material has exposed the long suppressed truth about the Swiss role during the Second World War. Newly disclosed evidence has put affairs like the hidden Jewish accounts into the headlines and caused an unprecedented international uproar which was further fuelled by a Swiss policy of denial. The public perception of Switzerland as a democratic and neutral guard of humanitarian traditions has been questioned. The current image is of a morally ambiguous country, where a ruling financial, industrial and military elite collaborated with Nazi Germany on a yet unknown scale for reasons of survival, but perhaps also because of ideological compliance with Fascism and Nazism.

A deeply rooted antisemitism prepared the ground for what is today rightfully called Switzerland's antisemitic refugee policy. Ever since the 1920's the official line was to prevent Jews from settling in Switzerland. When the so called *Fremdenpolizei* or "Foreigners Police" was founded, it was specifically aimed at preventing the *Ueberfremdung* or "infiltration" by Jews as *Wesenfremde Elemente* meaning "...elements foreign to Swiss mentality." The 1931 law which was reaffirmed in 1939 stated that Switzerland already had many foreigners. Therefore, the right of asylum was granted sparingly. Political refugees, amounting to 644 were the only people to gain entry and residency, but Jews were at no time recognized as political refugees.

The only legal possibility to gain entry was if one could prove that Switzerland only served as a point of transit. In the mid 1930's holiday camps organized by Jewish organizations for Jewish children from Germany were held in Switzerland which provided the children with rest and distanced them from the pressures of a worsening situation in Germany. The children were granted short term visas, and were denied extensions. In 1938 following the *Anschluss* with Austria, thousands of Jewish refugees tried to enter Switzerland, at times successfully due to the

lack, until 1941, of centralization of the legal and political procedures. The majority were sent back. At times, public pressure, aid agencies, legal loopholes and the courage and determination of individuals like the famous Captain Gruninger who let Jews in, made it possible for Jews to enter.

Among the refugees who reached Switzerland before 1939 were the children of the *Kindertransporte*, the children transports which were organized by aid agencies and Zionist groups. These children, ages three to



1938, Camp for Jewish German children, Alschwit, Switzerland.

twelve, were sent to safety by their parents, whom many never saw again. The *Kindertransporte* saved several hundred lives. Some of these children were brought to Switzerland to live with relatives, others had to live in foster homes, but virtually all of them were not allowed to stay in Switzerland following the war.

The occupation of France, Holland and Belgium brought new Jewish refugees to the border. By this time, a centralized bureaucracy was established consisting of border police and the army. The border was closed hermetically due to the decision made by the head of the Department of Justice and Police, Eduard von Steiger and Heinrich Rothmund, head of the Bureau of Police, who with the support of Parliament and government, were largely responsible for drafting and implementing the policy towards the Jewish refugees.

On September 26, 1942, new rules were

introduced. Sick persons, pregnant women, persons over sixty five years of age, children on their own under sixteen, people with relatives in Switzerland and families with children under sixteen (later changed to children under six) could remain in Switzerland.

A tragic fate struck the family of historian Saul Friedlander, of the Yad Vashem International Institute of Holocaust Studies, who is today a member of the Official Commission of Historians set up recently to research the Swiss conduct during the war.

His parents, fearing the hardships that the toddler would face in crossing the border, did not take him along, and they hid him with French farmers. They were apprehended by the Swiss border guards and sent back to their deaths. In accordance to the new Swiss rules, they would have been allowed to stay, had Friedlander been with them.

However, on August 13, 1943 it was clearly stated that "refugees for racial reasons, (meaning Jews,) will not be considered political refugees." Thousands were sent back at a time when the Swiss government already had full and accurate knowledge of the deportations and of the fate which was awaiting the Jews.

Relatively few Swiss helped Jewish refugees. Sebastian Steiger a courageous young primary school teacher from Basel, was among those who were active. In 1943, he went to the Pyrenees to work in the children's home of *Chateau la Hille*, established by the Red Cross. Steiger and his Swiss and French colleagues took care of and protected a few dozen Jewish children of all ages. *La Hille* was raided several times by the French Gendarmerie and the Germans, despite being under the jurisdiction of the Red Cross. In breach of the organization, Steiger and his friends transferred the older children to the French resistance, the *Maquis*, and smuggled groups of younger children into Spain and Switzerland. They were successful most of the time.

In his memoirs Steiger recalls the case of two fourteen year old Jewish youngsters from *La Hille*, who managed to pass through



# LAST CHANCE FOR SURVIVAL?

southern France undetected and reach the Swiss border which they crossed successfully. After a thirty kilometer hike, they were discovered by Swiss soldiers who wanted to send them back immediately, despite the law stating that children under sixteen who travelled alone had to be allowed in. Despite their pleas, the Swiss soldiers claimed that their orders from Bern were to send all Jewish refugees back, and, mercilessly, they drove them to the border. The two boys jumped off the truck but, were subsequently apprehended and sent over the border. The boys returned to *La Hille* where one of them was later killed while trying to escape to Spain, while the other was killed fighting in the French *Maquis*. At the end of the war, Sebastian Steiger himself had problems re-entering Switzerland because he had given away his Swiss passport to one of the children. Without papers, he was interned for a short time.

By July 12, 1944 the order was given to allow all Jews to enter Switzerland. By then, most of European Jewry were dead, and the Allies were advancing towards Germany. Some 28,000 Jews found refuge in Switzerland; despite the fact that many of them were confined to internment camps, subjected to harsh regulations, and were under constant threat of expulsion, they survived. However, unlike any other refugee group, the condition imposed by the Swiss government for the containment of refugee Jews within its borders, was that the local Jewish community pay for their entire upkeep and all costs involved. The majority were forced to leave after the war and subsequently emigrated to Israel, USA and Australia.

The exact number of those sent back during the war will never be known. The evidence which existed in the form of reports and files on every single refugee who reached the border was destroyed by the Federal Department of Justice between 1945 and 1955.

The Swiss Deputy Foreign Minister, Jacob Kellenberger during a visit to Yad Vashem met with the Chairman of the Directorate, Avner Shalev. Shalev officially protested against the Swiss policy of preventing access of Yad Vashem archivists and scholars to vital material held in the official Swiss archives. On his return, Kellenberger, and the Minister of Interior, Ruth Dreifuss, were responsible for the establishment of an internal committee within the Federal Archives to

study Swiss archival material relating to the refugee policy and the return of Jews to their point of embarkation, and thus to their deaths during the Holocaust. In 1995, the Federal Archives was about to announce that during their in-depth research, they had discovered the names of approximately 250 Jews who were turned away from the Swiss borders. They were also willing to state that the number of Jews turned away had exceeded 10,000. The Director of the Federal Archives, Christof Graf, confirmed that a police card file of the names of Jews who had been turned away at the border had been destroyed after the war,

as Yad Vashem had suspected. Yad Vashem, convinced that the numbers were innumerable larger, insisted on continuing and expanding the study, so that it would include the entire network of archives throughout Switzerland's cantons. As a result of Yad Vashem's pressure, and in cooperation with the Swiss Federal Archives, more than 30,000 files have been discovered in several Swiss archives. The names and fate of these people can now be reconstructed. However, estimates of the number of people turned away are significantly higher. Their names may remain unknown forever.

## *From the Children of the Otwock Orphanage: The Story of the Child Partisan, DAVID MUDRICK*

**D**avid Mudrick was born in the town of Dabrowica near Rovno in the Vohlynia district. The Germans occupied the area in 1941 and in 1942 they reached the town. All the Jewish men were gathered in the market square and taken to a place of no return. David's father escaped by bribing local villagers with gold and other valuables and hid in the fields. The final liquidation of the community involved the deportation of the remainder of men, women and children to the town of Sarny where they were shot in cold blood. David, his parents and brother and sister escaped and joined the partisans in the forest.

They were constantly on the run in fear of being identified and caught. Once, the group encountered a shepherd, and after much deliberation, he was spared. This decision was to guide them later on.

A trap set for German soldiers who attempted to plunder the *kontingent* (the cattle, wheat and vegetables) of a Ukrainian village succeeded. The soldiers were shot and the cows were distributed among the local peasants. The partisans got hold of the ammunition.

In a later incident the group encountered a forest keeper. As with the shepherd, they spared his life and the keeper became an invaluable informant, warning the partisans of German raids in search of them.

In Francesca Oliva's collection, Mudrick writes, "On a spring day in 1943, my parents set out to gather berries. I waited for their

return all day but to no avail. I looked for them, unsuccessfully. The following day they were discovered dead. They had been murdered by a gang of Ukrainians wandering the woods. Afraid of being discovered, we escaped to the swamp area where other partisan groups congregated. The Red Army advanced towards us and we felt safe. One day, my uncle, feeling secure and trusting, went to a nearby village. Ukrainian policemen identified him and shot him on sight."

The group disbanded and David remained in the swamps. Local peasants became friendlier and David visited them without fear. A German patrol stopped him, but the villagers immediately explained that he was a neighboring village boy who was sent to purchase potatoes. David was released. One night, the remainder of the group rowed to the opposite bank where a rescue team of the Red Army awaited them. David had won his war. David was sent to the Otwock orphanage and immigrated to Israel in 1948.



By: Bezalel Amikam

# NEWS

## GERMANY'S RESPONSES TO NAZI ANTI-JEWISH POLICY 1933-1941

"Young people were invited to present their papers. You could call this a new guard," commented Dr. David Bankier, the organizer of an international conference arranged by The International Institute for Holocaust Studies of Yad Vashem in association with the Leo Baeck Institute.

The conference, coordinated by Esther Aran, called, "German Society's Responses to Nazi Anti-Jewish Policy 1933-1941," took place February 10-13.

"Analyses presented by the new guard reflect a change in the field of Holocaust research," said Dr. Bankier.

Eminent lecturers included Heide Gerstenberger of Bremen University, Germany, John A.S. Grenville of the University of Birmingham, England, Konrad Kwiet of Macquarie University, Australia, Richard Brietman of the American University, and Yehuda Bauer head of International Institute of Holocaust Studies, Yad Vashem.

Commenting on the value of presenting the detailed analyses of particular aspects of the Holocaust, Dr David Bankier explained, "We had the general information some twenty years ago. There is no point in organizing a conference in which you return to the sweeping generalizations made then. We now have the benefit of studies on Lower Saxony, on Hamburg, and we have people who can provide answers about the behavior of the economic ministry, the welfare organizations, the resistance, and so forth. These studies are important because the more detailed, specific research can provide us with better answers, as well as help us formulate better questions."

*Jeremy Swimer*

## AN AMENDMENT TO THE HOLOCAUST MARTYRS' AND HEROES' REMEMBRANCE DAY LAW

On March 12, 1997 the Knesset passed an amendment to the Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Day Law. The amendment stipulates that whenever "the 27th of Nisan, falls on a Sunday, Remembrance Day will be held on the 28th of Nisan" i.e. on Monday.

In 1951, the Knesset resolved that the 27th of Nisan would be declared "a day of commemoration for the Holocaust and the ghetto uprisings." In 1959, the Knesset enacted the Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Day Law. An amendment in 1961 specified that "should the 27th of Nisan fall on a Friday, Remembrance Day will be held on the 26th of Nisan. In any event, Remembrance Day commences at sunset and terminates at nightfall the following day."

Events commence annually with the opening ceremony at Yad Vashem in the presence of the President, Prime Minister, cabinet ministers, MKs, Speaker of the Knesset, Chief Rabbis, President of the Supreme Court and thousands of survivors and their families, who come to Yad Vashem in the evening, from all over the country.

Since this year the 27th of Nisan falls on a Sunday, and consequently the opening ceremony would take place on Saturday night, the Yad Vashem directorate petitioned the Ministerial Committee for Ceremonies and Symbols to defer Remembrance Day by one day, in accordance with the principle established by law in 1961. The request was made in order to ensure that the opening ceremony would be conducted in a dignified fashion, and to enable the thousands of survivors and their families to arrive at the ceremony on time.

The Ministerial Committee, headed by Minister of Tourism Moshe Katzav, approved the request, which then received government consent, and was passed on to the Knesset for authorization as a temporary provision for this year alone.

On the joint initiative of the Chairman of the Yad Vashem Directorate, Avner Shalev, Prof. Shevach Weiss MK, and Emmanuel Zissman MK, Chairman of the Education and Cultural Committee of the Knesset, presented a recommendation to the Knesset to amend the law permanently as opposed to authorizing a temporary provision. The decision was taken in view of the fact that Remembrance Day will also fall on a Sunday in years to come. The recommendation was unanimously approved by the Knesset.

## THE UNDERGROUND PRESS OF THE WARSAW GHETTO'S RESISTANCE MOVEMENTS

**Volume Six: March 1942-July 1944**  
**Editor: Israel Shaham, Yad Vashem, Jerusalem, 1997, 630 PP.**

Yad Vashem has recently completed the sixth and final volume of the comprehensive collection of the Jewish underground press which operated and disseminated information in the Warsaw Ghetto from its establishment in 1940 until the beginning of 1943, the eve of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. (Two additional issues appeared outside the ghetto walls in 1944). The surviving 250 issues, amounting to 3000 pages, which were published by this press, represent one of the major findings of the ghetto's resistance movement.

The invaluable material, journalistic, historical and sociological in character, was preserved in the archive of *Oneg Shabbat*. This unique Jewish institute was established in Warsaw to record ghetto life and is our source for copies of the underground press.

The underground press was organized to fight against the Nazis by calling for armed resistance by the Jews, and sent this message through various channels to the local Polish population and throughout the world. The press also dealt with the complexities of Jewish life within the largest ghetto in Poland, expressing the broad range of views and positions of the ghetto residents and attempting to continue, as much as possible, a normal life in a decaying, closed off community.

By means of underground couriers and youth movement emissaries, these journals brought updated information on the fate of the Jews in the distant towns and the forced labor and death camps. It revealed the truth about Chelmno, Belzec, Treblinka, and other extermination camps and it warned the Jewish public what the meanings of the apparently innocent phrases like "Resettlement," "Registration," "Work in the east" etc. really meant.

With the completion of the translation and production of this collection, Yad Vashem provides researchers and students with rich and assorted material, including comments and clarifications of the text, contained within the six volumes of *The Underground Press*.



■ **Eli Zborowski**, Chairman of the American Yad Vashem Society recently paid a short visit to Yad Vashem, Jerusalem, to personally hand over the first's installment of the society's central project, led by **Joseph Wilf**, which is the campaign for building The Yad Vashem Museum. This first of many gifts includes the funds raised by **Sam Skura** for the establishment of a computerized learning center, which will be part of the new museum complex. The project, now in progress, is awaiting the completion of the plans and model of the architect who is currently being selected. With this, the campaign will enter its next stage.

□ At the **American Society's** highly successful dinner in **Israel**, in honor of **Dr. Miri** and **Sheldon Adelson**, many dignitaries and friends of Yad Vashem from Israel and the U.S.A. attended, including **Joseph Wilf**, the society's vice-chairman and chair of the museum campaign. The much praised dinner, initiated and supported by **Abe Spiegel**, was tastefully and thoroughly organized by **Rita Spiegel**. At the dinner, **Dr. Miri** and **Sheldon Adelson** were commended for their major gift towards a central project of "Yad Vashem 2001" which they pledged in the **American** dinner held in Los Angeles in August. This gift will be in memory of **Dr. Miri Adelson's** family who perished in the Holocaust.

□ Other news from the **American Society** includes the renewal of their annual support of Yad Vashem. These monthly gifts will go towards educational activities, the Valley of the Communities and research at Yad Vashem throughout the year.

□ Yad Vashem welcomes the new National Director of the American Society, **Dr. Alex Grobman** whose enormous energies will be invested in expanding the Society's activities and establishing new branches throughout the U.S.A.

■ **Sonia Badler**, from **Venezuela**, visited Yad Vashem at the end of March, at the initiative of **Hilo Oestfeld**, an old friend and generous supporter of Yad Vashem. In a touching meeting on that day, in the presence of **Hilo** and **Klara Oestfeld**, **Shlomo Lahat**, Chairman of the Yad Vashem Foundation, **Avner Shalev**, Chairman of the Yad Vashem Directorate and **Simcha Salach**, Director of the Yad Vashem Foundation, Yad Vashem was presented with the generous gift for the Library and Educational Resource Center of the new Central School of Holocaust Studies currently under construction.

□ **The Venezuelan Society** chaired by **David Israel**, held a celebratory dinner in honor of **Clara** and **Alexander Stransky** who supported the translation and publication of the book, "The Documents of the Holocaust" into Spanish. During the evening, the efforts and hard work of the society's director, **Perla Hazan** were acknowledged and praised.

■ News from the **Panama Society** includes **Sam Kardonsky's** support of the translation and publication of "To Fly like a Butterfly" in memory of his sister, **Sara** who perished in the Holocaust.

■ **The Yad Vashem National Charitable Trust in England**, chaired by **Ben Helfgott**, produced impressive results in their fundraising efforts last year. The society has opened its annual campaign for the support of a central educational project at Yad Vashem.

■ Reports from the **French Society** include **Hugo Ramniceanu's** support of the development of educational programs in memory of **Valerie Ramniceanu's** family from Rumania who perished in the Holocaust.

■ Steps are currently being taken to establish a **German Society**, based in **Frankfurt**, initiated by **Henry Faktor** who has turned to many public dignitaries to join and be active.

■ News from the **Dutch Society** includes the gift of **Simon Meerscham** which will be invested in the installation of an air-conditioning system in the library.

■ 20 members of the **Norwegian Christians for Israel Organization**, in coordination with the **Norwegian Society** led by **Herman Kahan**, visited Yad Vashem recently. In the past their support went towards Yad Vashem's employment of new immigrants from the former Soviet Union. During their recent visit, a stirring meeting took place between them and these new immigrant employees at Yad Vashem. The organization expressed their commitment in continuing to support this important project, and showed interest in additional projects involving new immigrants including enrichment studies on the Holocaust for immigrant teachers at Yad Vashem.

■ **The Israeli Society's Simcha Pratt**, on behalf of the **Pasyuk** and **Sztryk Families**, announced the support of the establishment of the Administration Center of Yad Vashem's Valley of the Communities in memory of the members of the two families who perished in the Holocaust.

□ **Yoram Berger** has recently supported the Yad Vashem's Central School of Holocaust Studies production of a Video film on teaching about the Holocaust. His gift is in memory of the **Berger family** who died in the Holocaust.

Published by:



Yad Vashem יד ושם

The Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes'  
Remembrance Authority

**Chairman of the International Council:** Dr. Josef Burg  
**Chairman of the Directorate:** Avner Shalev  
**Vice Chairman of the Directorate:** Johanan Bein  
**Secretary General:** Ishai Amrami  
**Head of the International Institute:** Professor Yehuda Bauer  
**Chief Historian:** Professor Yisrael Gutman  
**Members of the Yad Vashem Directorate:** Dr. Joel Barromi, Dr. Avi Beker,

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# Yad Vashem *new*

## PUBLICATIONS AND EVENTS

### NEW PUBLICATIONS



Friedlander, Saul, *Nazi Germany and the Jews. Volume I: The Years of Persecution, 1933-1939*, Harper Collins, New York, 1997, 436pp.

The novelty of this book lies in the combination of an erudite summary of the

historical literature, and what initially looks like anecdotal documentation. Yet the anecdotes accumulate and become a thesis: "Through a process of interpretation and innovation, party, state, and society gradually filled in the remaining blanks of the ever harsher code regulating all relations with Jews. What party agencies and the state bureaucracy left open was dealt with by the courts, and what the courts did not rule on remained for Volksgenossen to figure out" (p.306).



Serge Klarsfeld (et. al. eds.), *French Children of the Holocaust, A Memorial*, New York: New York University Press, 1996, 1881 pp. Giving victims names, faces and telling the

story of the victims telegraphically, Serge Klarsfeld has produced a very important, poignant and deeply disturbing book about the 11,000 children who were deported from France during the Holocaust. Klarsfeld succeeds in documenting, teaching about and commemorating these children and in so doing, helps us understand a little bit more about the fate of all the children murdered by the Nazis.

### MULTIMEDIA



The Hebrew version of the multimedia program of Yad Vashem's Central School of Holocaust

Studies has been in great demand, and recently the English version has been completed. The program, *The Return to Life*, deals with the reality confronted by the survivors when they were liberated from the camps. Despite a past

that was overwhelming, they had to cope with an uncertain future. Original news reels, clips of survivors' testimonies, and a steady flow of pictorial collages provide a constant stimulus. The structure of this innovative project is based on a continuous storyline which can be influenced by the direct participation and intervention of the user. For purchase in U.S. Tech-Support by phone at 1-800-925-6853 or 1-914-356-1485 or w.w.w. Torah Scholar.com

### EXHIBITION



A new exhibition of the works of the Jewish Polish artist, **David Olere**, for whom the theme of the Holocaust was his life's work, will open on the 30.4.1997 at Yad Vashem. Olere, who died in 1985, is the only artist in

the world who entered the Auschwitz-Birkenau crematoriums and survived due to his determination to become a witness, through his art, for the coming generations. The exhibition, initiated by Serge Klarsfeld from France, reflects the daily life within his murderous surroundings. Olere, originally a stage designer, was apprehended in France in 1943 and passed through the internment camp of Drancy on his way to Auschwitz. Prisoner tattoo number 106144 was in the *Sonderkommando* of Crematorium Three. However, his main occupation was writing letters to the families of SS staff and illustrating them. He also provided translations in numerous languages such as Polish, Russian, Yiddish, French, English and German. Olere was well aware that, as a witness to the annihilation process, he was doomed to die. Miraculously, he survived, but was never able to free himself from his living nightmare. The exhibition, whose curator is Bella Shomer - Zaichik, includes his works as an artist and graphic designer from before the Holocaust, as well as his drawings of the death camp.

### EVENTS MAY - JULY '97

#### REMEMBRANCE DAY

**The Eve of Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Day, Sunday May 4, 1997**

- 20:00** The Official opening ceremony at Yad Vashem
- 22:00** The Holocaust in the Contemporary Arts - a panel discussion.

**Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Day, Monday May 5, 1997**

- 10:00** Siren heard throughout Israel
- 10:02** Wreath-laying ceremony with the participation of the President, the Prime Minister, the Speaker of the Knesset and other.
- 10:30-13:00** Unto Every Person There is a Name. Members of the public will recite the names of Holocaust victims.
- 13:00** Main memorial ceremony with cantor.
- 10:30-16:00** Continuous screening of films on the Holocaust.
- 17:30** Ceremony for youth movements.

**8.5.1997** Ceremony to mark the Allied victory over Nazi Germany. Representatives from the war veterans, from the Israel Defense Forces, and from the various diplomatic missions representing the Allied Forces will be laying wreaths.

**26.5.1997** Piano recital in honor of pianist Edit Krauss.

**28.5.1997** Ceremony of the Yad Vashem Uveeler Prize: Promoting High School Projects.

**9.6.1997** British Musician, composer and singer Adrian Snell will perform his program called *Song of an Exile* in Yad Vashem's Valley of the Communities.

**1.7.1997** The opening of the Lubomile Exhibition and a subsequent concert of Jewish music will take place in the Valley of the Communities.

**20.7.1997** A concert of young Chazanim, who will sing traditional songs from various Jewish communities.

**30.7.1997** The Norwegian singer and actress Bente Kahan will present her program, *Voices from Theresienstadt*.

For further information, please contact: Tel: 02-6751614/5 or Fax: 02-6433511