



Documentation

Members of the Historical Committee gather testimony from survivors in the Leipheim DP Camp, Germany, c. 1946/7



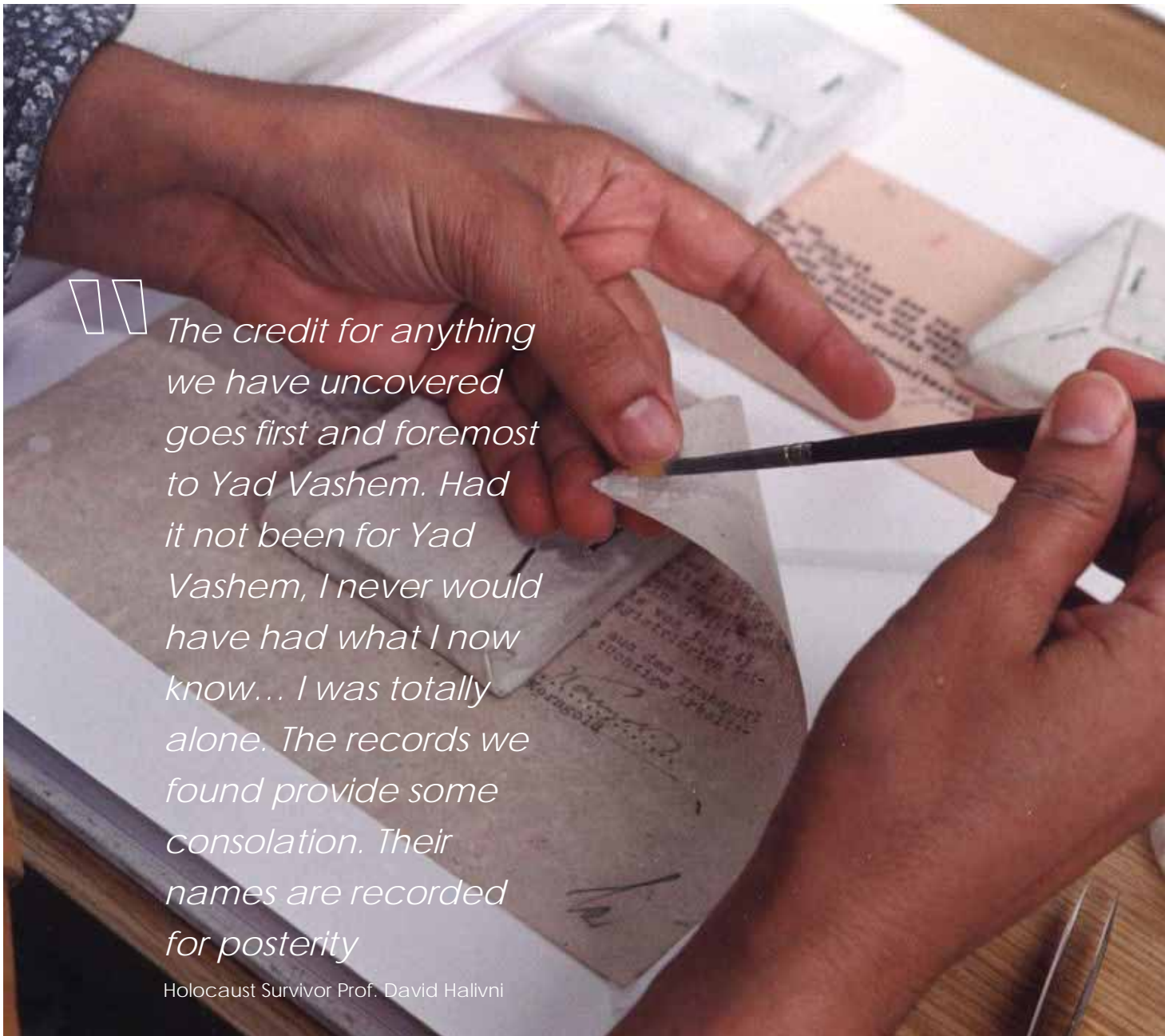
May my notebook, written in blood... serve as evidence to the world of the bloodbath of the murderer Hitler and his gang of criminals

From a letter written by Holocaust victim Yitzchak Aron (son of Moshe and Tzirel), 1942

Documentation

With over 125 million pages of documents, Yad Vashem's Archives comprise the world's largest collection of Holocaust-related information.

In 2008, we significantly expanded our archival collection, receiving tens of millions of documents from repositories and archives around the world. From our vast wealth of original documentation, we respond to thousands of applications every month from researchers, survivors and the general public, searching for information on the fate of individuals during and after the War.



The credit for anything we have uncovered goes first and foremost to Yad Vashem. Had it not been for Yad Vashem, I never would have had what I now know... I was totally alone. The records we found provide some consolation. Their names are recorded for posterity

Holocaust Survivor Prof. David Halivni

From the Streets of the Ghetto to the World Wide Web: Yad Vashem's Photographic Collection Now Online

In May 2008, Yad Vashem uploaded some 130,000 historic photographs – a significant portion of its unique collection – to the Internet. The photos cover the lives of the Jews before, during and after the Holocaust, as well as Shoah remembrance worldwide. As such, they represent an invaluable asset to historians, educators, writers, filmmakers and the public at large.

Internet surfers are now able to conduct searches of the database by topic, name or geographical location. A user-friendly interface allows surfers to navigate their way with ease. Every photograph in the database is linked to information relating to its content and, upon selection, a Google map automatically opens showing the location of the places noted in the caption. Further links enable expanded searches. Yad Vashem plans eventually to integrate the photographic collection with its other online databases, as well as those to be uploaded in the future.



*Amid all the horror around him, he has found his destiny:
to photograph, and leave behind a testimony for all generations
about the great tragedy unfolding before him*

Holocaust survivor Arie Ben Menachem about Lodz ghetto photographer and Holocaust victim Mendel Grossman (pictured above)

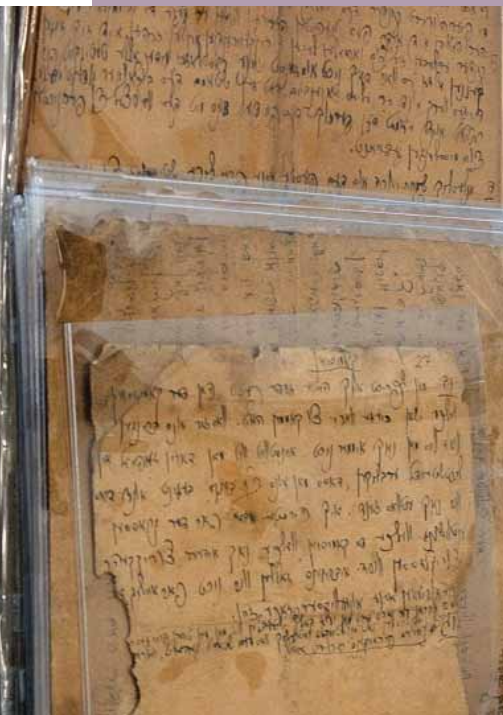
Facts and Figures 2008

- ⇒ 50 million pages of documents added to the Yad Vashem Archives, which now houses 125 million pages of documents in total
- ⇒ Over 14,500 photographs added to the Photo Archive, which now comprises some 370,000 images
- ⇒ 26,000 public enquiries answered by the Reference and Information Services Department: 18,000 written and 8,000 in the Library and Archives Reading Room

Yad Vashem Archives help reveal the fate of individual victims

By collecting and safeguarding millions of pieces of evidence from all over the world, Yad Vashem can provide students, researchers and historians, as well as the general public, with an accurate and detailed historical record of the atrocities committed against the Jewish people. Despite the passage of time, our Reference and Information Unit weekly assists hundreds of people seeking information about missing relatives.

The Yad Vashem Archives was recently augmented by the receipt of some 67 million pages of documents from the post-war German-based International Tracing Service (ITS). The digitized documents, 20 million of which Yad Vashem had already copied in the 1950s, include information about Holocaust victims, deportations, concentration camps, forced labor and displaced persons.



Preserving for Posterity

Part of the work undertaken in the vast Archives Division is the restoration and preservation of millions of documents from the wartime period, including diaries written during the Holocaust. One such diary was penned by Rabbi Uri Feivish Tauber during his incarceration in the Mogilev ghetto from 1941-1944. The diary, containing compelling and moving descriptions of his work and experiences in the ghetto orphanage, was submitted to the Archives by his widow Ruth. Yad Vashem's unique Preservation and Restoration Laboratory worked tirelessly to repair and preserve its crumbling pages, and restore it to a condition from which researchers may be able to decipher and utilize the information within.

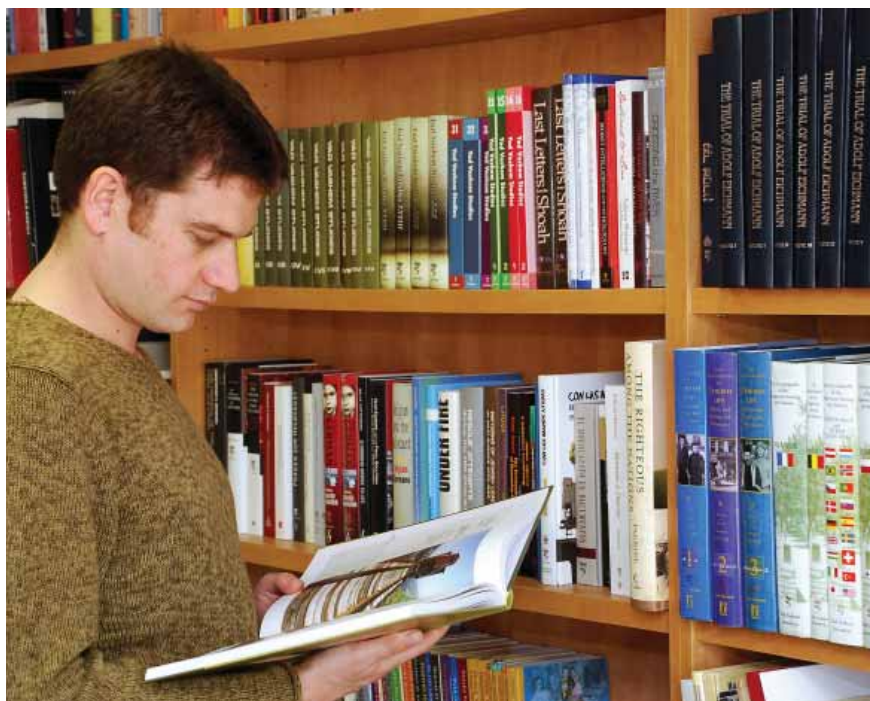


I didn't want the diary to be lost forever... at Yad Vashem it is much safer than in my own home. Now others can read it and learn about what happened. It will be a reminder for all time

Ruth Tauber, widow of Rabbi Uri Feivish Tauber

The Library

With over 117,000 titles in more than 50 languages, the Yad Vashem Library comprises the largest collection of Holocaust-related publications in the world. Not only does the material lining its shelves contain a wealth of information about the Holocaust, it represents mankind's attempt to grapple with one of the most traumatic events in human history.



In 2008, over 3,000 new titles were added to the Library, covering a range of topics from memoirs and biographies to educational publications, anthologies and postwar accounts.

Catalogue of the Yad Vashem Library: Now Online

In 2008, Yad Vashem uploaded its entire library catalogue – some 117,000 titles in 54 languages – to the Internet. The unique collection – the largest of its kind in the world – contains every kind of publication in the field, including memoirs, novels, encyclopedias, *sifrei yizkor* (memorial books), Nazi and antisemitic publications, and geographic sources. With links to basic bibliographies about the Holocaust, in-depth features on interesting items in the Library, articles from *Yad Vashem Studies* and published papers from our scholarly conferences, the online catalogue provides an unparalleled source of readily accessible knowledge regarding published works about the Holocaust.

Facts and Figures 2008

⇒ 3,400 book titles added to the Library collection, which now numbers over 117,000 titles in total

Names Recovery

With over 3.6 million names, Yad Vashem's Central Database of Shoah Victims' Names is the only repository in the world dedicated to preserving the memory of the six million Jews who perished in the Holocaust. Millions more names remain unidentified: it is our collective duty to persist until they are recovered.



When I help other survivors I can look them in the eye. I don't need to explain myself; we already have a mutual understanding and share a common knowledge

Holocaust survivor and Names Recovery Volunteer Aliza Shomron

Survivors Volunteer in Yad Vashem's Global Names Recovery Project

The Shoah Victims' Names Recovery Project trains volunteers in Israel and around the world to assist Holocaust survivors and members of their generation to commemorate victims by recording their names – and, when available, photos and other biographical data – on Pages of Testimony. Many of those joining the ranks of this historic effort are themselves Shoah survivors.

In Israel, volunteers undergo training at Yad Vashem and then conduct home visits with survivors, where tremendous sensitivity is required to guide them through the painful process of re-opening and confronting feelings of loss and mourning from over half a century ago. Nevertheless, Holocaust survivors time and again express their gratitude to the empathetic volunteers for finally helping them ease such a heavy burden.



Families Reunite Through Online Names Database

Since Yad Vashem uploaded its Central Database of Shoah Victim's Names to the Internet in 2004, its staff has had the honor to facilitate – and witness – poignant reunions of Jewish families from all over the world. Recently, descendants of the Diamond Family (USA) and the Dashut Family (Israel) met for the first time when Nancy Diamond (center) visited Yad Vashem's Hall of Names in October 2008, and met with her cousin, Holocaust survivor Avshalom Dayagi-Dashut (left) and his daughter Yona Kahanovitch (right).

Facts and Figures 2008

- ⇒ 33,000 Pages of Testimony and 4,400 photographs added to the Hall of Names
- ⇒ Over 600,000 names records digitized from archival documents gathered in Hungary, the former Soviet Union and other sources
- ⇒ Yad Vashem's Central Database of Shoah Victims' Names reaches 3.6 million names



This unique idea bridges continents, generations and time itself... the Jewish family lives on

Sara Michaela Reingewirtz



A Living Connection

Bnei Mitzvah “Twin” with Holocaust Victims

An increasingly popular way in which Jewish children and their families are strengthening their identification with the Jewish people is by forging bonds with individual children killed in the Holocaust. Using the Online Central Database of Shoah Victims’ Names, bar and bat mitzvah students review Pages of Testimony containing the names, biographies and (when available) photographs of children with the same Hebrew name, birth month or other family connection.

Many of the young students turn to Yad Vashem for help in researching various aspects of the victims’ lives, their struggles, and their traditions before or during the war. The experience adds a meaningful dimension to their own “coming of age,” and a powerful connection to the Jewish generations lost in the Holocaust. (Pictured above: Nathaniel Jean, left, with Henri Joinovici, brother of Holocaust victim Albert Joinovici, with whom Nathaniel twinned his bar mitzvah celebration.)

Stories From a Silent World Collecting Testimony from Deaf Survivors

How did people born without hearing survive the Holocaust? How did they connect with their surroundings? These questions are not theoretical for many dozens of deaf Holocaust survivors living in Israel today. Until just a few years ago, they were unable to provide videotaped testimony because of the technical difficulties involved. Yad Vashem's Oral Testimony Section, part of the Archives Division, initiated a special project, in cooperation with the Institute for the Advancement of Deaf Persons in Israel. So far, twenty survivors, deaf from birth, have been interviewed, and an additional 25 survivors (most from the former USSR) are currently being recorded.



This exceptional documentation is carried out with the help of a sign-language translator, who participates in the interviews at Yad Vashem. After the recordings are complete, the interviews are passed on for transcription, so that the individual stories of these survivors, part of the whole story of the Shoah, may be made available to researchers and the general public alike.

Facts and Figures 2008

⇒ 1,250 new survivor testimonies filmed. Yad Vashem's Archives now hold some 100,000 video, audio and written testimonies

Visual Center

The Yad Vashem Visual Center is the world's repository of Holocaust-related films. The Center currently houses over 65,000 video recordings of all kinds of genres – including documentaries, feature films and survivor testimonies.



"The transfer of the testimonies will create untold opportunities for education, scholarship and research"

Kim Simon, USC Shoah Foundation Institute Interim Executive Director

World's Largest Collection of Holocaust Survivor Video Testimonies

A full copy of the nearly 52,000 testimonies of Holocaust survivors and other witnesses was recently transferred from the archive of the USC Shoah Foundation Institute for Visual History and Education, established by Steven Spielberg. Now accessible for searching and viewing at Yad Vashem's Visual Center, these testimonies, from 56 different countries and in 32 languages, supplement Yad Vashem's existing Archive collection of 10,000 survivor testimonies, as well as 5,200 Holocaust-related films of all genres, produced from 1945 until today.

These collections are now easily accessible to the public at large at Yad Vashem's Visual Center. A simple computer search accesses and cross-references the entire collection. With over 200,000 hours of video available via VOD (Video on Demand), the Visual Center's collection of films is now the largest of its kind in Israel.

"The Green Dumpster Mystery" Winner of the 2008 Avner Shalev Award

For the third year running, Yad Vashem's Visual Center was honored to bestow the Avner Shalev Award for Artistic Achievement at the International Jerusalem Film Festival. The award, given to a film produced within the previous year that brings extraordinary cinematic expression to a unique Holocaust-related story, was presented to Tal Haim Yoffe, director of the moving docu-detective film, *The Green Dumpster Mystery*. The film follows Yoffe's own journey of discovery of the Wolkowicz family, through a pile of old photographs he chanced upon that had been thrown into a dumpster. Yoffe gently unravels tangled and torn threads of memory, patiently reweaving them into a whole –thus recreating the tale of one family of survivors among many thousands more.



Facts and Figures 2008

- ⇒ 500 new films added to the Visual Center Library Catalogue, which now holds 5,200 Holocaust-related films
- ⇒ In addition to its thousands of yearly visitors, over 90 groups, including teachers, students and filmmakers, attend the Visual Center for varied activities and programs