

“So That the Generations to Come Will Know”

by Nava Weiss

Programs for the Ultra-orthodox During the Three Weeks (*Bein Hametzarim*)

■ For a number of years, Yad Vashem has dedicated the period of *Bein Hametzarim*—the three summer weeks between 17 Tamuz, when the walls of Jerusalem were breached, and 9 Av, when the Temple was destroyed—to inviting the ultra-orthodox public for intensive Holocaust study. This year, two large conferences were held at the International School for Holocaust Studies: one for *Talmud Torah* (elementary school) teachers, attended by some 100 male instructors from all over the country; and one for 450 women teachers; as well as additional seminars and workshops.

The two conferences dealt with the importance of the teacher’s role in Holocaust education, with a focus on the School’s educational philosophy. The keynote lecture at the women teachers’ conference, delivered by pedagogical director Shulamit Imber, sparked intense thought and provided important tools for teaching the subject in ultra-orthodox educational institutions.

Cooperation on Holocaust Education in the Ultra-orthodox Sector: Beitar Illit

■ A partnership between the Beitar Illit municipality’s education department and the International School for Holocaust Studies began two years ago with a seminar for *Talmud Torah* principals at Yad Vashem. The focus of the seminar was the discourse between the ultra-orthodox public and Yad Vashem, and opportunities for cooperation in the educational sphere.

To proceed with this joint venture, the School’s teacher-training and ultra-orthodox education departments developed individualized lesson plans for *Talmud Torah* students. At the same time, a group of teachers in Beitar Illit attended a comprehensive course in Holocaust history as well as a supplementary course for teaching the subject in the lower grades. “I was especially impressed by the focus on



■ Top: Registration for the educational conference for *Talmud Torah* teachers
Above: Graduation ceremony for teachers from Beitar Illit. Bottom row, third from right, Yad Vashem Director-General Nathan Eitan

connecting the students to the individual and in identifying with the world of children prior to the Holocaust,” said one educator. “I also was interested in what *not* to teach to this age group, such as methods of destruction and other traumas.” Another participant said: “I enriched my knowledge, and hope to pass on what I learned to my students, so that the generations to come will know.”

The teacher-training graduation ceremony took place in the Beitar Illit municipality on 3 July, in the presence of Municipality Director-General Rabbi Yehuda Gerlitz; Director of the

Mayor’s Office Rabbi Akiva Ovitz; Director of the Education Department Rabbi Israel Tik; the project’s steering committee; local *Talmud Torah* principals; and course participants. The ceremony was also attended by Yad Vashem Director-General Nathan Eitan and School staff. The participants expressed their desire to continue such joint activities in the future, thus expanding Beitar Illit’s circle of students and teachers of Holocaust studies.

The author is Head of the Ultra-orthodox Education Section at the International School for Holocaust Studies.