

Teaching *OUTSIDE* the BOX

Yad Vashem Education Awards 2006

by Dalit Danenberg

“ One teacher, one class, one chalkboard, one method, and a closed door... The moment you discard this formula, meaningful learning begins. This is true for all subjects, and it’s also true for the Holocaust.”

Roni Weinberg, Principal, Manor Kabri Junior High School, Kibbutz Eilon – “Outstanding Educational Program” prizewinner, 2006

On 6 November, the auditorium in Yad Vashem’s International School for Holocaust Studies was filled to capacity with students, teachers and Holocaust survivors attending the annual Yad Vashem Education Awards ceremony, in the presence of Minister of Education Prof. Yuli Tamir, the families of the award donors, and representatives



Japanese educator Fumiko Ishioka (left) with George Brady, brother of Holocaust victim Hana Brady, the subject of the prizewinning book, *Hana’s Suitcase: A True Story*

of the Canadian Embassy and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The palpable excitement at the ceremony reflected the special character of this year’s group of prizewinners—educators who have all found unique ways of teaching the Holocaust to children, and for whom education is their life’s calling. Attesting to their dedication were the many students and their families who came to honor their teachers.

Mevo’ot Elementary School in Be’er Tuvia is likewise devoted to finding creative ways of integrating knowledge and emotion into Holocaust instruction from a young age. Sixth-graders at the school decided that their “ethical legacy” for younger pupils would be the establishment of a Holocaust museum and study center. Pupils, parents and teachers—in essence, the entire community—headed by Principal Chaya Avtalyon, mobilized for the task. The resulting museum,

On the Path to Remembrance, earned the school Yad Vashem’s Educational Achievement Award. Guided by the sixth-grade students, the exhibit provides an emotionally compelling sense of connection between today’s pupils and the children of the Holocaust era.

The Excellence in Holocaust Teaching Award was conferred to Marsha Goren, an English teacher at the Ein Ganim Elementary School in Petach Tikva. During her more than 30 years of teaching, Goren developed an entire website around the experiences of her mother, Sonia Frenkel z”l, a survivor of both Majdanek and Auschwitz. The site serves as a forum for dialogue with 32 other schools worldwide, with Israeli students telling their families’ stories and students abroad responding with their thoughts. Winning the Yad Vashem award represents an experience of a lifetime for Marsha: “The fact that the students and their parents came to the ceremony will deepen the impression made on them by their exposure to the Holocaust, and inspire them to keep learning about it in the future,” she said.

The heart-wrenching story of Hana Brady as retold in *Hana’s Suitcase: A True Story* (published by Shoken in Hebrew), is this year’s winner of the Children’s Holocaust Literature Award. The book, written by Canadian radio producer Karen Levine, relates the incredible tale of how a Japanese teacher, Fumiko Ishioka, pieced together the details of Hana’s life—and her death in Auschwitz at the age of 13—from one small, battered suitcase. The intercontinental quest turned the Holocaust into a tangible experience for Fumiko’s students, who ended up helping Hana’s brother George find out what happened to his younger and only sister more than half a century after they were separated in Theresienstadt. Translated into over 20 languages, the book is used to introduce children around the world to the subject of the Holocaust.

George Brady, his daughter Lara, and Fumiko Ishioka, Director of the Holocaust Educational Resource Center in Tokyo, flew in especially to attend the award ceremony. “There can be no solace for the loss of a sister,” explained George. “Nevertheless, the fact that Hana’s life and death has become the subject of a book that serves as

such an important educational tool represents hope for the future.”

The award for Outstanding Educational Program on the History of the Jews in France during the Holocaust was presented to Rose-Lyne Barbè of the Rabin Junior High School in Jerusalem. Barbè has developed an educational project through which groups of pupils from her neighborhood in Jerusalem are put in contact with members of the Jewish community in Lyons, enabling the students to learn about Jewish life in France before the Holocaust, the Jews’ suffering during the war, and their efforts to survive and rebuild their lives afterwards. At school, the pupils read survivor testimonies, and during their visit to Lyons they conducted interviews with survivors, thus perpetuating the memory of the Holocaust in France.

Prizes were also awarded to students for outstanding matriculation papers: Chana Kupetz from the Neve Chana High School in Alon Shvut for her paper on “The attitude of the Polish people to the Jews of Warsaw during the deportations of the summer of 1942;” Talia Kirsh from the Horev Girls High School in Jerusalem for her paper on “The Kindertransport;” and Elior Cohen from The University High School in Jerusalem for his paper on “Jewish Scouts in France during WWII and the Holocaust, 1939-1945.”

The Yad Vashem Educational Awards are enabled through the generous support of: the Chuno and Blima Najmann Foundation; the Estate of Sarah Brand in memory of Bruno Brand; the Luba and Mark Uveeler Foundation; the Foundation in Memory of the Members of the Golderbitter and Gifman Families Who Perished in the Holocaust, established by Many and Gershon Bergson; the Fondation pour la Memoire de la Shoah; and the Aloumim Association.

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New Director of the International School for Holocaust Studies

Dorit Novak has been appointed Director of the International School for Holocaust Studies at Yad Vashem, succeeding Dr. Motti Shalem, who has led the School since 1994.

The International School for Holocaust Studies, established in 1993 with the endorsement of then-Minister of Education Prof. Amnon Rubinstein, is a unique and trailblazing institution, and is a primary part of Yad Vashem's activities.

During his tenure at Yad Vashem, Dr. Shalem developed the School's three main avenues of work: teacher training; student seminars, and the production of lesson plans and educational material in many languages. He also oversaw the establishment of the European Department as well as the expansion of the pedagogical use of the Internet through multilingual online courses and educational networks. Similarly, under Dr. Shalem's leadership, a number of partnerships were established with various bodies, such as the OSCE, ICHIEC, the Council of Europe and the IDF. Dr. Shalem also initiated programs that, for the first time, brought young people from diverse backgrounds closer to the study of the Holocaust, including members of the Arab sector, the ultra-Orthodox sector and at-risk youth.

Chairman of the Yad Vashem Directorate Avner Shalev praised Dr. Shalem's work, pointing out his "fundamental contribution to the development of the International School for Holocaust Studies and its work in Israel and around the world, as well as its unique educational approach. I wish him luck and success in all his future endeavors."

Dorit Novak holds an MA in Education. Until recently, she was manager of the "welfare to work" pilot administration in the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Labor. Prior to that, she served as development and employment head of the cooperative project run by Israel's Ministry of Trade and the Joint Distribution Committee. Novak established and ran the countrywide educational program, "Haznek," that is today supported by Discount Bank. During her military service, she served in various educational capacities, including head of the Hasbarah and culture branches.

In wishing her success in her new position, Avner Shalev said: "I am confident that Dorit's vast experience in administering educational frameworks will contribute to her ability to lead Yad Vashem's educational activities, supported by the dedicated staff at the School."

Activities in Europe

The fall semester saw a renewal of seminars both at Yad Vashem and abroad supported by the International Commission on Holocaust Era Insurance Claims (ICHEIC). These seminars welcomed educators from the **Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary and Poland**, where staff presented educational units and led pedagogical discussions. Positive feedback was received from many participants, with those who came to Jerusalem expressing their appreciation for being exposed to both Yad Vashem and Israel in this manner.

The Second Annual International ICHEIC Forum at Yad Vashem will be held in February. This Forum is held once a year for Yad Vashem's European partners, who work closely with the School staff in the organization of seminars both locally and abroad. This year, the Forum will focus on goals and resources in the creation of a network of educators within the framework of the ICHEIC Program for Holocaust Education. It will give participants a platform in which to describe Holocaust educational activity in their own countries and express views on Holocaust education stemming from personal experience. Participants will also be updated as to the types of initiatives created by former participants in Yad Vashem seminars.

Benjamin Meed, z"l

Yad Vashem mourns the passing of **Benjamin Meed z"l**, survivor of the Warsaw ghetto who devoted his life to helping other Holocaust survivors. Born in February 1918, Meed spent the war years working as a forced laborer for the Nazis, using every possible opportunity to help smuggle Jews out of the ghetto. Together with his wife Vladka, Meed dedicated his life after the war to strengthening the voice of survivors and helping them reunite with scattered family members and friends. In 1981, he set up the American Gathering of Jewish Holocaust Survivors, serving as its president until his death in October 2006.

In 1989, Benjamin and Vladka Meed initiated the annual Yad Vashem summer seminar for middle- and high-school teachers from the USA. For 15 years, the couple traveled with the groups to Jerusalem, and also accompanied them to Poland, where they gave first-hand testimony of their experiences during the Holocaust. These seminars help ensure that the story of the Holocaust continues to be told through the next generations. Yad Vashem will remember Benjamin Meed z"l as a giant in promoting Holocaust education and remembrance. May his memory be blessed.

by Tamara Wassner

New on  www.yadvashem.org/education

"At the Edge of the Abyss" – "Final Solution"

The International School for Holocaust Studies has recently uploaded the second section of *At the Edge of the Abyss: the Holocaust of European Jewry*, the remarkably successful online course for educators, Holocaust resource center administrators and students, supported by the Claims Conference. "Final Solution" explores how the idea of exterminating the Jews evolved, and its implementation throughout Europe. By way of several case studies, the program reviews the various phases of the Final Solution, including: the Nazi camp system; different aspects of imprisonment and survival in the camps; and the role of the murderers and perpetrators.

Each independent section in the course is comprised of 10 fortnightly lessons, presented through texts, photographs and testimonies, in addition to documents from Yad Vashem's Archives, some of which have been translated into English for the first time. The historical work is largely source based, requiring a solid level of critical thinking and assessment. Students will gain a high level of knowledge on the subject, as well as training in using sources and historiography in approaching historical discourse.

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