

המאגר המרכזי של שמות קרבנות השואה
עמוד הבית | אודות | שואה | חינוך | תערוכות | תמיכה ביד ושם



פרטים המופיעים ברשומה אודות Svarss Rosa

מקור	דפי-עד
שם משפחה	SVARSS
שם פרטי	ROSA
שם פרטי	רוזה
שם נעורים	ISRAELSON
שם האם	RACHEL
מין	נקבה
מקום לידה	LIBAU, LIEPAJAS, KURZEME, LATVIA
מצב משפחתי	נשוי/נשואה
שם בן/בת הזוג	ABRAHAM
מקום מגורים קבוע	LIBAU, LIEPAJAS, KURZEME, LATVIA
מקצוע	עקרת בית
מקום במלחמה	LIBAU, LIEPAJAS, KURZEME, LATVIA
מקום המוות	RUMBULA, RIGAS, VIDZEME, LATVIA
תאריך המוות	1942
אופי החומר	דף-עד
שם משפחה של המצהיר	שוורץ
שם פרטי של המצהיר	צבי
הקשר לקורבן	בת

* מציין תרגום ממוכן מאנגלית

...on a piece of paper

A project at Yad Vashem gives each victim a written memorial, David Isaacson reports

FOR Joe Schachter, time is running out. A recently retired Yad Vashem worker, he wants its Hall of Names to include the personal details of as many Holocaust victims as possible, to give them "paper cemeteries" in lieu of proper burials. For this he needs survivors, their relatives or friends, to fill in "Pages of Testimony."

Two relatively recent events have given impetus to the project: The huge success of the movie *Schindler's List* prompted more survivors to "come out" and record the deaths of loved ones; and, on a far greater scale, the immigration of Jews from the former Soviet Union has led to a "resurgence of interest" in filling the hall's Pages of Testimony.

In the past 18 months, schoolchildren in Karmiel and Kiryat Gat — cities with large Russian-immigrant populations — have been making house-to-house inquiries about Holocaust victims. This pilot project, which Schachter hopes will go nationwide, has resulted in 23,000 pages — each page representing an individual — of testimony. Furthermore, Schachter says, the project has taught the youngsters about the Holocaust, and given immigrants the feeling "that someone cares."

The Hall of Names, where he still works on a part-time, voluntary basis, is Yad Vashem's greatest representation of the enormity of the Holocaust, Schachter says. "We can name more than 3 1/2 million victims — based on Nazi documents, postwar interviews in Russia and Western government documents — but this is not what we're trying to achieve in the Hall of Names. The project goes beyond merely creating a complete record of the victims."

"There are four million Jewish victims of the Nazis who have not been memorialized in the hall. I want to give [all the victims] proper memorials. But many [sur-

vivors] can't fill in the papers," he says, in reference to the unending trauma suffered by those who lived under Nazi rule. "I try to encourage them to do it for the Jewish people and for themselves. Once they've done it, they often feel great relief. They've given [the deceased] eternity on a piece of paper."

IN 1984, Schachter was a worried man: A fire or some other tragedy could have wiped out all of the Hall of Names' Pages of Testimony. So, with the support of an American foundation, he decided to commit all the information to microfilm. For three years he volunteered his time to index names and places, cross-referencing Hebrew and Latin duplications.

It was an immense job. The name Schwartz, for example, "has 150 variants." And the pages filled in by survivors were in numerous languages. But, Schachter says, the problems were even greater in the early days of the state.

"In 1955, government teams went from house to house getting survivors to record information in four out of five cases, they were told to go away. 'I can't handle this, maybe [the presumed dead relative] is still living,' was a typical response."

Another reason that survivors were reluctant to divulge Holocaust stories was, Schachter says, the "why-didn't-you-fight-back attitude of macho Israelis." This led to the tragic situation where Holocaust survivors in the Jewish state were far more likely to suppress their memories than were their counterparts elsewhere.

Only after the Yom Kippur War "which made Israelis feel less all-powerful and more sympathetic to Holocaust victims, did 'coming out' become more normal." In the past 10 to 15 years, "we have



In the Hall of Names office, Rabbi Schachter shows a Russian-language Page of Testimony which was filled out by a relative of the deceased. (Debbie Taylor-Zimelman)

learned better how to mourn and admit to sorrow."

Schachter himself escaped from Vienna and arrived in New York in 1941. Ordained as a rabbi, he spent 20 years as a student chaplain and director of the B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundations at the University of Illinois in Chicago and at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. He initially went to Yad Vashem to look for details of his own family and found that there were very little.

HIS MASTER'S degree in psychology undoubtedly helps in his work at Yad Vashem.

Citing a typical situation, he says: "An individual comes to the desk and asks what happened to Uncle Yankel. We're 80 percent confident that we don't know the answer. This does little to ease the anger and depression of one 'who couldn't bring himself to come here for 30 years. The person here has to be a psychologist; he has to realize that for survivors, it happened yesterday, not 50 years ago."

Sometimes a survivor needs to unload his anger [at Yad Vashem] he says. "He might bare his arm [to show his tattoo]. You become like a sponge; but there's only so much you can take."

Those whose faith has been destroyed often ask him how he can still believe in God.

"I tell them, 'I have no answer; you must find your own answer.' But, he points out, in theology, there are 34 arguments explaining

the coexistence of God and evil. Yet still the sculpted hands reach out in vain from the top of the Hall of Names' six pillars. And still the question from the Psalms inscribed on each pillar, "From whence shall my help come?" goes unanswered.

Today, the Pages of Testimony help reunite families. "We recently put together two Russian cousins," Schachter says. "One was living here, the other in Oklahoma City."

Then there are those who are only now discovering that they are in fact Jewish. "Often their parents — survivors — converted to protect their children from the next pogrom," Schachter explains. "The grandparents died for their Jewishness and the children converted out; that makes the deaths even more painful. He says that there is a support group "for about 900 of these crypto-Jews."

Then there is the question of defining a Holocaust survivor. According to the 1953 Martyrs and Heroes' Remembrance Law, "The task of Yad Vashem is to gather into the homeland material regarding all those members of the Jewish people who laid down their lives, who fought and rebelled against the Nazi enemy and his collaborators, and to perpetuate their names and those of the communities, organizations and institutions which were destroyed because they were Jewish."

Thus, Schachter points out, "an American soldier who died fighting could be considered a

Holocaust victim." Conversely, an indirect victim "who died of disease in Tashkent or of starvation in Siberia, we put in the exceptions category."

FAR MORE common are visits by veterans of the *Kindertransport* which evacuated 10,000 Jewish children from Germany, Austria and Czechoslovakia to Britain before the war broke out. Many *Kindertransport* veterans want to know the fate of their loved ones. If these relations were for example sent to the Lodz ghetto, the Hall of Names, which possesses the Association of Lodz Survivors' five huge volumes of names, might be able to help. Schachter asks rhetorically, "Can you imagine someone seeing the names of his family mem-

bers there? It's horrible." Numerous letters from Yad Vashem's visitors testify to the therapeutic quality of Schachter's counsel.

"I tell them, 'You suffered, you still suffer, but you may be comforted to know that, in their last view of you, your parents saw that you were safe.'

Some, especially American Jews, give the Hall of Names original photos of victims in their families "because, they say, [the photos] will mean nothing to their kids." In this way, even the last surviving member of a family murdered by the Nazis can know that their relatives' lives will be recorded and respected in perpetuity.

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