

The checking and sorting of Testimony received as a result of the Campaign for the Collection and Commemoration of Holocaust Victims' Names.



UNPRECEDENTED RESPONSE

two hundred thousand Pages of Testimony, received within two and a half months. An additional 400,000 Pages sent out are expected to arrive. "We are witnessing an unprecedented response," said Alexander

Avraham, Director of the Hall of Names, at a follow-up meeting on the project's success. "The amount of Pages of Testimony received in the last few months has even exceeded the amount of those received during the whole period of 1991-1994, the peak of the Russian aliyah," Alex explains.

Close to a hundred employees have been hired by Manpower to work for the "collection of names" project. Most are university students

"I am her father," he said in a thin voice. Then Dalia felt her own tears.

It takes a lot of inner strength to fill in Pages of Testimony; to search among old photos, to agonize over a young cousin's forgotten name, to inquire of one's own parents'

place and date of death. To retrieve the names and biographies of the dead, survivors need to "go back" in time and encounter their past. Much of this information arrives in white postal sacks overflowing with envelopes containing Pages of Testimony. These amount to tens of thousands of envelopes, containing more than

The Campaign around the World

by Yvette Nahmia-Messinas

From New York to Paris, and from Mexico to Sydney, Pages of Testimony reached the surviving carriers of memory via Societies for Yad Vashem, Israel's embassies worldwide, synagogues, schools, youth clubs, community centers, and Jewish organizations. As a result of extensive coverage in the Jewish press, Pages of Testimony and Yad Vashem's Hall of Names became familiar terms around the globe. Individuals from places as distant as Colombia and Kenya, Argentina and the Netherlands were busy downloading Pages of Testimony from Yad Vashem's Internet site. The campaign, which has had an

overwhelming response, has included a poster and study kit to raise the public's awareness of the project.

In the United States, the American Society for Yad Vashem, headed by Eli Zborowski, launched the campaign in New York. The leaders of the Jewish Community, local government officials, and dozens of members of the American Society for Yad Vashem, including survivors and second-

and third-generation representatives, present at the event launching the campaign, became emissaries of the campaign. Special support was provided by major organizations such as the World Jewish Congress, Hadassah, the American Gathering/Federations of Jewish Holocaust Survivors, Nachos, The Hidden Child Organization, the Conference of Presidents of Major Jewish Organizations, and the Association of Holocaust Organizations. Since the launching of the campaign in the United States, hundreds of callers have dialed 1-800-310-7495, the American Society's toll-free number, requesting Pages of Testimony. In addition to the regular staff, volunteers have been recruited to respond to the calls.

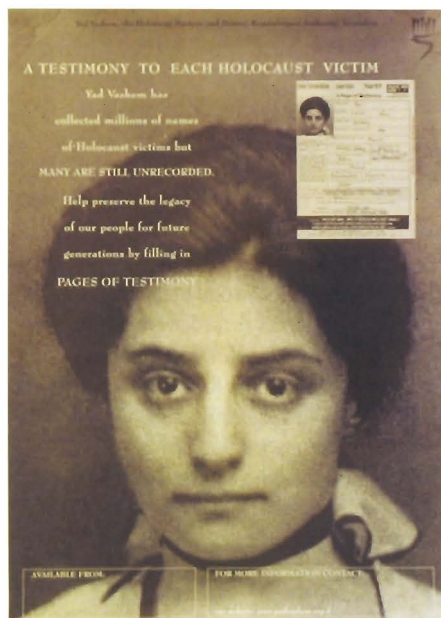
In Canada, the Canadian Society for Yad Vashem, led by Hank Rosenbaum, distributed Pages of Testimony at the official Holocaust Remembrance Ceremony in Toronto. 30,000 Pages of Testimony have been distributed through the Federations and Jewish organizations. Canadians called the toll free number 1-800-494-7999.

In Australia, the Jewish Federations, the Jewish Museum in Sydney, and the Holocaust Museum in Melbourne are promoting the campaign.

In Eastern Europe, the Nativ organization has distributed thousands of Pages of Testimony in Russian. The Jewish Agency and the Joint Distribution Committee, which targets the elderly population, are also publicizing the campaign in Eastern Europe.

The response to the campaign from the Societies for Yad Vashem in France, England, Germany, Norway, and Holland, as well as from the Jewish community of Greece, has been satisfactory.

The Israel Ministry for Foreign Affairs, B'nai Brith International, the Israel Public Council for Soviet Jewry, the World Jewish Congress, and the World Zionist Organization — member organizations in the commemorative project, "Unto Every Person There Is a Name," (the public recitation of names of Holocaust victims) — are also actively promoting and advancing the campaign.



Poster displayed abroad promoting the Campaign for the Collection and Commemoration of Holocaust Victims' Names.

A great number of people were moved by the campaign, many of whom expressed their appreciation in writing. “May their memory be blessed. And on your initiative, Yasher Koach,”

wrote a survivor in an attached note. “A great thank you on your wonderful undertaking,” wrote another, giving the recipients of this note the strength and energy to pursue this task until

every Jewish victim who perished in the Holocaust has regained the dignity of being remembered by his or her name.