

“ Hall of Names Shalom, this is Zviya speaking.” Thirty-five telephone operators, in two shifts per day, during a two-week peak period around Remembrance Day, answered the stream of calls directed to 1-800-257-777, Yad Vashem’s free phone number for the “Unto Every Person There is a Name” campaign. Zviya, a Hall of Names employee in her late forties, remembers the opening lines of her callers. “I saw on television an ad for the campaign . . .,” “I heard an announcement on the radio that you are

Survivors, their children, and grandchildren as well as representatives of survivors’ organizations, called up. Alice Bracha Frankel, a Holocaust survivor employed by Manpower (Israel) Ltd. to work for the project, recalls a telephone call from a 22-year-old. “Her grandmother’s reluctance to talk about her Holocaust experience troubled her. She attributed it partly to a language barrier. Hebrew was not her grandmother’s mother tongue.” When Alice realized

come to the Hall of Names in person. An elderly man, walking with the aid of a cane, removed a note from his pocket with a list of the family members he had lost. He asked for seven Pages of Testimony. His palm trembling with emotion, he was unable to fill in the Pages himself. Dalia reached to help him. “Family name?” she asked. “Solomon,”

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collecting Holocaust victims’ names . . .,” “I read in the paper about. . .” And the phone keeps on ringing.

Most of the 45,000 callers asked for Pages of Testimony, but there were also those who realized they had not yet given an oral testimony to Yad Vashem and inquired as to how it could be done. Others wanted to donate artifacts, photographs, books, or memoirs. “There were even callers who complained about not receiving compensation from the government, which is not at all related to Yad Vashem,” says Zviya.

that the grandmother’s native tongue was Hungarian, she set up a conference call, and told her, in Hungarian, what a great legacy her story would be for her great-grandchildren. “By the end of the phone call she was willing to share her story,” says Alice. With her fluent Yiddish, English, Hungarian, and Hebrew, Alice received a diversity of calls. She remembers a call from a woman, unsure whether her sister could be considered a Holocaust victim. “My sister set herself on fire when she saw the Nazis coming in . . . Should I fill in a Page of Testimony for her . . . ?”

Many survivors from all over the country

“First name?”

“Piroushko.”

“Relationship to victim?”

“My wife.”

Dalia swallowed. She took a deep breath and went on to the second page.

“Family name?” she asked again.

“Solomon,” he replied.

“First name?”

“Alice.”

“Profession?”

“Student.”

“Place of death?”

“Auschwitz.”

“Relationship to victim?”

and graduates. Avigail, a 21-year-old Jerusalemite, describes the job, despite being routine, as engaging. "Our work involves answering calls, sending out Pages of Testimony, and, when we receive the envelopes, checking their contents and establishing an inventory. We then mail a card confirming that the material has been received."

this the employees of the project proceed to check the Pages' validity — whether a single name appears on each page, whether the necessary information is filled in on a standard Page of Testimony, if the person is a Holocaust victim according to the specified criteria, and if the page is signed. The document is then considered valid. Only then do they prepare the Pages for scanning. According to Dr. Yaacov Lozowick,

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Director of the Yad Vashem Archive, it will take some time before the incoming Pages are computerized. "This is a highly time- and cost-intensive project," he says.

The relentless activity on an average day at the Hall of Names, since the project began in

early April, contrasts with the calm and quiet at the data-entry site in Givat Shaul where a tremendous amount of work is accomplished with minimal verbal interaction. Placed opposite computer screens, hundreds of employees, who communicate by means of a computer network, key-in the information listed on Pages of Testimony with the aid of specially designed computer software. These employees — experts in names, languages, geography, and history — decipher, sort, and authenticate the information encountered in Pages of Testimony. Their areas of expertise include categories such as the camps, ghettos and killing sites, first and family names, Jewish dates, the Jewish communities, and geographic places, professions, and family relationships, amongst others.

Sara Pachanac is one of those dividing her average work day between the Yad Vashem archive and the data-entry site at Givat Shaul. Sitting opposite her computer screen, she deals with a Page forwarded to her in her capacity as language expert. After checking the spelling of the name, handwritten on the Page of Testimony, she decides to add to the index yet a different version of the name, adding up to the eighth possible way of spelling the family name "Szwarcwald." The name "Berkovitz" is listed in 59 different versions, while "Yizhak" has 852. Yaacov Lozowick remembers a Page that intrigued him. Under the category of "Profession" it listed "student of agriculture." Checking on who had filled in the information, under the category "Relationship to Victim," he read "teacher."

In the process of computerizing the almost two million names recorded on the Pages of Testimony, many of the employees were personally touched. A few came across Pages of Testimony listing information on their own relatives. Others became interested in their grandparents' stories and urged them to fill in Pages of Testimony, helping them to complete the forms accurately.

A Boy's Vision

by Galia Limor

The collection of Holocaust victims' names, organized by Yad Vashem in Israel and abroad, has inspired many people to contact relatives and to fill in the details of those relatives who perished in the Holocaust, on Pages of Testimony.

Twelve-year-old Jordan Charlupski read about Yad Vashem's campaign in the children's newspaper *Arutz ha-Yeladim* and immediately contacted the Friends of Yad Vashem in Israel, who informed him about the campaign in Israel. "I accepted a mission," Jordan recalls, "to tell about the campaign in my school, so that all the children would ask their parents."

Jordan and Avishai Katsor, his classmate at Ben-Zvi School in Herzliya, began by asking their principal and homeroom teachers for permission to make the students aware of the campaign. They entered classes during lessons and delivered half-hour lectures on the Holocaust, Yad Vashem, and the collection of names. During a one-week period, they lectured to eight classes from the fourth to the sixth grade.

"A few children were not so interested, and disrupted the lectures," Jordan recalls, "but most of them listened and became interested. The teachers also got very interested and agreed that it was a really important subject." Jordan did not content himself with lectures; he also took his class for a visit to Yad Vashem.

Every youngster who needed a Page of Testimony obtained it from Jordan, who at the children's request had ordered Pages of Testimony and Pages of Survivors. When they completed the task, Jordan and Avishai submitted 200 pages to Yad Vashem. The two boys had skipped many classes while carrying out their enterprise; now they have much work to make up. Nevertheless, Jordan is now a committed friend of Yad Vashem and will be eager to carry out any mission assigned to him in the future.



From right to left: Jordan Charlupski and Avishai Katsor.

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.