

# Bulletin

of the

Arnold and Leona Finkler

Institute of Holocaust Research



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The members of the Arnold and Leona Finkler Institute of Holocaust Research mourn the loss of Mr. Arnold Finkler. Mr. Finkler, together with his wife Leona, were the co-founders of the Finkler Institute of Holocaust Research at Bar-Ilan University and devoted much time and energy to furthering Holocaust research and scholarship. May his memory be blessed.



המכון לחקר השואה ע"ש ארנולד וליאונה פינקלר  
The Arnold and Leona Finkler Institute of Holocaust Research  
FACULTY OF JEWISH STUDIES הפקולטה למדעי היהדות

From the Editor's Desk

Almost a year has passed since the publication of the first issue of The Bulletin of the Arnold and Leona Finkler Institute of Holocaust Research. The year has been a busy one for the Institute's staff, particularly in view of the preparations for the two international conferences sponsored by the Institute and by the Spiegel Chair on Holocaust Research. The first of these conferences on the Holocaust Period in Belgium (May 1989) , is being held in cooperation with the Institute for the History of the Second World War in Brussels. Eleven historians from Belgium and one from France are expected to participate along with a number of lecturers from Israel. The conference speakers will deliver talks on subjects ranging from Belgian Jewry on the eve of the Holocaust to The rescue of Jewish children during the war years. The four day conference is expected to draw a varied audience including historians, interested laymen and expatriate Belgians, particularly members of the diamond community.

The second international conference is planned for December 1989. This will be a joint conference of the Arnold and Leona Finkler Institute of Holocaust Research in cooperation with the Abraham and Edita Spiegel chair of Holocaust Research, the Departments of Jewish and General History at Bar Ilan University and the Department of General History at the Hebrew University. The conference's topic is "Fascism - National Socialism - Antisemitism - Holocaust: links, interactions, differences". Twenty three speakers from five countries are expected to participate.

In addition to the planned conferences, during the past year Institute staff members have participated in several international conferences and study tours in Israel and abroad. Dr. Dan Michman, coordinator of the Institute, delivered a lecture on "Species Hollandia Judaica" Versus Migration : the role of migration in preserving ties between Dutch Jewry and World Jewry during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries", at a conference on the Netherlands and the Jewish migration which was held in Amsterdam in November 1988. In March 1989 Dr. Michman lectured on The Problem of Jewish Refugees from Germany in Neighboring Countries at the Seventh International Yad Vashem Conference devoted to the topic : The Jews of Europe Face Fascism and National Socialism 1933-1939.

In May 1988 Dr. Judith Tydor Baumel led a Bnai Akiva - England sponsored study group to Poland. In July 1988 Drs. Baumel and Michman led the first two groups of the Holocaust Children's Memorial Fund on a "Fathers and Sons" study trip to Poland. Finally, in October 1988 Dr. Baumel led an Open University of Israel study group to Poland.

Throughout the year Dr. Yehuda Ben-Avner delivered several lectures on historical and political subjects, particularly those dealing with Jewry in southern Germany. In March 1989 Dr. Ben-Avner led a group of Jewish youth from Switzerland on a study trip to Poland.

1988-89 has been a year of staff reorganization and promotion. In 1988, two staff members, Penina Meizlish and Chava Eshkoli, received their doctoral degrees, the former from the Department of Literature of the Jewish People and the latter from the Department of Jewish

History at Bar Ilan University. Dr. Judith Tydor-Baumel and Dr. Yehuda Ben-Avner were promoted to the rank of lecturer. During the first half of 1989 Prof. Nathaniel Katzburg, Chairman of the Institute, is in England on sabbatical leave.

Projects and Progress

During the academic year of 1988-1989 several ongoing projects have been completed at the Institute. Other projects are continuing and additional ones have begun.

In late 1988 Dr. Dan Michman, coordinator of the Institute, published his book on Liberal Jewry in the Netherlands : Het Liberale Jodendom in Nederland 1929-1943, Amsterdam, Van Genneep, 1988. Apart from planning and coordinating the two international conferences, Dr. Michman is engaged in a comparative study of Jewish leadership during the Holocaust, in studies on daily religious life during the Holocaust and in examining the Holocaust in Belgium.

Dr. Judith Tydor-Baumel has recently completed the final revisions on her book dealing with The Holocaust and Prayer. In addition to editing The Bulletin and serving on the editorial board of Keshev Dr. Baumel has continued her research on Beth Jacob and on religious life during and after the Holocaust. She is also completing the research for a book on the history of Kibbutz Buchenwald, the first hachshara kibbutz to be established in Germany after the Holocaust.

Dr. Chava Eshkoli, who recently completed her doctorate on Mapai - the Israel Labor Party during the Holocaust, is now researching the history of the Mizrachi in Palestine during that period. In addition, she is preparing a study on the Hechalutz movement in Belgium during the Holocaust.

Mrs. Rivka Knoller is now completing the first edition of a bibliography dealing with the denial of the Holocaust. The bibliography will soon be published by the Institute. In addition, Mrs. Knoller is continuing her survey of the activities of religious Zionist youth groups in Europe during the Holocaust 1939-1945.

Dr. Yehuda Ben-Avner has completed a historical study of one rabbinical area in Germany, that of Bad Ems-Weilburg and of the rabbinical activities of Rabbi Dr. Laupheimer. Dr. Ben-Avner is also preparing a Hebrew version of his book on orthodoxy in Germany (see publications). Finally, throughout the year Dr. Ben-Avner, coordinated the Institute sponsored Interdisciplinary seminar.

Dr. Joseph Karniel is continuing his research of Austrian Jewry during various periods and has completed his book on orthodox Jewry in Austria between the two World Wars. He is presently beginning a study on the Jewish Woman in Austria during the Holocaust for inclusion in Keshev 3 which will be devoted to the topic of Women During the Holocaust.

Dr. Penina Meizlish is continuing her research on Jews in Poland, in the framework of the cooperative project with the Institute for the Study of Religious Zionism (see project spotlight). In addition, she is transcribing and annotating the personal diary of an important Jewish personage who served on the Lvov City Council during the 1920's and 1930's.

Library : Under the guidance of our librarian Mrs. Ruth Berkeley assisted by Mrs. Esther Drenger, the books dealing with the Holocaust period have been arranged and catalogued. During 1988-89 the library received over three hundred books as gifts. In addition, the Institute has purchased an edition of Encyclopedia Judaica which will be at the staff members disposal in the reading room.

Apart from carrying out the regular secretarial duties of the joint Institutes, throughout the latter part of 1988, Mrs. Zippi Berman has dealt with matters pertaining to the two conferences to be held during 1989. From February 1989 onward she has been assisted by Mr. Fabrice Cain in matters pertaining to the conference on The Holocaust Period in Belgium. Mr. Cain is fluent in French and has therefore been a great asset in dealing with administrative matters involving the foreign participants.

In May 1989 the Institute will hold a special ceremony during which a unique exhibit consisting of a desecrated Torah parchment used during the war as wrapping for a parcel will be unveiled. The parchment has been placed in a special case in the form of a Torah scroll. The parchment, originally in the possession of Dan and Lillian Arbel, was donated to the Institute by Mr. Isaac Willner via Mr. Ahron Scharfer. Mr. and Mrs. Willner also donated the exhibit case now containing the parchment.



Project Spotlight

In early summer 1947 a group of Jewish Agency emissaries from Palestine arrived in Germany and were dispersed among the D.P. camps to begin building an educational system for the young survivors. Besides being teachers, the emissaries were also representatives of political movements in Eretz Yisrael and as such they used their stay to assist in rebuilding the European branch of their movement.

One young emissary, representing the Mizrachi movement was Mordechai Lauber. From his position in the D.P. camp of Neu Ulm, Lauber had a vantage point from which to view the rehabilitation of the religious Zionist movement in southern Germany. Almost forty years later, as Director of the Institute for the Study of Religious Zionism, that same emissary, now Prof. Mordechai Eliav, approached the chairman of the Institute of Holocaust Research, Prof. Nathaniel Katzburg, and proposed that the two Institutes initiate a research project documenting the Reconstruction of the Religious Zionist Movement in Europe between 1945 and 1949.

Within several months a plan of research was drawn up which included a country by country study of the topic. After carrying out preliminary archival searches it was decided to cover the topic from all aspects including the political postwar development of the Religious Zionist Movement, the development of local party headquarters, the rehabilitation of youth movements, the reestablishment of agricultural

training centers (hachsharoth) and the day to day problems encountered by the trainees, etc.

At this point the project began to pick up speed. Researchers specializing in the post-war history of six Central and Eastern European countries were approached and asked to participate. Dr. Penina Meizlish, staff member of the Arnold and Leona Finkler Institute of Holocaust Research, began examining the archival collections pertaining to Poland. Isaac Willner, who has recently completed his M.A. thesis on the Foehrenwald D.P. camp in the Department of Jewish History at Bar Ilan University and Baruch Goldfinger, member of the Tel Aviv City Council, were asked to research the development of the Mizrachi in postwar Germany. Shlomo Leibowitz and Dr. Zvi Moshkowitz were approached to study the topic in Rumania and Hungary, respectively. Shlomo Schmidt was requested to examine the topic in Czechoslovakia and Mordechai Reichart was asked to concentrate on the rehabilitation of the movement in Austria.

What sources does one use to research such a topic? This was a question which I posed to Yossi Avneri, coordinator of the Institute for the Study of Religious Zionism.

"Our researchers have various sources at their disposal",

he answered.

Jerusalem and the various archives throughout Israel containing material on the post-war period in Europe : Yad Vashem, the Central Zionist Archives, the collections found in the Illegal Immigration Project headed by Prof. Anita Shapira at Tel Aviv University and various archives in the possession of individuals. Newspapers of the period, particularly Hatzofeh, the organ of the Mizrachi, and the newspapers produced by the D.P.'s themselves, are also good source material." "The most unique source at our disposal", he continued, "are the interviews our staff has conducted with the activists of the period. The oral history of the rehabilitation of the Religious Zionist Movement provides an added dimension to the stories being uncovered in the written archives."

An advisory board consisting of Prof. M. Eliav, Prof. N. Katzburg, Prof. M.Z. Kaddari, Dr. Z. Warhaftig, Dr. D. Evron, Mr. A. Adler, Mr. M. Ishon, Mr. E. Rubinstein and Mrs. S. Stern-Katan was chosen to supervise the project and oversee its progress. Two volumes, covering all countries being researched, will eventually be published.

Personality Spotlight : Chava Wagman Eshkoli

Dr. Chava Wagman Eshkoli is the newest staff member of the Arnold and Leona Finkler Institute of Holocaust Research. In 1988 the Israeli born mother of four received her doctorate from the Department of Jewish History at Bar Ilan University where she has been teaching for the past eight years. Dr. Eshkoli specializes in the history of the Yishuv in Palestine and its attitude towards the Holocaust. As her first project at the Institute she is examining that topic from the religious-political angle.

Q. Dr. Eshkoli, how did you decide to specialize in the history of the Holocaust?

A. Originally I intended to become a social worker. When I began my studies at Bar Ilan in 1962 I majored in psychology and chose history as my minor. Only during my second year in college when I began to substitute as a history teacher did I realize how much I loved the subject. Together with my success as a teacher, that led me to switch majors at age 19. From then on I was hooked on history. My career, however, developed in stages due to my children's birth. Two years after switching majors I married Avi Eshkoli, a high school principal. My older sons, Itzik (1966) and Nir (1969) were born before my M.A. studies, my younger ones, Hallel (1975) and Meir (1979) were born prior to my Ph.D. studies.

Q. What drew you to the topic of the Yishuv in Palestine during the Holocaust?

A. I began my studies only after having chosen a topic for my thesis. I had always been drawn to the subject of the Holocaust, especially while teaching it in high school, but it was the Biafran crisis of the late 1960's which brought matters to a head. Young people everywhere love to criticize and one of the groups then under attack in Israel was the Yishuv's leadership during the Holocaust. Among other things, they were being accused of inaction in the sphere of rescue. At the time of the Biafran "holocaust" when over a million people died of war and famine, I was an adult, and there I was, doing nothing about it. All of a sudden it gave me a better perspective of the capabilities of the Yishuv during the Holocaust. That's when I decided to investigate what the leaders in Palestine actually said and did about the rescue of European Jewry during the Second World War.

In 1971 I was one of the first young researchers in Israel to deal with the subject, and the facts which I uncovered were startling, at least to me. Even after I received my M.A. in 1976 I was driven to find out more. However, research topics wait for neither man nor woman. When I resumed my studies in 1980 other researchers had begun work on the topic which I had intended to examine. Thus, my dissertation had to take a slight change in course : Mapai ( The Israel Labor Party) vis a vis the Holocaust during the first years of the Second World War.

Q. Tell us about your findings.

A. First of all I learned that the Yishuv's leaders were human beings, with the same frailties and capabilities as everyone. When

you begin to understand the circumstances existing at that time and the multifaceted attitudes of various groups in the Yishuv, the picture which appears is not as black as it originally seems to be. One hears primarily about the attitudes of the Yishuv's leaders such as Ben Gurion and Moshe Shertok towards European Jewry during the Holocaust. But as I began to examine Mapai in depth I reached the second string figures among whom the connection to European Jewry was stronger. Unfortunately, when it came to policy, they held little sway over their superiors.

Q. Finally , what would you tell a young person today who is thinking of specializing in the Holocaust period?

A. I would say that he or she should first examine his motives, ideals and capabilities. Any advanced degree in history involves financial sacrifice, never ending years of study. Time stolen from ones family. You forget what the terms "leisure time" and "family outings" mean, you and your spouse pass as ships in the night. On the positive side there are the compensations. You spend less time worrying about unessentials, you attain a better sense of priorities. You have no time to spend the money you don't have anyway! Seriously though, you continue to learn, to grow and to think.

All in all, I would say that I am satisfied with the choice I made.

Publications

The Arnold and Leona Finkler Institute of Holocaust Research is offering readers of the Bulletin an opportunity of purchase Institute publications at a significant discount. Prices quoted include postage and handling. The following publications are now available :

1) Yehuda Ben-Avner, Vom Orthodoxen Judentum in Deutschland Zwischen Zwei Weltkriegen, (Hildesheim, Georg Olms Verlag, 1987) (100p.)

\$15.00/20 shekel

2) Meir Edelstein and Penina Meizlish (eds.), Religious Jewry During the Holocaust 1939-1945: Guide to the Archives of Religious Institutes and Organizations in Israel, (Heb.), (Ramat Gan, The Arnold and Leona Finkler Institute of Holocaust Research, 1986) (140p.)

\$12.50/15 shekel

3) David Farkas (ed. and comp.), Guide for Manuscripts and Printed Matter from the Legacy of Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch : the Saenger Collection Vol. I: letters and Hebrew manuscripts, (Heb.), (Ramat Gan, Institute for Research of Diaspora Jewry, 1982). (57+VIp.)

\$7.50/10 shekel

4) Nathaniel Katzburg, Hungary and the Jews 1920-1943, (Ramat Gan, Bar-Ilan University Press, 1981) (299p.)

\$15.00/20 shekel

5) Nathaniel Katzburg (ed.), Pedut: Rescue in the Holocaust - Texts and Studies, (Heb.) (Ramat Gan, Bar-Ilan University Press, 1981) (240+VIIIp.)

\$15.00/20 shekel

6) Keshev: Sources and Studies (Heb.) vol. 1 (1985) (65+XI p.)

\$7/50/10 shekel

7) Rivka Knoller, The Activities of Religious Zionist Youth Groups in Europe During The Holocaust 1939-1945, (Ramat Gan, The Arnold and Leona Finkler Institute of Holocaust Research, 1989)

\$7.50/10 shekel

8) Chana Yaoz, The Holocaust - Articles on Holocaust Literature, (Heb.) (Ramat Gan, Department of Education, Bar-Ilan University, n.d. in conjunction with the Arnold and Leona Finkler Institute of Holocaust Research) (75p.)

\$3.80/5 shekel

9) Chana Yaoz, [Israeli] Poetry and Prose on the Holocaust, (Heb.) (Ramat Gan, Department of Education, Bar-Ilan University, n.d.) (75p.)

\$3.80/5 shekel

10) Chana Yaoz, Teaching the Holocaust - [Israeli] Poetry, Prose and Plays, (Heb.) (Ramat Gan, The Arnold and Leona Finkler Institute of Holocaust Research, n.d.) (75p.)

\$3.80/5 shekel



11) Chana Ya'oz, Young Literature - Chapters in [Israeli] Poetry and Prose on the Holocaust, (Heb.) (Ramat Gan, Department of Education, Bar-Ilan University, n.d.) (70p.)

\$3.80/5 shekel