

# Remembering the Holocaust

As the audience took their seats, the Dean Acheson Auditorium was filled with the strains of a memorial song recorded in Czechoslovakia in 1945. The scratchy “78” record lent realism to the Department’s first Holocaust Memorial Program.

Holocaust survivors, resistance fighters, Jewish community leaders and some 200 high school students attended the April 29 program.

In his introductory remarks, Efraim Cohen of the Office of Civil Rights reminded the students that they had a special responsibility. “You have a central role in this program,” he said. “We are relying on you to remember what you learn today and to pass that memory on to future generations as one more link in the unbroken chain of remembrance.”

Storyteller and actress Lisa Lipkin presented a series of vignettes from her own childhood called “What My Mother Never Told Me...Stories of a Child of a Holocaust Survivor.” She captivated the audience with her accounts, demonstrating that the Holocaust had a profound impact not only on those who suffered through that dark period of history, but on succeeding generations as well.

Under Secretary Marc Grossman noted the special relevance of this year’s Holocaust remembrance theme—

“For Your Freedom and Ours”—as Polish armed forces fought alongside British and American troops to liberate the people of Iraq. He expressed his pride in being part of a State Department committed to promoting human rights and tolerance around the world. “We have a commitment to defend those values not just for ourselves, but for others.”

Barbara Spyridon Pope, assistant secretary for Civil Rights, read a poem by Jennie Adatto Tambulus titled “O My Brethren.” The poem expresses the poet’s sadness that her lost family of Greek Jews might be forgotten because the Holocaust “somehow is always associated only with the Jews of Eastern Europe.” Ms. Pope read the poem in English, and Moisés Behar of the Office of Civil Rights read it in the original Ladino, a language developed by Jews

who settled in Greece, Turkey and the Balkans after being expelled from Spain in 1492.

The program was sponsored by the Office of Civil Rights, the Office of Holocaust Issues, the Office of International Religious Freedom, the Secretary’s Open Forum and the Foreign Affairs Recreation Association’s State of the Arts.



Photo by Ann Thomas

*Lisa Lipkin, the daughter of a Holocaust survivor, performs stories from her childhood.*