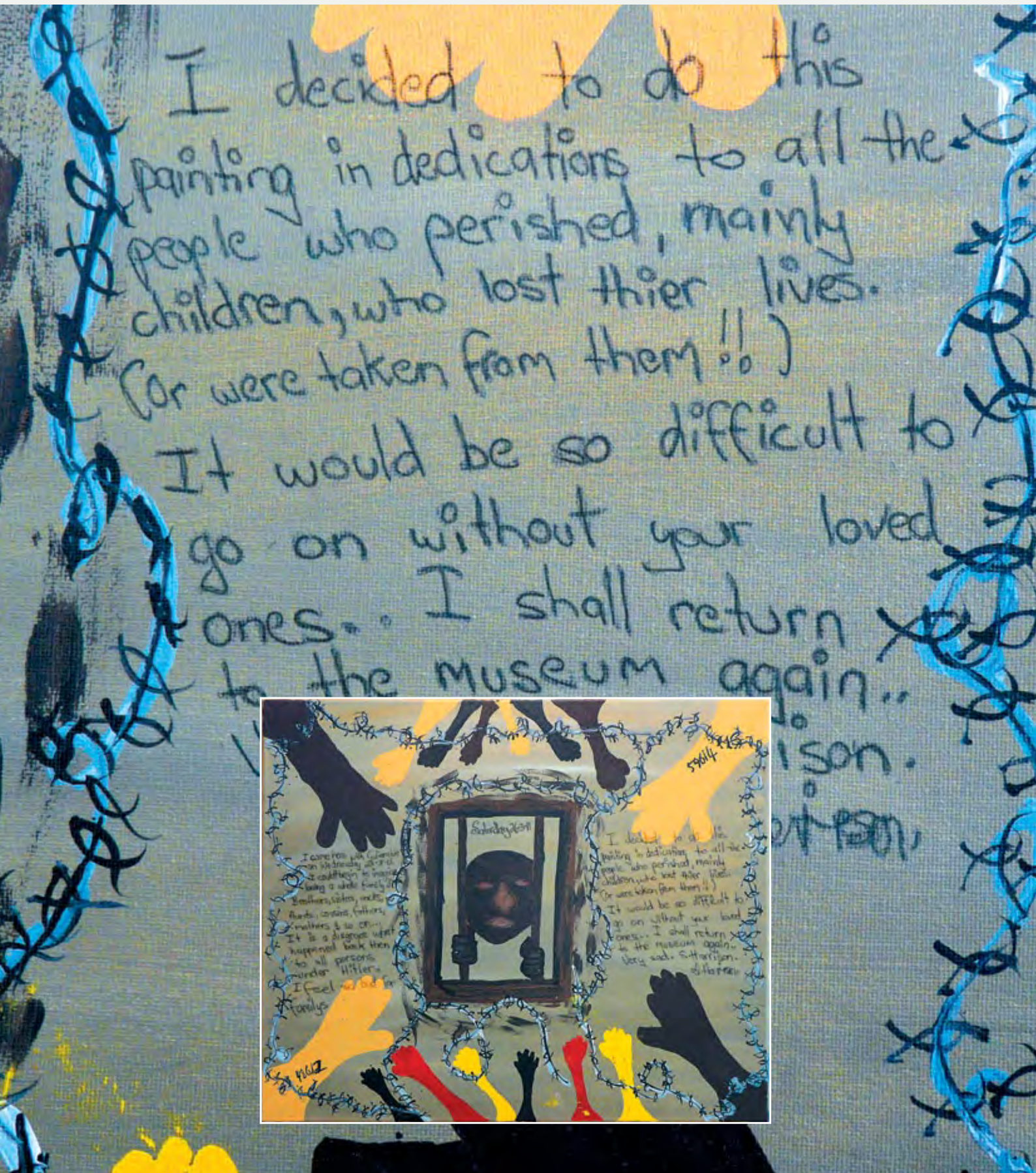


# Centre News

September 2011

Jewish Holocaust Centre



The magazine of the Jewish Holocaust Centre, Melbourne, Australia

Registered by Australia Post. Publication No. VBH 7236



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The Jewish Holocaust Centre is dedicated to the memory of the six million Jews murdered by the Nazis and their collaborators between 1933 and 1945.

We consider the finest memorial to all victims of racist policies to be an educational program which aims to combat antisemitism, racism and prejudice in the community and fosters understanding between people.

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#### On the cover:

Painting by Steven Harrison

This publication has been designed and produced by Izigraphics Pty Ltd [www.izigraphics.com.au](http://www.izigraphics.com.au)

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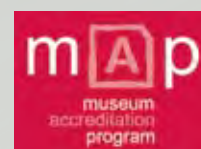
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Pauline  
Rockman OAM

**O**ver the past few months Melbourne has been the place to be. We have been privileged to have had a wonderful array of international visitors, many of whom I have had the pleasure to greet at the Jewish Holocaust Centre. You can read more about some of them in this edition of *Centre News*. Many were involved at the Monash University conference, *Aftermath: The Politics of Memory*. *Kol hakavod* to our partners at the Monash Australian Centre for Jewish Civilization and all those who contributed to making the conference the success it was.

This month I have met many inspiring people, among them Father Patrick Desbois, who has an amazing capacity for delving into the past and finding eyewitnesses to assist him and his team to find mass graves in Eastern Europe. His powerful message is to fight racism as we confront it.

I also met with Professor Jan Gross, Professor Dovid Katz and my dear colleague, Tali Nates,

Director of the Johannesburg Holocaust and Genocide Centre. Together we co-hosted a reunion for past Australian Adult March of the Living participants. Tali's strong message to participants was that they should be proactive, as they have much to contribute. This applies equally to the Australian Student March of the Living. Indeed, in its eleven years of existence, many graduates of the student March have made their presence felt in various aspects of the Jewish Holocaust Centre community, from guiding to volunteering.

On a recent visit to the University of Southern California Shoah Foundation Institute in Los Angeles I was privileged and humbled to meet a woman whose name is Edith. One can never underestimate the power of survivor testimony. 'Make sure you put on a few layers of clothing,' she said. 'We have to be prepared to move with little notice. My mother's words ring in my ears; it was the last time I saw her.' Anyone familiar with Holocaust survivor testimony may recognise these words, mirrored in many testimonies. No, Edith is not a Holocaust survivor, but a Rwandan genocide survivor who is now in her thirties, but was 17 years old at the time of the Rwandan genocide. When asked if she thought that the Reconciliation Commission had brought a measure of justice, she replied: 'For me, there is no justice.' She was clear, tearful and

strong, telling her heartbreaking story. Today she is a US citizen with two daughters. The similarities of testimony were chilling.

Not all the courageous people who helped save the lives of those victimised by the Nazi regime have had the honour of becoming 'Righteous Among The Nations'. There are many stories waiting to be told about the actions of some individuals during the Nazi regime – those people who displayed extraordinary acts of courage, whose actions ultimately saved lives and who are known as 'rescuers'.

One very special man I had the privilege to get to know was Gerard Herbst (1911–2011). I first met him when we interviewed him for the Shoah Foundation testimonies in 1996. Gerard hid a family of eight for ten days in his two-room artist's studio in Munich after *Kristallnacht*. They managed to escape to Australia and then assisted Gerard to come here in 1939 to escape the Nazis. Gerard maintained a lifelong relationship with that family. He received a letter from Yad Vashem acknowledging his act of courage. He was a true European gentleman who described himself as a 'philosemite'. Farewell dear Gerard. You are an inspiration, a courageous, creative mentor who fought apathy, ignorance and reaction with great courage and dedication. You will be missed!

*L'Shanah Tovah*

## EDITOR'S LETTER



Ruth Mushin

**A**n ongoing theme at the Jewish Holocaust Centre has been how to perpetuate the legacy of the survivors who established the Centre, and the importance of involving the second and third generations of the survivors. The editorship of *Centre News* has also gone through generational change since it was first published in 1984. Its first editor was Cyla Sokolowicz,

who was succeeded by Stan Marks. I, who am a little younger, have had the privilege to be the editor since September 2008, and although I have no intention of handing over to anyone else just yet, it has been a pleasure to involve Fay Helfenbaum, a representative of the third generation. Fay, who plans to pursue studies in editing and publishing, has helped with this edition and her skills and enthusiasm have been greatly appreciated. And Fay comes to this role with great credentials apart from her academic skills. She is the granddaughter of Pesia Helfenbaum – who also happens to be my aunt – a retired survivor guide who committed so much time and energy to the Jewish Holocaust Centre, to ensure that

young people learn about the Holocaust and the dangers of racism and intolerance.

Moshe Ajzenbud, a Yiddish writer of international standing, has written and edited the Yiddish pages of *Centre News* for many years. And what better way to mark the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Kadimah and the contribution that Yiddish has made to Melbourne than to profile Moshe? We are also excited to bring you an article by Dovid Katz on understanding the 'double genocide' – the model that puts Nazi and Soviet crimes on an equal basis. Dovid is a representative of the next generation of distinguished Yiddish scholars. I hope you enjoy these and the many other articles in this edition.



Warren Fineberg

**T**he Jewish Holocaust Centre (JHC) is more than a museum, a library, a collection of precious Holocaust artefacts and a memorial. The Centre is a community made up of survivors, guides, researchers, volunteers, staff, student interns and teachers, providing the 'heart' and 'hands' for the Centre's many activities.

Together with the very busy program of speakers, workshops, film nights and projects, we schedule strategic planning meetings for the writing of grant proposals, project planning, and event planning and management. Financial planning and budgeting, together with human and material resources, must all be put in place from the outset, and a review of operations takes place after events to see how well we have matched our plans.

We have made successful applications to the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany for the digitisation and upgrade of Holocaust video testimonies, and for museum panels. Work on the museum panels has been completed and the digitising of our Holocaust survivor testimonies is well underway.

In recent weeks we have also been successful in our application for a grant from the Telematics Trust for the project 'Bringing History to You'. This project will enable us to adapt our popular Storypod technology for delivery over the internet via the Centre's existing website and by DVD, and to develop engaging audio-visual

curricular materials for teachers and students. These materials will use the unique Storypod technology with its oral history, written documents, historical photographs and timelines, and eyewitness testimonies of Holocaust survivors to engage students in learning experiences. Through this innovative curricular program, we aim to engage students with sophisticated multimedia material, gaining their interest by being both informative and intellectually stimulating.

We share our technology with other museums and education centres which may wish to develop their own curricular materials and believe that this high quality curriculum approach can be adapted to other areas of human endeavour by interested educators. In short, this project will contribute to groundbreaking developments in education and training using digital media, an essential pedagogical tool today.

Other projects to bear fruit more recently are our new, enhanced web site, the use of on-line booking for some of our gala events, and a very active JHC Film Club, spearheaded by Adam Brown and Lena Fisman. Much of what goes on at the Centre can be accessed from our web page. For those who are less computer literate, Centre assistance is only a phone call away.

The Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance, and Research is an intergovernmental body whose purpose is to place political and social leaders' support behind the need for Holocaust education, remembrance and research, both nationally and internationally. I have previously spoken and written about this important body. Countries wishing to create programs in Holocaust education, or to develop further their existing materials and activities in this area, work together

with the Task Force. To this end liaison projects can be established between countries and the Task Force for long-term cooperation. Such cooperation is mutually beneficial to all concerned. Member states include Argentina, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Israel, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, UK and USA. Australia is not yet a member state and we urge the government to join.

On a somewhat related note, I was recently listening to the ABC's 'Q&A' hosted by Tony Jones. During the program an important discussion emerged on freedom of speech in our society, sparked by far right views and the recent horrific shootings in Norway. Editor Brendon O'Neill argued that the media should remain unrestrained with no censorship, and that citizens should take responsibility for weighing up the arguments. Other panelists, including Stephen Mayne, founder of the on-line media company Crikey.com, questioned how liberal our media laws should be and argued that there are consequences for getting the facts wrong.

Where do we stand at the Jewish Holocaust Centre in our view on this important debate? How can the media be used to promote our concept of social tolerance? How do we react when others manipulate the media for what we regard as wrongful deeds? As I listened to the 'Q&A' debate, these questions came to mind. And then I asked myself: how could Hitler have been stopped, given his control of censorship and the media, his use of propaganda and his evil intent? How is the media used in our society? How can we work with the many students and visitors to our Centre in a way which never allows for a false 'would be emperor' to sway the populace and incite evil?

## Abram Goldberg is inducted into the Victorian Refugee Recognition Record

This year Abram Goldberg, survivor guide and member of the Jewish Holocaust Centre Board, was inducted into the Victorian Refugee Recognition Record (VRRR). Organised by the Victorian Multicultural Commission, the VRRR is an awards program which recognises individuals of a refugee background for their outstanding work in the community. The VRRR also marks and celebrates Refugee Week (19–25 June 2011) – Australia's

peak annual activity to inform the public on refugee issues and to celebrate the positive contributions made by people of refugee background to Australian society.

Abram was inducted to the VRRR at a ceremony held at the Immigration Museum, hosted by Parliamentary Secretary for Health, Nick Wakeling, on behalf of the Minister for Multicultural Affairs and Citizenship, Nicholas Kotsiras. *Mazel tov* Abram!





Zvi Civins

I recently spent a week in Los Angeles at the University of Southern California Shoah Foundation Institute, where I observed master teachers from across America who were learning how to use an exciting new program. This program will enable them and their students to search one thousand survivor testimonies from the Shoah Foundation according to key concepts, words, phrases and even more specific information. As there are over 100,000 hours of recorded survivor testimonies, this user-friendly system helps students to find specific information in the testimony archives. Imagine: a student can type in a particular year, location, age and gender of a survivor, a key word such as 'hunger' or 'health', and the search engine will suggest a number of testimonies. The search results also include the exact locations on the testimony where the student can hear the survivor speaking about the chosen topic. Rather than sitting through hours of videoed testimonies, the student can quickly find the most relevant clips for whatever project or assignment the teacher has set. This is a program which is still in its pilot phase in America, and one which will be piloted in Australia in the coming months.

What was even more memorable was a tour of the computer centre

at the University of Southern California, where these video testimonies are housed. There is an enormous amount of work involved in not only recording the survivors around the world, but preserving the original videotapes, and then converting them to the digital formats now used. The array of computers and servers and the number of people involved in preserving and disseminating the archives is overwhelming.

Today's DVDs and digital storage formats, although able to store huge amounts of information and extremely easy to access and copy, deteriorate quickly and are very fragile compared to the original videotapes. The videotapes in turn had a short life span compared to 'old fashioned' film. This means that the technicians and computer scientists need to inspect and repair the digitised testimonies continually, keep up to date with new technologies and ensure that the priceless survivor testimonies can continue to be used as valuable learning tools by students and researchers worldwide.

On the Shabbat after returning to Melbourne I received an *aliyah* to the Torah at my synagogue. The Torah scroll with its ancient words may have been written a hundred years ago, yet it shows no sign of deterioration and should be legible for another hundred years. The Dead Sea Scrolls are thousands of years old and they too are still legible, as are ancient hieroglyphs and books printed on paper from the Middle Ages that are still with us in their original form.

I wonder if anything is permanent anymore. Our digital survivor testimonies are priceless glimpses into the Holocaust, but the most up-to-date technology does not

guarantee their permanence. A power outage, a lightning strike or a malicious hacker could destroy or compromise all this information contained on the millions of dollars worth of computers. Rather than take for granted all that technology offers, we should bear in mind that the digital age is a delicate age. Yet this is the world in which we live, and there is no questioning that technology empowers us. Technology enables information to be accessed by so many people, whereas a single book may only be seen by relatively few.

Our museum has embraced technology in dynamic ways, but we still face another, greater challenge. Here in Melbourne we have the wonderful opportunity to speak with Holocaust survivors every day, but most people elsewhere in Australia and in other countries are not so fortunate. However, the technology of on-line access to survivors now and in the future will mean that the survivors' voices will never be silent. But will people remember that the images speaking from a glass screen are those of real people?

Perhaps we should be encouraged by this anecdote: When asked to comment about using the technology, one student said: 'It was great! I met a really interesting person today.' She was referring to the videoed testimony of a survivor she saw on her computer screen. The technology had enabled her to encounter a real person. We must remember, however, that technology is a tool for learning, and not an end in itself. It is up to all of us to bear this in mind so that all students who use this technology in the future will know that they, too, will have met a real person.

## Tuesdays will never be the same

Tuesdays for me were 'Pearl's Day', when Pearl Recht would stand before the large map in the upstairs auditorium, pool cue in her hand as a pointer, and speak to students about the Holocaust. She knew that map backwards and forwards and, as she often said, the feedback was that the students or visitors were literally 'riveted' by her presentation. Certain schools would only visit on Tuesdays, and specifically ask for Pearl to speak to the students. Pearl 'retired to the back bench' last year, but continued to come to the Centre on Tuesdays. She could not resist the opportunity to continue to share her powerful testimony with students. She would arrive early and walk once or twice around the block

in the sun before joining the other Tuesday morning guides. Although she was legally blind, nothing, but *nothing*, slipped by her. She would speak to me and ask me why I said this or wrote that! She was sharp as a tack, and her intellect was a force with which to be reckoned. Yet her mind was matched by her heart, and I will always remember, as many will I am sure, her apple strudel and cake she sometimes brought on Tuesday mornings. Pearl will be remembered not only by the Tuesday guides, but by all of us, as a pillar of the Jewish Holocaust Centre, one of our longest-serving guides. She will be sorely missed. *Y'hee Zichrah Baruch*. May her memory be a blessing to us all.

# Understanding 'Double Genocide': a lethal new threat to Holocaust memory and honesty

Dovid Katz



Photo: Ida Olniansky

Dovid Katz

**A**ustralians, Americans, Britons and others who are proud of a parent or grandparent who fought in the Second World War, proud of the Allies' defeat of Hitler, have ample reason to be wary now.

One of the Eastern European far right's priorities, notwithstanding the current economic challenges, is to 'rubbish' the Allies' triumph, and rewrite the history of the war to suit local ultranationalism.

The ongoing campaign seeks

to rewrite Second World War history, not just in Eastern Europe but for the world at large, by mitigating Nazism, insisting that communism's evils be proclaimed 'equal' to Nazism by European Parliament resolutions, and trashing the Allied war effort as one that did nothing but replace one tyranny with another 'equal' one in the east.

Make no mistake, the peoples of Eastern Europe suffered enormously under communism for decades after the war, while we westerners were enjoying unbridled freedom and prosperity. It is absolutely right that they should now call for thorough investigation of the crimes committed by communist regimes. But the demand that the entire European Union (EU) declare Nazism and communism to be 'equal' is something else entirely.

Perhaps you must actually live in Eastern Europe to appreciate the nuances. Let it be stressed that none of this is about the fine, tolerant, welcoming and hardworking people of the region, among whom I have lived happily for over a decade, in Vilnius, the Lithuanian capital. It is rather about the abuses of power elites, in government, academia, media, the judiciary and so forth, whose agendas are often opaque even to locals, and all the more inscrutable to unsuspecting foreigners.

The new ultranationalists are neither skinheads nor toughs. On the contrary, the elites are suave, silver-tongued, charming and highly educated, especially about history – not in the open-minded sense of relishing civic debate between competing ideas, but in the sense of insisting upon a single, uniform history as a product for export, and being quick to stigmatise any who might disagree as unfit, disloyal or even 'communist'.

In 2009, the Lithuanian parliament actually debated proposals to criminalise opinions that disagree with the 'double genocide' model of the Second World War and who would question, for example, whether Soviet misrule constituted 'genocide'. In June 2010, the Hungarian parliament passed such a law shortly after the right-wing government came to power (maximum jail time for offenders: three years), and within weeks the Lithuanian parliament followed suit (with a mere two years of jail time to folks who hold the opinion that the Holocaust was the one genocide in twentieth century Lithuania).

But what actually is the ultranationalist version of history?

In the case of the 'anti-Russian' countries in Eastern Europe – the far east of the European Union, particularly the Baltic states, plus the western, nationalist part of Ukraine, among others – there is a reluctance to own up to any complicity with the Holocaust. The percentages of the Jewish populations killed in the Baltics were the highest in Europe. Further west, collaboration had meant ratting to the Gestapo or taking neighbours to the train station to be deported. In these countries, it meant something different. Many thousands of enthusiastic local volunteers did most of the actual shooting of their country's Jewish citizens, whose remains lie scattered in hundreds of local killing pits. In Lithuania and Latvia, the butchery started before the Nazis even arrived, initiated by nationalist thugs who were in 2011 honoured by some of the highest echelons of society as 'anti-Soviet freedom fighters' (ignoring the slight detail that the Soviets were fleeing the German invasion, not them).

Of course there were exceptions – those Baltic citizens who showed inspirational courage by risking their and their families' lives to rescue a Jewish neighbour. They are the *real* Baltic heroes of the Second World War who should have been honoured and remembered by their governments in 2011, on the seventieth anniversary, in lieu of the orgy of commemorations for the killers.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union and the rise of democratic states in the region, individual citizens hailing from each country's majority made spirited strides toward unearthing the truth. Some remarkable non-government organisations were set up. But near the turn of the millennium, the three Baltic governments colluded to set up state-financed commissions to study 'as a single topic' the Nazi and communist legacies (known informally as 'red-brown commissions'). The most notorious of these bodies, headed by a right-wing-compliant and ambitious

Jewish politician (recently rewarded with the chairmanship of the parliament's foreign affairs committee), has been Lithuania's International Commission for the Evaluation of the Crimes of the Nazi and Soviet Occupation Regimes in Lithuania. Built into the Orwellian name of the inquiry are the foregone conclusions: first, the desired equivalence or parallelism of Nazi and Soviet crimes; second, the limitation to consider the crimes of 'occupation regimes', leaving little scope for investigation of the genocide committed by local forces, in some cases before the occupation began; third, the seeking of solace in 'international' recognition for that which needs to be faced up to nationally and locally. The commission is cosily housed in the prime minister's office, turning history into a PR department of the government.

To 'fix' the region's unfixable Holocaust history, an array of cunning ruses was brought into play. The very definition of genocide was inflated by local legislation in this part of the world to include wrongful deportation, imprisonment or attempts to rid society of a certain class, thereby 'legally' placing communist oppression in the same category as Nazism. The state-funded Genocide Museum on the main boulevard of Vilnius does not mention the word 'Holocaust'; it is all about Soviet crimes; and even flaunts antisemitic exhibits. It is widely repeated locally that the Soviets committed genocide first, in 1940 (when the Baltic states were wrongfully incorporated into the USSR, less than a year after the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact, and many innocent people were deported or imprisoned), and that this was followed by some kind of opposite and equal reaction in 1941, when the German invaders and Balts began their genocide of the Jewish population.

According to this narrative, all is equal; everybody is even. All that remained was to sell this new history to the naive westerners whose mind is on other things these days.

But in Lithuania, the process went further. State prosecutors, egged on by the antisemitic press, opened 'war crimes investigations' against Holocaust survivors who are alive today only because they managed to flee the ghetto and the murder awaiting them, to join up with anti-Nazi partisans in the forests who were, yes, supported by the Soviet Union. (There were, alas, no US or British forces in these parts.) They are heroes of the free world, but in the far east of the European Union, where a not-so-latent pro-fascist sentiment grips segments of the elite, they are the villains. Almost as if someone is unhappy that any Jew at all survived the Holocaust.

One of the accused survivors, Dr Yitzhak Arad (born in 1926), a gentle scholar who was founding director of Jerusalem's Yad Vashem Holocaust Museum, was duped into joining the Lithuanian red-brown commission (to give it legitimacy) before being absurdly accused himself. Then, in May 2008, at the low point of modern Lithuanian history, armed police came looking for two incredibly valorous women veterans: Fania Yoches Brantsovsky (born 1922), librarian of the Vilnius Yiddish Institute, and Rachel Margolis (1921), a biologist and Holocaust scholar. Margolis is especially loathed by proponents of the 'double genocide' industry because she rediscovered, deciphered and published the long-lost diary of a Christian Pole, Kazimierz Sakowicz. Sakowicz, witness to tens of thousands of murders at the Ponár (Paneriai) site outside Vilnius, recorded accurately that most of the killers were enthusiastic locals. Now resident in Rehovot, Israel, she is unable, on the eve of her ninetieth birthday, to return to her beloved hometown in Lithuania for fear of prosecutorial harassment.

Why would prosecutors, who have yet to level a single charge, go after the victims instead of the perpetrators? In fact, this has been all about defamation and manipulation of history, not prosecution. When it came to the perpetrators, fifteen of whom were deported from the United States after being stripped of citizenship, Lithuanian prosecutors were bereft of any energy or motivation.

With unbridled audacity, the Baltic states, working closely with far-right parties in other 'new accession states' (Poland and the Czech Republic among them), have found Useful Idiots (UIs) in the European Parliament for spreading their underlying view that the Nazis were, in effect, liberators of their countries from the yoke of communism. The entire effort is often artfully covered for by Useful Jewish Idiots (UJIs), Jewish dignitaries and scholars from around the world invited to Lithuania and neighbouring countries for



(l-r) Phillip Maisel, David Katz, Pearl Recht

conferences, honours, research opportunities and an array of enjoyable junkets.

The East European far-right cabal's greatest success to date is the Prague Declaration of June 2008, which demands that the entire European Union recognise communism and fascism (Nazism) as a 'common legacy', and that 'all European minds' think that way. Its practical demands include a new Nuremberg-type tribunal for trying the criminals of communism and, unbelievably, a demand for the 'overhaul of European history textbooks' to reflect the revisionist history. This last demand was the subject of the group's 2011 meetings in Brussels, where they pursue what is now innocuously called 'The Prague Process', and sometimes referred to by other pleasant-sounding names, including 'reconciliation of European histories', 'equality of victimhood' and more.

One of the reasons that all this progressed without scrutiny can be found in the Prague Declaration's list of signatories. They include some major anti-Soviet icons who stood up bravely for their nations' independence as the USSR crumbled, and subsequently helped forge solid democracies. The heroic roles of Vaclav Havel of the Czech Republic and Vytautas Landsbergis of Lithuania in their nations' re-emergence remain undiminished. But that does not mean that, two decades later, we must be afraid to disagree with them when, following the general political trend in the region, they veer rightwards or unwittingly give succour to the ultranationalists.

By denigrating the Allies' war effort against Hitler, the easterners go beyond whitewashing their own Holocaust



histories. The entire 'red-equals-brown' movement within eastern Europe panders to base instincts, which can be politically useful in hard times. It has hit upon a convenient way to stigmatise not only 'Russians' (often a cover term for Russian-speakers of many ethnic backgrounds, including Roma), but also today's Russia. These nations have every right to fear Russia and they deserve firm western support for their permanent security and independence. This legitimate concern must not be compromised by the attempts of some at historical falsification and the peddling of contemporary racism and antisemitism.

The anti-Russianism in Eastern Europe is however not as strong as the antisemitism that accompanies Holocaust revisionism. In 2011, Latvia and Estonia held events actually honouring their countries' Waffen SS units, and the Lithuanian parliament sponsored a series of events, including an international conference and a documentary film, to rehabilitate the murderous Lithuanian Activist Front (LAF), who started butchering Jewish neighbours before the Germans even arrived. In 2010, a court legalised public swastikas (less than two years after the parliament forbade 'Nazi and Soviet symbols' – so much for the 'equality' in play). One of the official Genocide Centre's 'chief specialists' helped organise the March 2011 neo-Nazi parade. The incredible list goes on.

Holocaust denial *per se*, in respectable Western civilization, died its death back in 2000 when the London High Court

ruled for Professor Deborah Lipstadt, throwing out the libel suit brought by denier David Irving. It has since been replaced by a much more dangerous and complex incarnation, which I have called 'Holocaust obfuscation'. The Holocaust obfuscation movement is a far-right, antisemitic, state-funded effort to rewrite history and confuse perpetrators and victims for ultranationalist motives. It is spreading dangerously from the Baltics and Eastern Europe to various susceptible circles in the West, where clueless historians, public figures and politicians can readily be persuaded to join a seemingly exciting revisionism.

Each state may in some sense preach and teach what it likes within its borders, though within the European Union and NATO the freedom to disagree must be upheld by law and in practice, and the tolerance for adulation of fascism should be zero.

In all scenarios, the unseemly revisionism promoted in some eastern EU states must not be granted entrance to the West via the back doors of Brussels and Strasbourg.

The time has come to stand up and say no!

*Dovid Katz, who was professor of Yiddish language, literature and culture at Vilnius University from 1999 to 2011, is editor of the web journal [www.DefendingHistory.com](http://www.DefendingHistory.com). His personal website is [www.DovidKatz.net](http://www.DovidKatz.net).*

# Moshe Ajzenbud: keeping Yiddish alive

Ruth Mushin

*Moshe Ajzenbud has edited the Yiddish pages of Centre News for many years. This profile is in honour of the contribution Moshe has made to the Jewish Holocaust Centre and to Yiddish literature, and in honour of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Jewish Library and Cultural Centre 'Kadimah'.*

**M**oshe Ajzenbud was born in 1920 in Niesviez, a small town in east Poland near the Russian border. He was educated in a Yiddish secular school, a Polish government school and later a technical college in Pinsk.

Originally part of Byelorussia, Niesviez was under Polish rule between 1919 and 1939. As part of the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact, it came under Soviet control in 1939. When Germany invaded the Soviet Union in 1941, Moshe escaped deep into Central Asia with his father and brother. There he was sent to work in a labour camp in Siberia and was sentenced to five years' imprisonment for organising a general strike in the iron ore quarry. He was freed during an amnesty in 1945. In that year he was also reunited with Leah, whom he had met in Pinsk in 1936. They married and returned with Moshe's father and brother to Poland. His mother and sister perished in the Holocaust.



Photo: Abhijit Chattaraj

*Moshe Ajzenbud*

Understanding that Poland would never be truly independent under Soviet rule, Moshe and Leah decided to leave after staying in Poland for only one month. Without passports, visas or money, they joined other survivors in making their way across Czechoslovakia and Austria to the American Occupation Zone of Germany. There they were directed to the German holiday resort of Bad Reichenhall where they spent the next four years in a displaced persons camp. It was there that Moshe began to write, hoping to shed the burden of pain and to voice his protest against the needless suffering to which he had been subjected during the war. His first short stories were published in the Parisian *Notre Vox*, a Yiddish daily where he worked as a local correspondent.



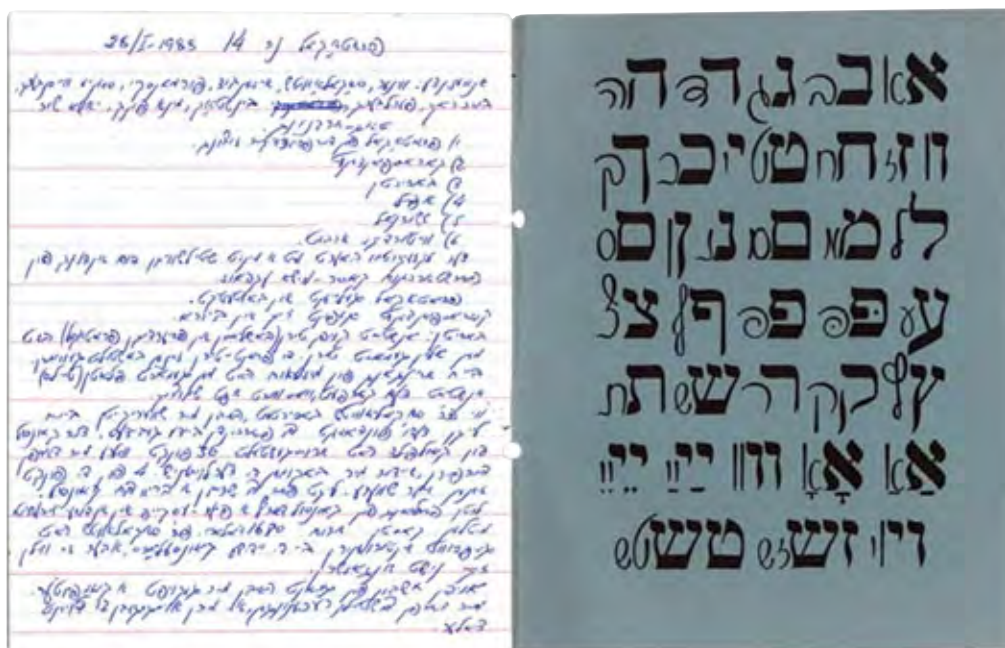
A fitter and turner, Moshe was accepted as part of Australia's migration program in Melbourne as a skilled migrant. Moshe and Leah arrived in Melbourne in 1950 and, after spending the first month at the Bonegilla Commonwealth Immigration Centre in Albury, they secured housing and employment in Melbourne. Moshe worked first as a metal tradesman and later as a storeman. Despite the usual difficulties of settling into a new country, he continued writing, and quickly became involved in Melbourne's Jewish community.

In 1951 he began writing for the *Jewish Post* and became a regular contributor to the Jewish press. He was the founding editor of *Yiddishe Bleter*, the Yiddish section of the *Melbourne Chronicle*, as well as the editor of the Yiddish pages of the Jewish Holocaust Centre's *Centre News*. His books of fiction include *Gelebt hinter kratn* (*Lived behind bars*) (1956), translated by Leah in 1986 as *The Commissar Took Care*, and *Yugneleche blondzenishn* (*Dilemmas of youth*) (1973). He has published three collections of short stories: *Nyesviezher Yidn: dertseylungen* (*Jews of Niesviez; Stories*) (1965), *Aleyn in gezeml: dertseylungen* (*Lonely in a*

been Honorary Secretary of the Bund and spent 15 years as Yiddish presenter at the ethnic radio station 3ZZZ.

Moshe is passionate about keeping Yiddish alive. As he says: 'It has been the living, vibrant and acknowledged language of generations of Jews, whether religious or secular. In the *cheders* and *yeshivot* of Eastern Europe the Scriptures were taught in Yiddish or in Yiddish translation. Yiddish was the language of the majority of Jews who were confined to the ghettos and camps, who were involved in uprisings and who went on their final journey. It has also crept into the everyday language in many lands, especially in America and England and, to a degree, in Australia.'

Moshe became involved in the Jewish Holocaust Centre as a representative of the Kadimah before the Centre's foundation in 1984, and was Honorary Secretary on the first Executive committee. When the Holocaust Centre was built, Yiddish was the *lingua franca* of the founders. When they established the Centre, they felt that they should not only remember the tragic deaths of the victims, but also had a duty to preserve and memorialise their language – a proud,



Minutes of the Jewish Holocaust Centre Executive 1985, handwritten in an exercise book

*crowd: Stories*) (1970), and *Pnina, un andere dertseylungen* (*Pnina, and other tales*) (2006). As well as his works of fiction, he has written a study of Oskar Rapoport's works entitled *Nusakh Y Rapoport (Oskar Rapoport's Style)* (1967), and studies of the Jewish Folk Centre in Sydney and the Bund and the David Herman Theatre in Melbourne: *50 yor Yidisher folks-tsenter in Sydney (50 Years of the Jewish Folk Centre in Sydney)* (1991), *60 Yor Bund in Melburn, 1928–1988 (The History of the Bund in Melbourne 1928–1988)* (1996) and *Di Geshikhte fun Dovid Herman Teater (The History of the David Herman Theatre)* (1998). He has also been a contributor to the *Bibliographical Dictionary of Modern Yiddish Literature*.

Moshe has had a distinguished career as a Yiddish educator. He began teaching Yiddish at the Sholem Aleichem Sunday School in 1958, a position which he held for around twenty years. In 1984, he became its headmaster. He has played an important role in the Jewish Cultural Centre and National Library Kadimah where he was President from 1988–1992. He was also Honorary Secretary from 1979–80 and again in 1999–2002, and Chairman of the Kadimah Cultural Committee from 1993–98. He has also

living language that had inspired so many.

The first meetings at the Centre were in Yiddish, and the minutes were written in Yiddish. Exhibition captions were in Yiddish and English, and Yiddish was always heard around the Centre. However, as newer, younger volunteers and staff became involved, English began to take over as the main language. One thing that has not changed, however, is the three-page Yiddish section of *Centre News*, which Moshe has been editing for many years. For each edition, he collects material about the Holocaust from all over the world, writes it up by hand, then types it on his Yiddish typewriter. He then passes it on to Mr Mokotov, who transfers it to his computer.

Moshe recognises that the transition from a Centre run almost entirely by volunteers to the one that exists today is something that was necessary and he is proud that the Centre has achieved recognition both in the Jewish community and in the wider community. At the same time, he feels strongly that the importance of Yiddish at the Centre must always be remembered. 'We owe it to the millions who perished and whose language it was,' he says.

# The Future of Remembrance

Jayne Josem

In March/April 2011 I travelled to the International Conference of Holocaust Museum and Holocaust Centre Curators held at the Holocaust Museum, Houston where over 25 delegates from American and overseas Holocaust institutions discussed vital issues related to their work. Following the conference I visited a number of other American museums, including the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington.

One of the major themes of the conference was the transition of Holocaust centres to a future without survivors. As the witnesses to the Holocaust are fading from view, we desperately want to carry on their legacy and recognise that now is the last opportunity to collect items and stories directly from them. This forces us to try to forge our way through a new landscape and, while on the one hand museums use their physical space as a site of memory and education, we have the opportunity via the internet to go far beyond our walls.



(l-r) Tali Nates, Director of the Johannesburg Holocaust & Genocide Centre, William Shulman, President of the Association of Holocaust Organizations and Jayne Josem at the Houston conference

Sara Bloomfield, Director of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM), summed up this challenge. She said: 'Every single day we are losing some aspect of the authentic voice of the Holocaust, whether it's the loss of the survivors, the other eyewitnesses, or the deterioration of the material – every single day.' Last year, the USHMM reached over 24 million people, and most of them did not walk through their doors. As Bloomfield stated: 'Hate lives today on the internet, and we are reaching people all over the world on the internet where our problems are globalised and so are our opportunities.'

The Holocaust exhibition at the Imperial War Museum, London, incorporates survivor testimony like an 'aural wallpaper' throughout the exhibition display. Susan Bardgett, Director of the Holocaust Exhibition, remarked: 'There is no doubt that the "substrand" of survivor testimony provides one of the Holocaust Exhibition's most moving elements ... It is all very well to be told that the Jews were made to wear yellow stars, but how much more telling is it to hear Barbara Stimler remember how

degraded she felt when she says ... " You felt like an animal".'

At the Jewish Holocaust Centre recently, Dr Stephen Smith, Executive Director of the Shoah Foundation for Visual History and Education, spoke about an educational pilot program being trialled at present called 'iWitness'. He explained how students found connections between survivor stories and aspects of their own lives and it was through this connection that learning began.

The use of personal stories in museums to convey 'bigger history' has been a trend not only in museums, but in all aspects of popular history – literature, cinema, television. The shift has been from the dry and distant presentation of 'this is what happened', to the more immediate and personal 'this is what happened to us'. At the Houston conference, Dr Stephen Luckert, Curator at the USHMM, told us how it used to be the museum's policy *not* to identify the donors of the items on display, as the items were intended to be representative of many people's experiences. Stephen quickly set about changing this mindset and now the labels clearly articulate the names of the donors, instantly personalising them. In the Museum of Jewish Heritage in New York information labels include a small photo of the survivor who donated the material, to provide an even more immediate connection to a real person.

Dr Robert Rozett, Director of the Yad Vashem Libraries, talks of the fragments of memory that have been dispersed all over the globe in the form of documents, diaries, testimonies and photographs. He says: 'Each fragment tells its own tale and, like a thread, has a beginning and an end. These threads of information, intersecting and combining, are then woven together into a broad and deep tapestry that depicts a multi-faceted story stretching over time and space.' Right now, with the Melbourne Jewish Holocaust Centre museum's Storypod project, as well as our efforts to consolidate our data into one comprehensive database, we are attempting to make connections between the discrete areas within our collection.

Museums worldwide each hold different fragments of the Holocaust experience. The challenge for the future is for each of us to find the funding to put all our collections onto user-friendly databases on the internet. In that way curators, researchers and the general public can view the different strands, irrespective of where they are situated.

In the future I envisage people using computers to zoom close up on old documents that may be housed thousands of kilometres away. To achieve that goal we at the Jewish Holocaust Centre, with our white gloves on, have to examine and ask questions about every single precious item in our collection, to improve the catalogue entry and ensure that whoever views it knows its provenance. For one item this can involve hours of work, and we are blessed with thousands of items, so it will take time, even with our dedicated team of volunteers. We need to be able to communicate 'what story is it telling us?' because when the survivors are not around to tell us, the objects will carry the stories into the future.



# Reviving Jewish identity in Poland

Michael Schudrich

People often ask me how I, an American rabbi from New York's Upper West Side, became the Chief Rabbi of Poland. In 1973, just after graduating from high school, I joined a program that first went through Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union and then on to Israel. In Poland we were told that only a few thousand aged Jews were left and that very little remained of the Jewish past. It did not make sense; the sums did not add up. If, as is commonly believed, about 10 percent of three and a half million Polish Jews survived the Second World War and 90 percent of the survivors emigrated, that would still leave about 30,000 Jews in Poland. Many of these people would now have children and grandchildren. Where were they? I wanted to find out.

In 1976, I returned to Poland and the following year I became the assistant leader of the program in which I had participated in 1973. In 1979, after spending my third year of rabbinical school in Israel, I decided to study Polish at the Jagiellonian University in Krakow for the summer. There I met several young Jewish dissidents and realised that there were indeed some young Jews left, and they were asking for my help to gain Jewish knowledge. I had had the blessing of a rich Jewish life as a result of the decisions made by my grandparents and parents, and I felt that the time had come for me to give something back.

The Polish Jewish community is a growing one, and the median age of its members has dropped from 70 to 40 in four years and is declining! New members are all under the age of 40. Their parents and grandparents had given up being Jewish, but some of the children are discovering their Jewish origins and wanting to 'do something Jewish'. The Nozyk Synagogue in Warsaw has over 550 members, and there are now ten rabbis in Poland, two of whom are Polish-born.

I could tell thousands of stories about men and women of all ages and backgrounds who are only now returning to Judaism. From 1939 to 1989, when Poland suffered under Nazi occupation and the authoritarian rule of the Communist Party, nothing gave a Jew the impression that it was a good idea – or even a safe one – to say that he or she was Jewish. Since 1989, some people have needed a long period to conclude that perhaps the time has come to 'do something Jewish'. Fear often dissipates slowly. A few months ago a man of about 60 approached me and said that his Jewish mother had died. They had buried her next to his non-Jewish father in a non-sectarian cemetery. He told me that he had never done anything Jewish, but now felt the need to say *Kaddish*. So, on a Friday morning, I taught him the mourner's *Kaddish*, then invited him to come to the synagogue for the Shabbat service that evening. He mentioned that his wife was also Jewish, and therefore so was their 21-year-old daughter. I invited all three of them. They came and were moved.



(l-r) Shmuel Rosenkranz and Rabbi Michael Schudrich

Another story: A young woman in her twenties discovered less than four years ago that her mother's mother was Jewish. She became observant, met a young Jewish man from the United States, and they fell in love. Her mother wanted the wedding to be in New York so that the neighbors would not see that they were having a Jewish wedding. This is more proof that fear does not dissipate easily. This does not so much concern current antisemitism, but mainly what might happen again, based rationally on what people have experienced during most of their life.

My main obligation is toward today's Jewish community: to help them with their identity and assist them in expressing their Judaism. Without ignoring the profound Jewish past, and working to preserve its memory and to protect material Jewish sites, the main focus of our work in Poland is to revive the Jewish identity of individuals.

As far as we can look ahead, the Polish Jewish community will continue to live in the shadow of the *Shoah*. Yet most problems are becoming more 'normal' and familiar. A young woman says to me: 'Rabbi, I am 23 years old. I know all the boys in the community and don't like any of them. How am I going to get married?' Or parents will say: 'Our son is 15. He has decided to become Orthodox, but he has no Orthodox friends. What is he supposed to do?' These are the typical problems of a quite normal, small community.

*Rabbi Michael Schudrich is Chief Rabbi of Poland. He addressed a function at the Jewish Holocaust Centre in February. This is an edited version of a chapter Rabbi Schudrich contributed to The Fall of the Wall and the Rebirth of Jewish Life in Poland 1989–2009.*

# Forever in our hearts: Child Survivors of the Holocaust art exhibition

Fay Helfenbaum

**O**n 19 June 2011 the Child Survivors of the Holocaust launched the exhibition 'Forever in Our Hearts' at the Jewish Holocaust Centre. The exhibition provides a platform for those unable to speak about their Holocaust experiences to communicate their feelings through artistic expression. Initially an exhibition of Holocaust survivors' work, these artists were joined by a group of Aboriginal men connected to the Child Survivors of the Holocaust group, who expressed their interest in taking part. Later the exhibition was extended to include second generation artists and non-Jewish painters, all of whom wished to show their sorrow and express their solidarity with the victims of the *Shoah* through art.

The theme of the exhibition is the expression of heartfelt loss, whether of a special person, family or friend; of home and the memories of towns, houses and streets as they were before the war; or prized possessions lost during wartime but never forgotten. The exhibition focuses on the loss of life and Jewish community during World War II and serves as a tribute to the suffering of innocent people.



Yael Rayman  
*Where will my help come from?*



Petre Santry. *Childhood lost*



Sam Migdanek.  
*Destiny of the cap make machine*



(l-r) Paul Grinwald, Mirka Mora and Henri Korn

The Jewish Holocaust Centre was delighted to welcome well-known artist Mirka Mora, herself a child survivor, to launch the exhibition. Born in Paris, Mirka Mora and her mother were arrested in 1942 in the infamous Vel d'Hiv roundup and were sent to the concentration camp in Pithiviers. Fortunately, her father was able to secure their release before they were to be deported to Auschwitz, and Mora and her family evaded capture until 1945 by hiding in the forests of France. At the launch, Mirka Mora spoke emotionally of her own experiences during the war, inspiring and captivating the audience with her charm and vibrant personality.

The exhibition will be on display at the Jewish Holocaust Centre until late September. The art is available for purchase, with part of the proceeds earmarked for the Centre.



Tosca Brandt.  
*From shame to fame*



John Howley.  
*Where have all the flowers gone?*



# Remembering the Shoah is not enough

Stephen Smith



Dr Stephen Smith

**I**t never crossed my mind that my tradition was antisemitic. There was no real reason to suspect it. After all, I had never met any Jewish people in the small coalmining village where I grew up. Whenever I heard about Jews, it was in the context of miraculous Bible stories. It seemed they were a significant group of people, as they always seemed ultimately to have God on their side, no matter what ills befell them.

Even the New Testament texts, so fixated with their rejection of Judaism, left a generally good impression, whether the authors intended it or not.

I never developed the impression that Christians should in some way obfuscate the Jews. I grew up assuming Judaism to be fundamental to Christianity – that the two were not mutually exclusive. And then, at the age of 13, I stood in front of the Western Wall and embarked on a journey of discovery. I read Christian theology to try to understand better the relationship between Judaism and Christianity. That is where I discovered the trail of hatred spewed for centuries in my name, or at least in the name of my tradition.

In 1991, my brother James and I visited Yad Vashem. Until then, we had considered the Holocaust to be a Jewish issue; that day we discovered that while it was a horrific tragedy for the Jewish community, the problem lay elsewhere. It was not Jews that perpetuated antisemitism, or perpetrated the Final Solution. They were the victims. The hatred and violence emerged out of Western European Christian civilisation.

The day I visited the Belzec extermination camp there

was two-feet-deep snow on the ground. It was noticeable that there were no footprints in the snow. No one had been there in several weeks. This was surprising, as more than half a million Jews had been murdered there; it is probably the densest site of human destruction anywhere in the world. Standing there, looking at this void of forgotten memory, it became clear that the duty to remember is something in which we can all participate.

With our parents' permission, James and I converted our parents' small Christian retreat in Nottinghamshire into The Holocaust Centre, the UK's first such centre. We built a new museum and education facility to provide a place of learning. It opened in 1995.

During the creation of the centre, genocide was unleashed in Rwanda, and the ethnic wars in the Balkans were claiming thousands of lives less than a thousand miles from where we were building. We knew that it was untenable to speak about the past if we did not act in the present. The Holocaust comes with many implications. One of them surely is that one should never be a bystander to the wasting of human life. Another has to be that every life has equal value. Another, that those who saved Jews have the highest honour, because they risked their own lives to save the lives of others.

We created a second organisation, *Aegis*, to combat the causes of genocide; it is an obvious extension of teaching about the Holocaust.

In 1994, Steven Spielberg and his team of volunteers collected nearly 52,000 testimonies of Holocaust survivors and other witnesses. They share an unspeakable past, and they challenge our actions in the present. They are the voice of conscience of our age.

My work at the University of Southern California (USC) Shoah Foundation Institute, where those testimonies are housed today, is to make their voice heard around the world. As we now add testimonies from Rwanda, Cambodia, Armenia, and other places to the archive, the challenge to understand grows even greater.

Time is passing, and as the generation of eyewitnesses leaves us, memory is slowly turning to history. The urgency to document their stories is all the greater. In a world still plagued with racism, antisemitism, marginalised communities and genocide, the need to learn and apply what they have said is all the more pressing.

*Dr Stephen D Smith is Executive Director of the USC Shoah Foundation Institute. He spoke at a professional development program for Holocaust survivors, guides, volunteers and staff and Courage to Care volunteers at the Jewish Holocaust Centre in May. This article was first published in The Australian Jewish News.*

## Ghetto workers to receive compensation

Holocaust survivors who worked in European ghettos during the Shoah have won rights to special payments in recognition of their suffering, after Germany amended its compensation regulations.

Recipients of German Government pensions whose labour had been recognised as part of their pension package can now claim separately for the one-off 'recognition' payment of 2000 Euros.

Survivors who were forced to live in ghettos 'under National Socialist influence' but were employed 'without coercion' are now eligible for the new

payments, according to a statement from the German Government. The changes do not apply to those whose work in the ghetto has already been compensated as forced labour from funds of Germany's 'Remembrance, Responsibility and Future' foundation.

The deadline for applications is 31 December 2011. For more details, please go to the website: <http://www.melbourne.diplo.de/Vertretung/melbourne/en/Konsularservice/Rente.html> or contact the German Consulate General Melbourne 480 Punt Road, South Yarra, Victoria 3141, phone 9864 6835.

# Efraim Zuroff: pursuing Nazi war criminals

Michael Cohen



(l-r) Henri Korn, Helen Brustman OAM, Efraim Zuroff and Pauline Rockman OAM

**D**irector of the Simon Wiesenthal Office in Jerusalem, Dr Efraim Zuroff, delivered a fascinating address, titled *The Ongoing Pursuit of Nazi War Criminals*, to an audience of some 200 people at the Jewish Holocaust Centre (JHC) in June. Dr Zuroff is the contemporary public face of those pursuing perpetrators of crimes against Jews during the Holocaust. In his address, held under the joint auspices of the JHC and the Australia/Israel and Jewish Affairs Council (AIJAC), Dr Zuroff recounted the efforts to trace and prosecute Nazi war criminals, despite the passage of time. He gave details of several cases currently taking place in Eastern Europe, and also discussed the John Demjanjuk and Charles Zentai cases. Demjanjuk has been accused of complicity in the murder of Jews in the Sobibor death camp, and Zentai of murdering an 18-year-old Jew. Zentai is currently fighting extradition from Australia to Hungary.

Dr Zuroff spoke of the widespread skepticism today about prosecuting Nazi war criminals, given the passage of time and the age of the perpetrators. He argued, however, that time does not diminish the guilt of the killers – that their crimes are just as valid today as they were during the *Shoah*; that old age does not afford protection from prosecution for heinous crimes. He highlighted the case of Sandor Kepiro, a 97 year-old Hungarian currently before the courts for complicity in the murder of over 1200 people – mostly Jews – in Novi Sad, stressing that we have an obligation to the victims to do whatever is possible to ensure that their murderers pay for their crimes. Zuroff said that pursuing Nazi war criminals sends a powerful message – that those who perpetrate crimes against the Jews will pay for their crimes; and that there is a need to scotch Holocaust denial, the new form of contemporary antisemitism. Deniers of the Holocaust, said Zuroff, attempt to avert sympathy for the Jewish victims from the wider world. Fortunately, however, there is no single group,

political party or organisation deemed mainstream, which accepts the charges of Holocaust deniers, more so since the Holocaust is the most documented atrocity of its kind in human history.

Today, argued Dr Zuroff, we face the issue of Holocaust distortion rather than denial. Those who attempt to distort the *Shoah* accept the fact that the murders occurred but minimise the roles of the Eastern Europeans – the Hungarians, Croatians, Byelorussians, Latvians, Estonians, Ukrainians and Lithuanians who, he noted, played a pivotal role as collaborators, assisting the Nazis to commit mass murder. Today, he said, the Lithuanians are making supreme efforts to hide that collaboration. Yet, he noted, there was mass murder of Jews by Lithuanians even before Nazi Germany occupied Lithuania in June, 1941, to be welcomed as ‘liberators’ from the repressive Soviet regime.

Lithuanians are now referring to the members of the Lithuanian Activist Front – the LAF – as heroes.

The LAF, a short-lived resistance organisation which aimed to secure independence from the Soviet regime, viewed the purging of Jews, deemed parasites and monsters, as one of the essential preconditions for starting a new life in a newly-restored Lithuania. In their quest, they committed unspeakable atrocities against the Jews.

Dr Zuroff said that the Eastern European countries are guilty of obfuscation, attempting to hide such crimes by equating Nazism with communism. This, he said, is the thrust of the ‘Prague Declaration’ of 3 June 2008. The declaration aims to dedicate 23 August annually to mark all victims of totalitarianism. The date is significant, for on that day in 1939 the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, a treaty of non-aggression between Germany and the Soviet Union, was signed. By conflating Nazism with communism, Zuroff claimed, the signatories to the Prague Declaration have equated the people who planned, built and administered the death camp at Auschwitz with the people who liberated Auschwitz. The Eastern Europeans, who claim

that the communists committed genocide and that Jews were communists, infer that Jews too were guilty of committing genocide.

Dr Zuroff’s presentation, copies of which are available on DVD from the Jewish Holocaust Centre, was followed by questions and comments from the audience, many of whom were survivors of the Holocaust.



(l-r) Avram Zeleznikow and Efraim Zuroff



# Liberation

## Willy Lerner



Willy Lerner

Willy Lerner was born in Krakow, Poland in 1923, the son of Herschel and Chana (nee Roth). He had a younger sister, Dusia. His father ran a liquor manufacturing business and, after the Depression, a kosher restaurant. After the Germans occupied Poland, life became much more difficult and Willy was forced into unpaid labour. When the Krakow Ghetto was created in March 1941, Willy and his family moved into his

grandmother's house in Myslenice. In June 1942, Willy was taken to the Krakow-Plaszow labour camp. From there he was sent to Ostrowiec, then Auschwitz-Birkenau, Sachsenhausen, and later to a sub-camp of Dachau. Willy's parents, sister and grandmother were murdered at the extermination camp of Belzec. When he was liberated, Willy, who was 180cm tall, weighed only 38 kilos. This is his account of liberation from Dachau:

It was late afternoon on 29 April 1945 when US troops arrived in Dachau. I could hear screams: 'We are free! We are free!' I had survived but couldn't fully understand the situation. I was very sick and, in a way, I didn't care.

We started to get bigger bread rations. The soup was thick with plenty of meat and vegetables, but I ate with my eyes only, as my illness didn't let me eat. I was running to the toilet every hour, passing a little fluid and some blood, yet I had no medical help. I knew I was liberated but still couldn't believe it and, to this day, I can't understand how it is possible to know you are free and yet not believe in your freedom!

About three days after liberation, some US army medical staff arrived in our barrack to take the sick by ambulance to a makeshift hospital. I had done my best to evade them, but I had to run to the toilet. On the way back I was stopped and had to give my name and prisoner number – 127666. I started to worry about why they had taken my number. When they came for me later I protested that I was okay and fit for work. Later on, when my name and number were called, I tried to hide. I was found and two soldiers eased me on to a stretcher and I was taken to an ambulance, where



Working as an interpreter for the US Armed Forces, Dachau 1946

there were already three others. I was very worried. It was a short ride to a tent where we were taken inside. There were others lying on stretchers and some had been taken behind a canvas curtain. I was shaking with fear. Were we to be fodder for experiments?

My turn came to be taken behind the curtain. There I saw a table and on top was a pinkish-looking hose with a kind of showerhead. There were two men in surgical gowns and masks and I couldn't see their faces. I was laid on the table and they started to undress me. My fear was unbelievable. I was holding my pot, which I used for soup or water, and when I was naked they tried to take it from my hands. They were stronger than I was and they removed the pot from my hands. I burst out crying and thought: 'This is the end. Now they are going to kill me!'

I closed my eyes. Suddenly I felt warm water. The feeling was indescribable. It was wonderful! Until this day I can't find the proper words for this feeling. For months I hadn't had a shower, let alone a wash, and now this wonderful, warm water. I was washed by two men and when they had finished, I strained my memory to ask in English for a bit more water. I finally managed, half in English and half in German, and they obliged. I was then given a beautiful, sweet-smelling towel. They helped me to dry myself and then sprayed me with DDT to kill off the lice. I was given brand new flannel pyjamas. I still remember the narrow stripes of pink, blue and cream. I was convinced that yes, I had been liberated and now I was in Paradise.



Certificate of liberation from Dachau Concentration Camp

# Journey to the killing fields with Patrick Desbois

Debbie Wiener

I am on a trip with Father Patrick Desbois and some of his team of young scholars as well as about 25 others, mainly from Paris, but some from elsewhere in France or other French-speaking places.

It has been a long day. In truth it has been a long two days.

Two days prior to this we had flown from Paris to Krakow. We spent an afternoon in Krakow visiting the relics, the ghosts of that once vibrant community, my father's home, my grandfather's home, and my grandmother's. My aunt's home. My ancestors' home. The following day we visited Auschwitz.

But this day we left Krakow early, at 7.30, and travelled for five hours through the gorgeous Polish scenery to the horror of Belzec. Belzec, a little town in the east, almost in the Ukraine. On a train line. The Nazis liked to build their camps next to train lines, as that way they could more easily transport their victims. Belzec, where I believe my grandparents ended up. Belzec is an enormous mass grave. The machinery of death was destroyed, but now there is a huge area marking the site where 500,000 or so were murdered. There is a huge stone perimeter, within which are larger and smaller boulders. The large boulders represent a mass grave. There are many of them. On the perimeter are etched the names of the towns from which the Jews were deported and the dates of each transport.

I search. I find. Tarnow 1942.

Today it is 29 March 2011. It is deepening dusk and the soft grey air is increasingly cold. We are in the Ukraine, just outside the village of Borowe which itself is very close to the little town of Rawa-Ruska. We have driven along what passes for a road, and now we wait at the side of an overgrown field. Presently our interpreter Svetlana arrives, then an old lady, then an old man. The old lady has a sweet, careworn face and wears a headscarf in the traditional Eastern European manner. She lived at the end of the road, she said, and she saw the Jews being driven here. They were forced to get undressed at this spot, at the edge of the field, and then they had to run through the field. They had to stand at the edge of the pit. There they were shot. About 1500 of them. Men, women and children. Naked. The earth moved, she said, for three days afterwards. The man spoke next. His father owned horses and they were requisitioned by the Germans to pull the lorries in which the Jews were transported.

We stand in the increasing cold and darkness, listening, then we move through the undergrowth towards the

grave. These days, it is covered with trees and shrubs and it is difficult to find one's way without falling, especially in the dark. There are a couple of torches to help us. Then we reach a small area around which there is a stone perimeter and a Magen David etched into a stone. The area that we see is about half the size of the grave. This is where the 1500 Jews from Borowe lie. This is our first mass grave. It haunts us, this silent grave where they lie, in the dark and the cold, in a field in the Ukraine. In truth it is not silent for I hear them keening, the voices of the young and the old, the mothers and fathers and children. Murdered. Massacred. Pushed, shot into graves, some yet living. Living until, three days later, the earth stops moving. Finally ...

After our visit to Borowe, we stop at the gates to the camp of Rawa-Ruska where Father Desbois' grandfather was interned. It was in Rawa-Ruska back in the days of the Solidarity movement that Father Desbois, a young priest, first learned who 'the others' about whom his grandfather had spoken were. Bad for us, he had said, but worse for 'the others'. The others were the Jews. Murdered in mass graves.

We stop and eat herrings and other pickled fish at a roadside café. We drink too much vodka. I drink too much vodka. It has been a long day. We arrive in Lvov at about 1:30am.

The next day we visit the forest of Lisinitchi. It is a beautiful day, cold but sunny. There is a park with little hills, trees and paths winding their way through it. This is the forest; this is the site of mass graves. Every indentation in the field marks a mass grave. There is no memorial to the Jews. The local inhabitants walk and stroll and



*Father Desbois and a witness to the killings in Lisinitchi*





*Mass graves in Belzec*

run and throw their rubbish into this area. It is but a few kilometres outside Lvov, just off a main road. We meet an old man who lives in a shack nearby. He was a child on his way to school when he saw the Germans round up the Jews, bring them here to the edge of the forest, force them to undress and then run to the pits. They were shot. The Jews of Lvov were regularly shot and buried here in mass graves. Here too the earth moved for three days afterwards.

Next we go to Busk, an hour or so away. We drive through part of it, then we park and walk through the village. We see chickens and geese walking the streets, we see the wells in the front gardens, old peasants going about their daily tasks. Eventually at the end of the village, up on a small hill, is what is left of the Jewish cemetery. Here too we meet witnesses. This village was half Jewish before the war. The Jews were brought here and shot. We see the indentations in the fields. We see where the pits were. The mass graves. The *matzevot* here are broken and largely destroyed.

As one walks around trying not to walk on the graves, lost in the bucolic tranquility, one can wonder but fail to comprehend. And, as Father Desbois said to us when we were en route to Belzec, they too could not have understood, could not have foreseen, for there was nothing for them to see. No gates, no fences, no wires. Nothing to alert them to their impending fate. As one stands amidst the remnants of the cemetery, one half expects Tevye to come along, holding his horse's reins, singing. The river flows peacefully, perhaps a hundred metres away from where we stand. One can see clearly the Jews going there for *Tashlich*, one can see the *shtetl* life right before one's eyes. It is here now, it was there then, only now there are no Jews left, only the bones and the ashes and destroyed gravestones.

Our last stop. We travel further through the golden landscape, quite different from the green hills and forests of Poland. We drive through more villages and up into the hills and come to the end of a road. After a long walk, in the middle of a wood is another mass grave. Olesko. Apparently about 500 or so were killed here. Father Desbois says to us to be careful where we move, as the graves are everywhere. There are bones he says, be careful. Someone pokes about with a twig. Something is pulled up. It is teeth. A bullet is found.

This is the Holocaust by Bullets.

In the west the Jews were herded into camps and gassed. In the east, in the killing fields of the Ukraine, and of Belarus, and indeed large parts of Poland, the Jews were

forced to dig pits and were shot. No memorials exist for the overwhelming majority of these victims.

The morning of our departure we have free, so I visit the remaining *shul* in Lvov. It has been restored. There are now, I am told, about 3000 Jews in Lvov. Before the war there were over 100,000. The Golden Rose Synagogue in the heart of the old town was blown up by the Nazis, and all that is left now is a piece of wall in an overgrown car park.

In Warsaw I finish my research at the Jewish Historical Institute and I find a book about three girls who survive a mass grave. They are each too frightened to move for some time, for fear the Germans will return and shoot again. One has her hand over her daughter's head. The daughter dies and the mother survives. After some time they each scramble out of the pit, naked, and run to the trees.

They manage to scrounge some food and clothes and two survive. Survive the Holocaust by Bullets.

In the words of Martin Niemöller: 'First they came for the communists, and I didn't speak out because I wasn't a communist. Then they came for the trade unionists, and I didn't speak out because I wasn't a trade unionist. Then they came for the Jews, and I didn't speak out because I wasn't a Jew. Then they came for me and there was no one left to speak out for me.' However, now there is a man who does speak out. That man is Father Patrick Desbois who has dedicated his life to documenting the work of the *Einsatzgruppen*. Father Desbois works with a small group of enthusiastic young scholars who study the archives and ascertain where each killing site was. They then go and interview the witnesses, who were, for the most part, children at the time.

Although to the best of my knowledge none of my family was killed by the *Einsatzgruppen*, the more I read about Father Desbois and his work, the more I instinctively knew I had to go on the trip. I had to meet him and see what it is he does. He has been honoured the world over.

*Debbie Wiener is a Barrister and Chairperson of the Jewish Taskforce Against Family Violence. She has a special interest in Holocaust and Genocide Studies.*



*Debbie Wiener in Busk*

# Conspiracy in Paris, November 1938: medical fraud as a pretext for the *Kristallnacht* pogrom

George Weisz

In October 1938 the authorities in the German Reich rounded up Polish and stateless Jews – the so-called ‘Poland Aktion’ – and transported them to the Polish border. Expelled by Germany and rejected by Poland, some 7,000 deportees remained in no-man’s-land; they were exposed to appallingly unhygienic conditions, hunger and a harsh climate. Intending to protest the injustice done to his parents in Germany, 17-year-old Herschel Grynszpan, residing in Paris, entered the German Embassy on 7 November. He asked to see the legation secretary with a ‘secret document’, and shot him. The victim’s name was Baron Ernst vom Rath. This act led to the first nationwide anti-Jewish pogrom in Germany, and for many historians it represents the first step in the Final Solution of the ‘Jewish problem’ in Europe.

Herschel Feivel Grynszpan was born in Hanover in 1921 of Polish Jewish parents. By the mid-1930s, he could find no work, not even in farming. He was sent to an uncle in Paris, but could not obtain a resident permit or work card. He was desperate, wandering the streets and visiting cafes and dance clubs in a suburb frequented by the gay community. It is not clear whether Grynszpan was himself homosexual. His trial was prepared first in Paris, but after the 1940 occupation, the Nazis intended to bring Grynszpan to trial in Germany. However, this trial had to be abandoned, as it was feared that Grynszpan may have disclosed the homosexuality of the German secretary. Herschel’s fate in Sachsenhausen camp has remained unknown.

Vom Rath was born in Frankfurt in 1909. He graduated in law in Berlin at the age of 21 and was dispatched to India, where he contracted tuberculosis of the lungs, but recuperated in Germany. He joined the Nazi Party in 1932. During 1935–1936, while in Berlin, he contracted a homosexually transmitted infectious disease. To avoid discovery, he sought treatment from a female Jewish doctor, Dr Sarella Pomeranz. In 1938, apparently recovered from both illnesses, he was sent to the Embassy in Paris, as third legation secretary. He was devoted to work and privately associated with the gay community. His disappointment with the Nazi regime, and possible co-operation with the French espionage, was suspected.



Baron Ernst vom Rath



Source: U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of Morris Rosen

Portrait of Herschel Grynszpan taken in 1938 after his arrest for the assassination of a German diplomat.

Immediately after he was shot by Grynszpan, vom Rath was taken to a nearby hospital in a desperate condition. An x-ray of his abdomen was taken before emergency surgery and the brief hand-written note by the operating surgeon, dated November 7, 1938 describes ‘a wound of the right upper thorax: projectile in the right shoulder and a wound in the left flank, projectile in front of 10th dorsal (vertebra).’ The surgeon’s notes on the operation state: ‘Excision of the spleen and suture of double perforation of stomach.’ Following blood transfusions and emergency surgery, vom Rath was stabilised and awake the next morning, sitting up and talking.

At this stage a third participant appeared. His name was Dr Karl Brandt, who has only been recognised recently as a co-conspirator in vom Rath’s death. Brandt was born in 1904 in Mulhouse, Alsace-Lorraine. He studied medicine with specific interests in trauma and infectious diseases (TB). He graduated in 1928 and furthered his career in a general surgical unit, becoming head of the University Surgical Clinic in Berlin in 1935. Dr Brandt had joined the Nazi party in 1932, the SA in 1933 and the Waffen SS in 1934. With the rank of Major General, he became Reich’s Commissioner for Health and Sanitation. Being appointed by the Fuehrer as his personal physician, Dr Brandt was dispatched overnight to Paris to attend to vom Rath in November 1938.

On the day after surgery, Dr Brandt examined the victim and announced that his injuries were extensive. The diagnosis of extensive abdominal tuberculosis was not disclosed. Two days after the shooting, the patient deteriorated rapidly, went into a coma at 3:00 pm and succumbed at 4:30 pm, some 55 hours after having been shot. Questions have been raised about his deterioration,



and the suggestion that he was intentionally mismanaged by Dr Brandt was repeatedly raised.

The interpretation of vom Rath's injuries by different commentators has varied. It was clear that there were no exit wounds for the bullets and there was no record of removal of the bullets. The conclusion I have reached relies on the early medical description, given by the French Dr Cuenot, the first to suggest injury to the pancreas.

The operative and autopsy documents that I obtained from the German National Archives are essential to my analysis. They state that one bullet was fired into the left side of vom Rath's lower rib cage. It split an enlarged (tuberculous) spleen, went through the front wall and then the back wall of the stomach. The bleeding spleen was removed and the holes in the stomach were sutured. Where could the bullet finally have lodged? The near-horizontal line of abdominal bullet penetration would end up in the left half of the pancreas and x-ray has shown the location of the bullet.

The analysis of the management of this patient is based on the fact that the fundamental management of abdominal gunshot injury would have been well known before the First World War. It is to be expected that Dr Brandt would have been acquainted with the well-publicised approach to abdominal injuries, such as described in April 1900 by the German surgeon Boeckel (*Report of XIII Congress Internationale de Medicin et Chirurgie Abdominale*) and even more so, with the work of another German surgeon, Borchardt, published in 1904 in the *Berliner Klinische Wochenschrift*, both dealing with 'gun-shot wounds to the pancreas'.

The damaged pancreas requires partial or total removal, with drainage of the space behind the stomach, that is the retro-peritoneal space of the abdomen. There is no record of any drainage being put in place and no record of the removal of any bullet. Removal of even a part of the pancreas would not have been possible during an operation starting at 10:30am and 'running before noon'. The diagnosis of tuberculosis of the stomach and intestine was made by Dr Brandt on the day after the operation, and tacitly approved by the two participating French doctors, surgeon Baumgartner and blood transfusion specialist Louis Jube.

This undisclosed diagnosis of tuberculosis was revealed by Dr Brandt only in July 1941, at a table talk with a high-ranking diplomat in the Foreign Ministry, Otto Brautigam. It was revealed to the public in Brautigam's autobiography only in 1968 when he stated: 'Dr Brandt discovered when he examined vom Rath on 8 November 1938, his medical condition to be also tuberculous. It became clear to all, including the French medical team, that if vom Rath were to die, this would be due partly to his tuberculosis, and not simply to the gunshot wounds, which would not necessarily have killed him.'

Apart from hiding the diagnosis of tuberculosis, it is of particular interest that Dr Brandt did not mention the injured pancreas with probable resulting diabetes anywhere – neither in the communication sent to Berlin, nor in his later confession in 1941. Surgery and insulin therapy would have been life-saving for someone in vom Rath's situation and both were available in 1938.

The idea of operating on vom Rath at the well-equipped American Hospital in Neuilly, Paris, was raised immediately after the shooting. Because vom Rath was bleeding extensively, emergency removal of the spleen was performed in the nearer (gynaecological) Alma Hospital. However, once vom Rath's blood loss was

replaced and his general condition had returned to normal, why was the first procedure not followed with a more extensive intervention, paying attention to the pancreas, in an appropriate academic surgical centre?

Dr Brandt, after a phone call with Berlin, decided not to make the diagnosis of tuberculosis public, because it would have 'disturbed the causal link between the shots which had been fired by a Jew and the death of vom Rath'. It is suggested that the same political decision made on the tuberculosis disclosure would also apply to any other pathology contributing to the victim's death.

The proof of the injuries that I found came from Wolfgang Diewerge, another high-ranking Nazi official, published in 1939 in a Nazi Party magazine, which contained the autopsy description. The cause of death was established by Dr Charles Paul, a forensic pathologist, based on his autopsy of 9 November, performed on behalf of the Court de Seine, Paris. His report states: 'The first bullet went over the right side of the thorax and lodged in the right shoulder. This event did not contribute to the death. The second bullet entered the abdomen through the rib cage, hit the spleen, and lodged in the pancreas and diaphragm. This was the cause of the death.'

It became clear that the projectile was not removed, the damaged pancreas tissue was not excised and no insulin was administered. This case is one of obvious medical negligence that would not be defensible in court.

Based on the above surgical analysis, it seems clear that the Nazi regime had no interest in saving vom Rath's life. A successful assassination by a Jew was of far greater propaganda value than a mere attempted assassination. The criminal response to a compatriot's shooting was determined on the one hand by the Nazi decision to sacrifice him for his three sins – homosexuality, treatment by a Jewish physician and being suspected of spying – and on the other hand by officially making him a martyr, using his assassination as a pretext for the 'spontaneous' anti-Jewish pogrom of *Kristallnacht*.

It is indeed surprising that Dr Karl Brandt, who was ready in his early career to volunteer for missionary work with Dr Schweitzer in Africa, became the head of the Nazi euthanasia program in 1939. At Nuremberg he stated: '... the demands of the society are placed above every individual human being ...' Brandt stands accused of betraying everything sacred in medicine by covering up and falsifying medical information, deliberately neglecting the proper treatment of his compatriot and, inadvertently, also offering a pretext for a nationwide pogrom. At the post-war Nuremberg Trials, Dr Brandt was convicted of crimes against humanity, for participation in medical crimes as head of the euthanasia program, and for being

responsible for medical experimentation in the Nazi camps. He was executed in 1947. His direct role in Ernst vom Rath's death was not examined at his trial.

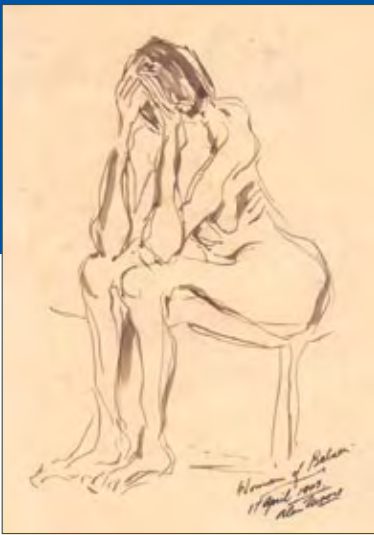
*Dr George M Weisz, MD, FRACS, BA, MA is an orthopaedic surgeon and medical historian who lives in Sydney. He spoke at the Jewish Holocaust Centre in May. This is an edited version of an article published in the Israel Medical Association Journal, May 2011.*



*Dr George Weisz*

# 'Woman of Belsen'

Saba Feniger



*'Woman of Belsen'*  
Artist Alan Moore,  
Australian War Artist  
1945

**H**ow did 'Woman of Belsen', the drawing on the cover of the last edition of *Centre News*, come into the Jewish Holocaust Centre's possession? This is the story behind this valuable work by a famous Australian war artist.

In 1995 the Centre was preparing to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of World War II. Gathering exhibits for an extensive display was the easy part. It was not so easy to obtain the names of Melbourne's ex-serving members of the liberating Armed Forces. We felt that their presence would play an important role in the planned event.

We decided to hold the celebration in two parts: 'We Remember Liberation – Part 1', to be held in January, would commemorate the liberation of Auschwitz and other camps; and 'We Remember Liberation – Part 2', to be held in May, would commemorate the end of war in Europe.

We were aware that there were ex-Soviet Army servicemen in Melbourne who were involved in the liberation of the concentration camps. Other ex-servicemen, however, were more difficult to find.

We somehow managed to contact Alan Moore who served as a war artist with the British Forces and was with them when they liberated Bergen Belsen. Unfortunately for us, he was joining his former colleagues for the celebrations in Britain in May. He agreed, however, to join us at the Centre for 'We Remember Liberation – Part 1'.

We underestimated the popularity of the function in January and were forced to refuse entry to many because of the danger of overcrowding. A video, especially made

for the occasion, was shown and there were some moving speeches.

Our guests of honour were the ex-Soviet servicemen who were invited to face the audience, proudly displaying the many medals on their chests. Each soldier was greeted by a Holocaust survivor who presented him with a red rose and a card. It was a very moving commemoration.

The other guest of honour was Alan Moore. Helen Schon, a survivor of Belsen, presented Mr Moore with a silver cup which she had had engraved. It was her personal thanks for her liberation. The liberator and survivor remembered each other from that fateful day, 17 April 1945. On that day, after realising that the newly arrived soldiers and officers were their liberators, an emaciated Helen Schon did not leave the sight of the officer who was drawing the unfolding horror. She followed him step by step as he sketched and photographed the important evidence of Nazi atrocities. Many years later, Helen Schon and Alan Moore made contact again in Australia, and have kept in touch ever since.



Saba Feniger

Alan Moore promised to return to Melbourne with some of his work. True to his word, he came a few weeks later, and donated the drawing 'Woman in Belsen', as well as some of his photographs. We displayed these works during 'We Remember Liberation – Part 2.' These precious originals constitute a small but extremely important part of the Centre's archival collection.

A large collection of Alan Moore's drawings and photographs of World War II are kept at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra.

*Saba Feniger was Honorary Curator of the Jewish Holocaust Centre from 1985 until 2001, maintaining and updating the existing permanent collection as well as curating many temporary exhibitions.*

## Holocaust Testimonies Project

If you would like to give your testimony or know of someone who is interested in giving a testimony, we are keen to hear from you.

Call Phillip Maisel on  
**(03) 9528 1985** or email:  
[testimonies@jhc.org.au](mailto:testimonies@jhc.org.au).





# Three generations of Goldbergs on the March of the Living



*Student March of the Living 2011, with Daniel and Abram Goldberg far left*

In April 2011, Abram, Charlie and Daniel Goldberg left Melbourne with the Australian contingent to participate in the Student March of the Living. It was Abram's seventh visit to Poland since the end of the Second World War. Abram was there as a representative of Holocaust survivors, Charlie – his son – to look after logistics, and Daniel – his grandson – as a student participant. But what was so special was that three generations of Goldbergs were able to return to Abram's birthplace together and remember his family's past.

Abram was born in Lodz and first went back there after he was liberated in 1945, returning two years later to meet his sister. In 1996 he visited Poland accompanied for the first time by his family – his wife, Cesia, and his two children, Charlie and Helen. The main reason for the visit was to be there when the widow of Abram's childhood friend, Abram Morgenthaler, known as Mumek, scattered his ashes at Birkenau Crematorium II on 23 August, as requested by Mumek in his will. Mumek had chosen that particular day, as on 23 August 1944 the Lodz Ghetto was liquidated and its inhabitants – including Mumek, his mother and his brother – were transported to Auschwitz. It proved to be a very emotional journey for the Goldbergs, especially as Cesia realised, while they were standing at the site of Birkenau II, that she was transported to Birkenau on that day with her mother, and that too was the day on which her mother was murdered.



*(l-r) Charlie, Abram and Daniel Goldberg*

In 2001 Abram went back to Poland with Helen and her children, and promised he would return with Charlie's son, Daniel. So, this year, as Daniel is in Year 11, the year level in which students are permitted to attend the March of the Living, grandfather, father and son decided to make the journey together.

The contingent of 60 Australian students arrived in Warsaw and went straight to Lodz. It was an action-packed and emotional day, visiting the site of the ghetto, the building which served as the headquarters of the *Schutzpolizei* (Gestapo ghetto guards), the apartment block in which Abram grew up before the war, and the Jewish cemetery. They also visited the site where Mordechai Chaim Rumkowski, head of the *Judenrat* of the Lodz Ghetto, delivered his infamous 'Give Me Your Children' speech, pleading with Jews in the ghetto to give up their children, as well as the old and sick, so that others might survive. Abram addressed the group at this site, recalling his memories of that time. The visit to Lodz ended with a visit to Radegast, the former railway station just outside the Lodz Ghetto, which was the staging point for transportation to the Auschwitz death camps, and which is now a museum.



*Memorial: Auschwitz-Birkenau*

As Lodz was Abram's birthplace, that day was a particularly emotional one for him, Charlie and Daniel. So too was the time they spent in Warsaw, Krakow and the Majdanek concentration camp, not to mention the finale of the program – the visit to Israel for *Yom HaZikaron* (Memorial Day for Israel's Fallen) and *Yom Ha'Atzmaut* (Israel Independence Day). Particularly harrowing, especially for the students, was

their visit to the Belzec extermination camp. Abram and Charlie had visited Belzec in 1996, when there was nothing on the site but a few small monuments. Today there is a large memorial, constructed in 2004. It includes a 'tube' through the cemetery area, symbolic of the final journey of victims on their way to the gas chambers, and a hall with amazing acoustics, symbolic of the gas chambers.

The March of the Living took place on *Yom Hashoah* (Holocaust Memorial Day), when the 8000 participating students marched from Auschwitz to Birkenau, Abram and Daniel marching hand-in-hand. For Abram, the March is symbolic of the survival of the Jewish people. As he said: 'Despite what happened to us, we were able to march as three generations. It is not just a victory for the Jewish community, but also a victory for mankind.'

# Presentation of Aboriginal artwork to the Jewish Holocaust Centre

Viv Parry

**V**iv Parry, Vice President of the Child Survivors of the Holocaust, volunteers at Galiamble Men's Recovery Centre, a residential drug and alcohol rehabilitation service primarily for Aboriginal men. Working with Galiamble's manager Mark Hammersley, Viv arranged a visit to the Jewish Holocaust Centre, primarily to acquaint program participants with the history of William Cooper, the indigenous Australian who led a protest against *Kristallnacht* to the German Consulate in Melbourne in 1938. Before the visit, Viv gave participants an overview of the Holocaust and described the impact on her own family in Berlin.

The Galiamble participants were greatly moved by their visit. Stephen Harrison, who had himself experienced the tragedy and sorrow of the 'Stolen Generation', was particularly affected and offered to paint a picture expressing his feelings about the visit. The resulting painting depicts outstretched arms tattooed with

numbers. The arms are surrounded by barbed wire and in the centre is an image of a man trapped behind bars. On the canvas is the message: 'I can't believe what it would be like to live without family ... mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters.'

Stephen Harrison presented his moving and powerful painting at a ceremony at the Centre in May. Centre President Pauline Rockman, in accepting the painting, confirmed the deep respect and affection between the Jewish community and the Aboriginal people.

The painting can be viewed at the Jewish Holocaust Centre during opening hours.



*Stephen Harrison presents his painting to Pauline Rockman OAM*

# Reflections of an Austrian Holocaust Memorial Servant

Sebastian Hausleitner



*Sebastian Hausleitner*

*The Austrian Holocaust Memorial Service is an alternative to Austria's compulsory national military service, providing participants with the opportunity to serve at major Holocaust memorial institutions in 23 countries worldwide. Sebastian has just completed his internship at the Jewish Holocaust Centre in Melbourne.*

**W**hen I made the decision to undertake my civil service abroad, and thus come into daily contact with Holocaust survivors, I was expecting to hear considerable anger towards and criticism of Austria and Germany. What I found, however, was radically different. While the survivors of the Holocaust at the Centre spoke about their difficult experiences and the acts of the Nazis, they also spoke positively about the rich cultures of Austria and Germany. This came as a complete surprise to me, given the horrific deeds perpetrated against these survivors and their

friends and families during the Holocaust. I often heard, 'I don't hate the Germans or the Austrians but I am not able to forgive the Nazis for what they did. We all know the consequences of hatred.'

I was very impressed when I first visited the Centre, not only because it is a very interesting organisation, but also because of the incredible people I found there. Everyone has been very kind to me and has tried to help me wherever they could. Flying to the other side of the world, I was made to feel at home.

One of the many significant projects I undertook was to catalogue pictures of children who perished in the Holocaust. One picture – the picture of a child sitting on a rocking horse – struck me and I began to smile. But then I started to read the text accompanying the picture, one I shall never forget. This child was just six years old when he was murdered.

I will never understand the kind of people who are able to kill innocent children. What leads one to do such things? It is incredibly sad, to say the least, to see what people are capable of. We need to work hard to ensure that such things never happen again. Respect for humankind, for the cultures of others, and the elimination of hatred are some of the critical messages taught at the Jewish Holocaust Centre.

I am very grateful and appreciative for the many experiences I have had at the Centre, especially my conversations with the survivors. It makes me humble to think of the privileged life I enjoy and emphasises for me the need to fight to ensure that future generations are able to enjoy a life of freedom and peace.



# Reflections of (and on) the past: the JHC Film Club

Adam Brown



Lena Fiszman and Graeme Kinross-Smith

**A**n ever-expanding body of writing has explored the portrayal of the Holocaust and other genocides on the screen. Film has had – and continues to have – a vast impact on collective memories; indeed, cinematic works reveal as much about the context in which they were produced as the history they claim to represent. In this way, films function not only as refractions of the past, but also mirrors of the present.



Stephanie Tassone

The JHC (Jewish Holocaust Centre) Film Club was co-launched by the Jewish Holocaust Centre and Deakin University in April 2011, following an immensely successful screening and panel discussion of the documentary *Facing Arthur* (2002), to mark Harmony Day. The aim of the Film Club is to watch and exchange ideas on films dealing with the Holocaust, other

genocides and human rights issues.

The Film Club has showcased works that are particularly original, influential, innovative or controversial – films that go beyond ‘conventional’ Holocaust and genocide narratives. Early screenings included the evocative representation of collaboration in wartime Paris in Joseph Losey’s French thriller *Mr Klein* (1976); Daniel Anker’s *Imaginary Witness: Hollywood and the Holocaust* (2004), a documentary exploring the history of Holocaust cinema; the depiction of the ethical dilemma confronting a Catholic priest persecuted by the Nazis in *The Ninth Day* (2004); the surviving fragments of Oscar Apfel’s very early genocide film *Ravished Armenia* (1919); and Michael Verhoeven’s tragi-comedy about the deportation of Hungarian Jews, *My Mother’s Courage* (1995). Many more exciting events are planned.

Following each screening, a panel of speakers offers personal reflections and insights on the films viewed, combining the perspectives of Holocaust survivors, scholars researching the subjects on which the films focus, and other interested members of the community. Audience discussion has resulted in absorbing and lively debate over issues as diverse as the nature of Jewish identity, Hollywood’s treatment of the past, the role(s) of Christianity in the Holocaust, women’s experiences under Nazism, and many more crucial issues that continue to be played out on our screens and which have an impact on present-day society.

From the introduction of the interactive touch-screen Storypod technology in its museum, to the Centre’s rejuvenated website and engagement with social media such as *YouTube* and *Facebook*, screens continue to play a prominent role in the work of the Jewish Holocaust Centre. The JHC Film Club promises to offer an important contribution to this, providing a comfortable and friendly environment for all interested visitors to see and discuss films that are often otherwise difficult to view. Screenings are held on the last Thursday evening of every month, with entry by donation. We look forward to seeing you at our monthly gatherings!



Dr Adam Brown

*Dr Adam Brown is a Lecturer in Media, Communication and Public Relations at Deakin University, who wrote his PhD thesis on Holocaust representation. He co-authored the study<sup>2</sup> Communication, New Media and Everyday Life (2011), and is currently researching the areas of children’s television, new media in museums, and Holocaust film.*



# Auschwitz shoes

Dmetri Kakmi



Dmetri Kakmi

**S**hoes, primarily, are about function. Protection and comfort of the human foot comes first. Fashion, decoration, design is secondary, an attribute of affluence and assurance. Civilizations at work.

As a boy in Turkey, I had one pair of shoes to wear all year round. They had holes in them and, despite my mother's efforts, they were often scuffed. Now that I live in Australia, I own fourteen pairs of shoes, not counting the slippers and sandals. Once a level of wealth is attained, the shoe moves out of primary function into abstraction: self-expression, vanity, declaration, status. That's why when we want to show ourselves to our best advantage, we say 'put your best foot forward'. Certain types will notice if your shoes are polished or dirty. You will be judged on the look of your shoes, what they convey about you and your attitude towards your possessions and your body. That's what's known as image.

As time passes, a well-worn shoe attains personality, a certain humanity. Leather is skin. As any shoemaker worth his salt will tell you, leather is alive even though it is no longer attached to its source. You have to care for leather, buff and polish, if it is to retain its lustre and vitality. That's why, over time, leather takes on the qualities, the features and peculiarities of the wearer's foot. Leather becomes a topography of the heel, the toes, the nails, the arch, the muscles and bones. From that point on, the shoe becomes a part of the body, no longer separate. It becomes an extension of the person whose foot lives for several hours a day inside that shoe. The minute you say a shoe fits like a glove, a second skin, that it is a pleasure to slip into, a pleasure to walk in, it has become a part of you. And you a part of it.

Shoes are the most human of all the items we attach to the body. More so than clothes. Cast-off shoes, piled up together, as they are in Auschwitz, are poignant reminders. Heaped together, an indiscriminate mass, shoes are an obscenity, a denial. Seen like that they are almost as appalling as bodies in a mass grave. An attempt has been

made to erase form, individuality. Even so the personality of the wearer asserts itself in phantasmal guise. How can this be? Two reasons. First, shoes are as intimate as underwear. That's why fetishists attach lust and desire to them. Second, shoes are a mode of transport. Like the car or the tram, they speak of human endeavour and motion. A walking shoe shows possibility, determination, focus, direction. A walking shoe tells us that it is attached to a living entity, a human being with wants, desires, a family history. The shoe is going somewhere. Soon it will be some place else and it will be participating in an activity that represents life.

Cast-off shoes, on the other hand, are a contradiction. I'm not speaking now of shoes that are carefully set aside for the night or the day. But cast-off shoes. Shoes whose silhouette has gone cold. Hundreds and thousands of shoes that are thrown willy-nilly atop each other and crushed. They have reached the end of their life. Their function has been erased. Cast-off shoes, as I say, hold a central contradiction. They speak of presence and absence. A worn down heel, a crushed vamp, a flattened or twisted strap, a broken lace, speak of a life that is over. They are as tombstones, repellent and attractive. The sight of them brings on unspeakable horror and unnamable sadness. We see in them the mass of humanity that has come and gone before us and whom we shall follow.

The oldest known leather shoe was discovered in Armenia. It is 5500 years old. It is made of a single piece of cowhide and laced with cord along seams at the front and back. When I saw a photograph of shoes in Auschwitz, I realised two things in quick succession. First, the shoes in Auschwitz and the 5500-year-old shoes from Armenia bear a resemblance. The leather cascades. They appear to be melting; they have a certain forlorn, decomposed air about them. It's as if they have lain eons in a peat bog, waiting to be unearthed; and in that time, they have transmogrified into a semblance of a shoe, human and inhuman. Recognisable and unrecognisable.

A shoe is like a face, care-worn and full of character. You can take each one in your hand and through reason deduce something of the man, woman or child who wore it. Seen *en masse* the shoes in Auschwitz are obscene. It's as if a jackboot has stomped on a familiar face and crushed its features. There is a complete lack of regard for human life in the way the shoes are cast aside, made to form a hill. This gesture tells us that whoever is responsible for this deed did not care. Behind these high walls, away from the world's eyes, empathy failed on a colossal level.

At the end of their lives cast-off and forgotten shoes are spectral reminders of the human tread. They are phantom feet. When worn, shoes move. When not worn a shoe, by definition, cannot move. But the promise remains in the object.

Looking at shoes in Auschwitz it's as if universal wrath has fallen on a foot and crushed the more than twenty-six bones, the thirty-three joints and more than one hundred muscles, tendons, and ligaments. The shoe is pulverised and layered in dust. Soon it will fall to pieces. It is crippled and will never walk again.

As a child I learned that the sole of a shoe must never face up. It is, in many cultures, an insult to god. Yet at Auschwitz many shoes are turned on their backs. The flat grey soles face the sky. What happened here, they say, is depraved.

*Dmetri Kakmi is a writer based in Melbourne, Australia. His book Mother Land was shortlisted for the New South Wales Premier's Literary Awards and has been published in Europe. Follow him on his blog: <http://dmetrik.blogspot.com/>*



# A Cartload of Shoes

By Abraham Sutzkever, Vilna Ghetto  
January 1943  
(translated by David G. Roskies)

The wheels hurry onward, onward.  
What do they carry?  
They carry a cartload  
Of shivering shoes.

The wagon like a canopy  
In the evening light;  
The shoes – clustered  
Like people in a dance.

A wedding, a holiday?  
Has something blinded my eyes?  
The shoes – I seem  
To recognise them.

The heels go tapping  
With a clatter and a din.  
From our old Vilna streets  
They drive us to Berlin.

I should not ask  
But something tears at my tongue  
Shoes, tell me the truth  
Where are they, the feet?

The feet from those boots  
With buttons like dew  
And here, where is the body  
And there, where is the bride?

Where is the child  
To fill those shoes  
Why has the bride  
Gone barefoot?

Through the slippers and the boots  
I see those my mother used to wear  
She kept them for the Sabbath  
Her favourite pair.

And the heels go tapping:  
With a clatter and a din,  
From our old Vilna streets  
They drive us to Berlin.

# I Saw a Mountain

By Moishe Shulstein  
(translated by Beatrice Stadler  
and Mindele Wajzman)

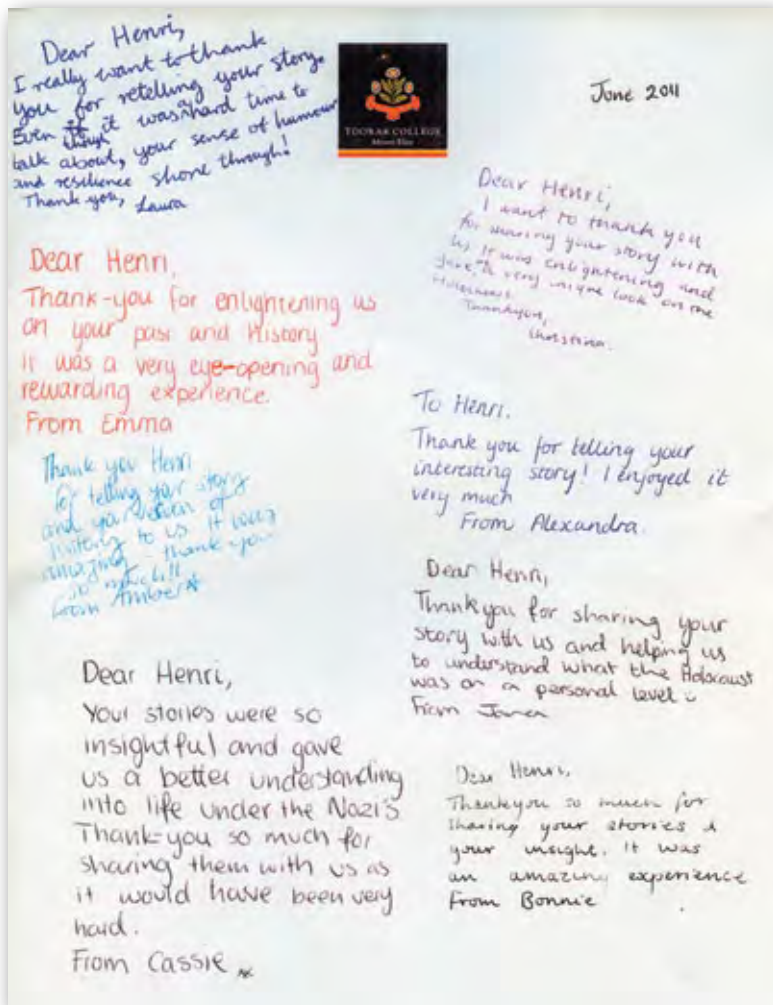
We are the shoes, we are the last witnesses.

We are the shoes from grandchildren  
and grandfathers,

From Prague, Paris and Amsterdam,

And because we are only made of fabric  
and leather

And not of blood and flesh, each one of us  
avoided the hellfire.





# Club JHC

Barbara Sacks

**N**ow in its fourth year, Club JHC continues to go from strength to strength. Our group of retired Jewish Holocaust Centre guides and volunteers continues to meet every second Thursday at the Kadimah for lunch, followed by a speaker or an outing. The meetings are interesting and thoroughly enjoyable!

So far this year we have been entertained by many wonderful people. We began with Abe Monester, a retired barrister who regaled us with excellent and often humorous stories from his career in Family Law. We also welcomed Lisa Buchner who manages the refugee support program at Jewish Aid. She told us of the wonderful work Jewish Aid does with refugees, teaching English, creating art works, playing sports and generally helping them to integrate into their local communities.

Neil Cole is the author of the play *The Trial of Adolph Eichmann*, which was performed at the Malthouse Theatre earlier this year. He explained his inspiration for the play, which interweaves the prosecution of Adolph Eichmann with the stories of two Holocaust survivors, Kitia Altman and Arnold Erlanger.

We heard from Vicki Davis, owner and creator of 'Vicki's Bickies', who brought us some of her delicious and decorative biscuit creations. She told us how she has followed her passion for food and is able to share it by employing refugees from a range of countries, including Sudan and India. Yiddish teacher Danielle Charak gave a moving talk about her childhood, when she was hidden by a non-Jewish family in Brussels. And Pamela Myer Warrender, the daughter of Sir Norman Myer and great-niece of Sidney Myer, gave a fascinating talk about her life growing up as a Myer, the establishment of Myer (formerly the Myer Emporium) and her involvement in chairing the Committee of Melbourne.



*Boat ride on the Yarra River*



*JHC Club members and volunteers at the Centre*

We always look forward to our outings, superbly arranged by Max Wald. On one particular outing we took in the gorgeous setting of the Alphington Boat House on the Yarra River. After lunch the owners of the Boat House treated us to a special dessert of delicious homemade scones with cream. Sonya Weisenberg and Pesia Helfenbaum led us in song and a good time was had by all. At our next outing we had lunch at the Elwood Beach House, where we enjoyed a spectacular view of the sea and the city.



*Club JHC members and volunteers at the Royal Botanic Gardens*

We saw the film *A Tickle in the Heart*, a heart-warming documentary about the Klezmer musicians, the Epstein Brothers. At another meeting Zvi Civins and Max Wald presented a slide show and talk about their trip to Spain and, in particular, 'Jewish Spain'. Their magnificent photos and compelling narrative left us feeling as though we had been there ourselves!

We still have more great events planned for the rest of the year. If you would like to join this stimulating group, you are more than welcome to do so. We even provide transport to and from the Centre. We welcome new members, including those who are still guiding or volunteering. Please contact Barbara Sacks on 0404 224 498 or 9596 9857 if you would like any further information.





(l-r) Alice Peer, Dr Harry Lew, Dr Howard Goldenberg,  
Dr Leah Kaminsky and Goldie Birch

**T**he Friends of the Holocaust Centre has continued to plan a series of interesting and enjoyable fund-raising functions on behalf of the Centre.

In June, a large audience was entertained at an evening function titled *The Pen is Mightier than the Scalpel – Three Medicos Reading their Stories*. Leah Kaminsky, family physician, award-winning author of *Stitching Things Together* and editor of *The Pen and the Stethoscope* anthology, read excerpts from her prose and poetry, recalling childhood relatives and painting scenes of Melbourne from times long since gone. Harry Lew, an ophthalmic surgeon, followed with a personal account of his family's harrowing experiences in Paris prior to, and after, the Second World War, related in his highly acclaimed book *The Stories our Parents Found too Painful to Tell*. He is also the author of several other works, among them *Horace Brodzky, In Search of Derwent Lees*, and *The Five Walking Sticks*. Finally, general

# Friends of the Jewish Holocaust Centre

## Elly Brooks

practitioner Howard Goldenberg spoke of his travels and his work with indigenous communities. He is the author of the highly successful memoir *My Father's Compass* and his more recent work, *Raft*, an intimate and candid account of his work as a doctor in dozens of remote communities. Howard, who has also run 38 marathons, compared life to a marathon – in his words, 'an undistinguished passage made rich by encounters along the way'.

As *Centre News* goes to press, we are finalising plans for three more functions. The first is an evening with award-winning actress Evelyn Krape, titled *The Many Faces of Eve: A Celebration of the Characters and Events in the Life of Evelyn Krape*. This will be followed by a public lecture in late August by celebrated author Tim Bonyhady, whose book *Good Living Street* follows the lives of three generations of women in his family, from patrons of the arts in pre-war Vienna to Holocaust refugees who made their home in Sydney.

On the afternoon of 16 October, Friends of the Jewish Holocaust Centre will hold a musical feast at the Caulfield Town Hall, featuring a show-band orchestra, and the 'Vocally Wild' 120-voice choir who will be representing Australia in an international choral competition in Italy later in the year.

To join the Friends of the Jewish Holocaust Centre and 'connect' with the Centre and support its work, call the Centre office on 9528 1985 for details.

## Help support the activities of the Centre by becoming a Friend

### FRIENDS OF THE JEWISH HOLOCAUST CENTRE MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM (2011—2012)

Title \_\_\_\_\_ First Name \_\_\_\_\_ Surname \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_ postcode \_\_\_\_\_  
 Daytime Contact Number \_\_\_\_\_ Mobile \_\_\_\_\_  
 E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

#### FRIENDS ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP

☐ \$25 Single    ☐ \$45 Family    ☐ \$15 Single Concession    \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ Tick here for Young Friends (under 35)    \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 DONATION (All donations over \$2 are tax deductible)    \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
**TOTAL AMOUNT**    \$ \_\_\_\_\_

#### PAYMENT DETAILS

☐ Cheque payable to: **Friends of the Jewish Holocaust Centre**  
 Credit Card: ☐ Visa    ☐ Mastercard    ☐ Diners    ☐ Amex  
 Card No:              
 Expiry Date: \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_  
 Cardholder Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Please send payment to:

**Friends of the Jewish Holocaust Centre**

**13-15 Selwyn Street,  
Elsternwick 3185**

Telephone: 9528 1985

Fax: 9528 3758

Email: friends@jhc.org.au

Website: www.jhc.org.au



*(l-r) Bronia Witorz, Sue and Phil Lewis at the Rabbi Michael Schudrich lecture*



*Lottie Felman and Victor Hecht at the Efraim Zuroff lecture*



*(l-r) Annette Cohen and Helen Leperere at the Efraim Zuroff lecture*



*George Weisz and Rona Zinger*



*(l-r) Suzie Nozik and Ruth Vogel*



*Rachel Croucher (seated) with (l-r) Abram Goldberg, Moishe Fiszman and Henri Korn*





*(l-r) Naomi Sampson, Sandra Korn and Petre Santry at the Child Survivors of the Holocaust Art Exhibition*



*(l-r) Irit Snir, Shaiké Snir and Henry Greener at the Child Survivors of the Holocaust Art Exhibition*



*Vivian Parry and Gillie Freeman at the Child Survivors of the Holocaust Art Exhibition*



*(l-r) Nicole Silberberg , Warren Fineberg and Judy Berman*



*(l-r) Helen Gardner and Marcia Silverman at the Stephen Smith lecture*

# The birthday party

Vicki Gordon OAM



In April I was invited to a birthday party as a 'surprise guest'. It was a unique party held in the home of Szaja Chaskiel. First of all, instead of the usual birthday cake there was rye bread, butter, schmaltz herring with onions, as well as some smoked salmon. I suspect the smoked salmon was a nod to Australian culture, as no one really touched it. Oh and most importantly, there was Scotch to wash it all down. There was a scattering of women, but they were merely appendages to the men, who were the main focus of this event. Of the ten or so men there, everyone was wishing one another 'Happy Birthday'. The 'Buchenwald Boys', as they are affectionately known, were all 66 this year, they explained to me. It was 66 years since their liberation at the Buchenwald concentration camp and they had been 'reborn' to begin a new life on 11 April 1945.

There was great warmth between all the 'boys', raucous laughter, some arguments, and each wanting to tell the other something. It was not hard to imagine how they would have been as young boys, as they almost slipped back into these roles when seated around the table. Some spoke of lost family members, some spoke of their own 'near misses' as they changed lines surreptitiously, or even changed their names to escape death. One said he knew nothing of Auschwitz until he arrived there; another said he had heard about the 'showers' and was surprised when he first arrived at the camp that his shower was water, not gas.

There was discussion about the memorial at the cemetery the day before. Some went and some didn't; some were criticised, and some claimed they had a 'valid excuse' for not being there. It seems politics even visit memorial ceremonies, and there were many opinions voiced.

Someone then asked the question about why there was a Warsaw Ghetto uprising, yet there was no similar uprising in Lodz. Some argued Lodz didn't have the leaders that were in Warsaw. Others argued against this, saying there was a very strong Bund movement in Lodz, and there were other strong personalities too. One person remarked wryly about the point of the discussion: Warsaw did and Lodz didn't, and there was nothing more to add!

Someone then began talking about Birkenau. Did everyone go through the selection or did some arrivals from some cities miss out? It appears that a recent book stated that there were some from a particular village that were processed differently and did not go through a selection.

'What does it matter what a book says! You were there, what do you remember?' 'I am not sure ... I don't think I went through a selection, I would have remembered that wouldn't I?' Maybe not...

Perhaps the most passion was raised when it was suggested that for the following year, each of the Buchewalders should invite their children and grandchildren to come and have a *l'chaim* with them at the birthday celebration. It was pointed out that as they were diminishing in numbers, it was important to involve the next generation to tell and retell the stories with them. Once again, some said they wouldn't come, that there was no interest. If they were interested wouldn't they have come till now? Others said it didn't matter who turned up. The obligation was on each of them to invite, and each individual could respond as they wished.

Leon then brought out some photocopied pages of a newspaper that was printed a few weeks after liberation. It seemed he was a master at finding relevant material on the internet, and was only too happy to share his 'latest find'. The paper had been written by hand, as there was no access to printing presses yet. There were photographs too, probably the first published pictures of Holocaust victims to circulate amongst the survivors.

And then the singing began: 'Come on Benny, sing for us that tune!' *Tumbalalaika*, the song of the resistance, even the 'football' song was sung, with sadness, fervour, laughter and melancholia, all rolled together with the mixing of the voices. Together they were able to piece together all the words, echoing the songs of their childhood and youth, swaying around a table 66 years later. Now it was easy to see them as young boys, all united by the power of music, each reflecting on where he had originally heard that song.

Reluctantly, I left after an hour, other commitments pressing upon me. It was a wonderful privilege to be invited and let in to witness the strong bond of this group. Their strength 66 years on was palpable; they were survivors, resilient and proud.

*Mazel tov* to the Buchenwald Boys on your 66<sup>th</sup> birthday and thank you for inviting me. You are all truly inspirational. May you continue to go from strength to strength. *Ad meah v'esrim!*

*Dr Vicki Gordon OAM is a clinical and forensic psychologist*

## Travel to the Ukraine, Lithuania and Poland in 2012

In honour of the 100th anniversary of the Kadimah, the Jewish Holocaust Centre (JHC) together with the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC), are planning a 12-day journey to the Ukraine, Lithuania and Poland in June/July 2012. 'Jewish life ... Eastern Europe' will involve travel to older Jewish communities, as well as to the myriad of Jewish renewal projects that are revitalising and rebuilding the Jewish communities of Eastern Europe.

There will be an information evening about this trip in November. Please contact the JHC to register your interest by phoning (03) 9528 1985, or emailing [admin@jhc.org.au](mailto:admin@jhc.org.au)



# Significance assessment of the Centre's Lodz Ghetto Collection

In June 2011 historian Dr Julie Fenley submitted a study entitled *Significance Assessment of the Jewish Holocaust Centre's Lodz Ghetto Collection*. The study, funded by Heritage Victoria, is the second Dr Fenley has done for the Centre. Her earlier study looked predominantly at textile items in the collection. This current report is part of an initiative throughout Australia to better understand the significance of items held in museum collections. It assists the Centre in making informed decisions about future collecting, research and interpretation in the museum.

The Centre has an interesting collection of items from the Lodz Ghetto. These items were donated by a number of survivors, with two collections in particular providing much of the material. The first collection was donated by Bono Wiener and Abram Goldberg, who buried two boxes of personal and public documents from the ghetto prior to its liquidation. After the war they were only able to locate one of these boxes, and from this they donated a range of interesting items, including identity cards, letters and official notices that were placed on the ghetto walls. Most significant are the posters from the final days of the ghetto, instructing Jews to assemble for relocation. They instruct Jews to come in families and bring a certain amount of luggage. This reveals the level of deceit from the Nazi officials, because in fact the Jews were being taken to camps where their luggage would be confiscated and men and women separated. Those deemed unfit to work were murdered.

A second collection contains items from Julian Scelwyn, whose father was a member of the administration of the Lodz Ghetto. His family's collection contains a range of interesting official documents. In addition to this, Jewish Holocaust Centre survivor guide Maria Lewit OAM has provided the Centre with a collection of material from her parents-in-law who were incarcerated in the ghetto, including photos of her father-in-law in his ghetto workplace.

Some items from our Lodz Ghetto collection are on display, and others will be rotated into the display



Poster instructing Jews to assemble for relocation in the final days of the Lodz Ghetto

throughout the coming years. Having a historian interview the donors and establish the provenance of the items is vital to our future operations. We have a number of plans for the collection, which will be developed if and when funding is secured. These include the creation of an online archive of some of the most significant items, so that via our website, the range of materials will be able to be viewed by interested people from all over the world. There is also the potential for a small publication highlighting the items and stories from our Melbourne Lodz Ghetto survivors.

Whilst we have significant material from the Holocaust from many different places, the quantity of original items from the Lodz Ghetto is greater than from other sites, so it is vital for us to understand it better. The Centre is extremely grateful to Dr Fenley for her comprehensive report and acknowledges and appreciates that most of her work was done voluntarily.

Don't miss the chance to become a

## Partner in Remembrance

through the Jewish Holocaust Centre Foundation to ensure the ongoing success of JHC.

Three levels are available, payable over five years.

All donations are fully tax deductible

<b>Gold Partner</b>	<b>\$18,000</b>
<b>Silver Partner</b>	<b>\$10,000</b>
<b>Bronze Partner</b>	<b>\$5,000</b>

Each 'Partner in Remembrance' will be acknowledged.

Further details are available from Helen Mahemoff, Chair of the Foundation

t: 9822 8080 or 0417 323 595

# The Chronicles of Camp Westerbork

Jayne Josem and Ann Kabillo

*The Jewish Holocaust Centre holds a manuscript entitled The Chronicles of Camp Westerbork in its collection. This story was compiled based on the audio recording from the donor, Doris Lissauer.*

Camp Westerbork was built by the Dutch Government in 1939 for German Jewish refugees who had fled Germany after the November 1938 *Kristallnacht* riots. Many crossed illegally into Holland, and those caught were sent back to Germany. Others, including the Lissauer family, left their hometown of Essen and went to Holland legally by means of a 'green paper'. However, even those with official papers were met at the border by police, taken off the train, and sent to various holding camps. The Lissauers were held in Rotterdam in the compound of the Hapag shipping line.

In August 1939 Jewish men were transferred to Westerbork to help build the camp. The women and children followed a few months later. Doris was around 12 years old at this time. Each barrack had a central eating area, with no hot water and no heating. Conditions were harsh in the freezing Dutch winters, but the Jews made the best of their situation. They established a kosher kitchen, a hospital, a synagogue and a school. It is unusual to think of Jews being able to practise their religion in a camp, but until mid-1942 the Dutch ran the camp and respected the prisoners' rights.

Dissatisfaction and boredom prevailed until Leo Blumensohn arrived. Leo was 17 years old, religious, and along with other religious youth, he organised children's activities, teaching of Jewish tradition, Zionism and religious practices. He was loved and respected by all. Shortly after, 22-year-old Salo Carlebach came to Westerbork. From a famous rabbinic family in Leipzig, he had heard about Leo and the children and voluntarily came to join them. An inspirational person, he became totally devoted to the children.

The *Chronicles of Camp Westerbork* were written by the young members of Salo and Leo's religious group, who called themselves '*Tikvatuenu*' – 'Our Hope'. The first few chapters were written as a gift to Leo for his 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.

It was added to by different contributors up until late 1943 or early 1944, by which time all the children had been deported.

The positive influence of Leo and Salo is evident throughout the text. It begins with the phrase 'The will conquers all'. It then documents the transformation of this undisciplined group of 10–13 year olds into a committed and inspired group with community spirit and purpose. The children, who had come from different backgrounds, looked forward to their meetings and even enjoyed themselves, despite their dire situation. As one writer notes: 'Everyone is gladly going to the meetings of the group. This makes for a life of camaraderie because everyone tries to make life in the group beautiful for everyone else.' The chronicles reveal that the students sang and danced, discussed world issues and planned the various Jewish festivals that punctuate the year.

In July 1942 the German authorities took over the running of the camp and conditions worsened. There were more barbed wire fences and watchtowers, no more kosher food or schooling, and the children were forced to work. Soon the transports began to leave for Auschwitz. The chronicle discusses the new restrictions and the devastating impact of the deportations on the mental state of all the inmates. At this point Salo gave

an inspirational speech to the youth, encouraging them to keep their spirits up, 'to look into the future with courage despite it being so absolutely uncertain. Despite all that is taken from us, it remains our Jewish *neshama* (soul) which we have to guard with our own power and will.' He talks about the strong bond that the group has forged and reveals that he has undertaken to go with them when they are deported.

Soon after this, the children from Westerbork's orphanage were selected for deportation. The Chronicle notes: 'Salo kept his promise. He wanted to show us that they were not empty words ... He went with this transport. We shall never forget this, his deed. In the camp his name is always mentioned with the

greatest of reverence.' Later it was discovered that Salo Carlebach and the 'orphans' lived only three weeks and were gassed together.

Even as Jews were deported to camps in Germany and Poland, others arrived at Westerbork weekly. By that stage, everyone knew what was happening in Poland and they had little hope for the future. Despite their situation, however, the children met with Leo at night for lessons and their spirits were high. Leo was finally deported to Theresienstadt in January 1944 and although the group continued, it was a challenging time.

In September 1944 Doris's family was transported by cattle truck to Theresienstadt. Starvation and disease were rampant. In early 1945 Doris' father was shot during a Nazi death march. In May 1945 the rest of the family was liberated from Theresienstadt.



*The Chronicles of Camp Westerbork*





*The Tikvatenu group of children at Camp Westerbork celebrate Hannukah*

Around this time Doris saw Leo Blumensohn in Theresienstadt. He had been like a 'walking skeleton' when he was liberated, but had since been nursed back to health. He had come to Theresienstadt to look for his parents and sister, but they had been murdered in Auschwitz. Leo then moved to Palestine, where he remained.

Doris and her mother moved to Australia, where they had a relative. The Dutch government demolished the camp and put up a 'marker' as a memorial. Today there

is a small museum, but we have found little recognition anywhere of the martyrdom of Salo Carlebach, and the inspirational work of Salo and Leo Blumensohn with the children of Camp Westerbork, many of whom went to their deaths in camps in Germany, Poland and Czechoslovakia.

*Jayne Josem is the Jewish Holocaust Centre Curator and Head of Collections. Ann Kabillo is a volunteer researcher at the Centre.*

## Sharing the joy of celebration

**A**t his bar mitzvah, Mackenzie de Bortoli invited his guests to make a donation to the Jewish Holocaust Centre in lieu of gifts.

Mackenzie visited the Centre with his family following his bar mitzvah, accompanied by his mother Roz and her parents, Sofie and Les Fried. As part of his bar mitzvah, Mackenzie honoured his great-grandmother Rose Fried (Les's mother), who was murdered during the Holocaust.

Mackenzie and his family were given a tour of the museum exhibition, as well as a behind-the-scenes look at the video testimonies and archives department, to get an understanding of where the funds raised would be put to work.

The Jewish Holocaust Centre greatly appreciates Mackenzie's generous donation. His friends and family contributed around \$9000. If you are interested in finding out more about requesting a donation to the Centre in lieu of gifts, please contact the administration office on 9598 1985 or [admin@jhc.org.au](mailto:admin@jhc.org.au).



*(l-r) Jayne Josem, Sofie Fried, Mackenzie de Bortoli and Les Fried*

# What's on at the Jewish Holocaust Centre

22 September	JHC Film Club: <i>The Great Dictator</i> (1940), directed by Charlie Chaplin. Presented by Bernard Korbman OAM
16 October	<i>Songs in the Key of Life</i> musical extravaganza at the Glen Eira Town Hall, with Vocally Wild Choir, Adrian Glaubert, and Southern Area Concert Band
27 October	JHC Film Club: please check website for program details
October	<i>Four Faces of Israel</i> , presented by teacher and performer Helen Gottstein. A professional, highly interactive and original one-woman show on modern-day Israel, its challenges, divisions, history, passions and its people
November	Annual Betty and Shmuel Rosenkranz Oration
10 November	<i>Kristallnacht</i> Commemoration
24 November	JHC Film Club: <i>Bent</i> (1997), directed by Sean Mathias

Please phone the Centre on 9528 1985 or check the website [www.jhc.org.au](http://www.jhc.org.au) for details of these events.

## Mazel tov Maria Lewit OAM

**M**aria Lewit, Holocaust survivor and guide at the Jewish Holocaust Centre has been awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia for 'service to the Jewish Holocaust Museum and Research Centre as a volunteer, and to literature as a writer and educator'.

Maria, the younger daughter of Borys and Lidia Markus, was born in Lodz, Poland. Borys had a textile business, in partnership with Jozef Lewit. The Lewit and Markus families were very close friends. Jozef and Mery Lewit had three sons, the youngest of whom was Julian.

When the Nazis invaded Poland in September 1939, Maria was a teenager. The Nazis confiscated the Lewit and Markus' textile business and the Lewits were evicted from their apartment. Lidia Markus was able to retain her apartment, as she was not Jewish, and the Markus family initially stayed with her. Julian, who had been working in Warsaw, escaped to Soviet-occupied Lvov (Lemberg). After Borys Markus was beaten to death by an SS officer, Lidia decided to relocate to Warsaw with her two daughters, Maria and Eugenia (Genia). She urged the Lewit family to come with her, but Jozef wanted to remain in Lodz.

By the beginning of 1940 the Lewits were forced into the Lodz Ghetto. Mery died in the Lodz Ghetto in 1944. Later that year, Jozef, along with other family members, was transported to Auschwitz, where he was murdered. Julian eventually escaped from Lvov to Warsaw and went into hiding nearby with Lidia, Genia and Maria Markus. They built a hiding place in a cellar and during that time Maria



Maria Lewit and Jayne Josem

and Julian fell in love and began a relationship. After liberation they returned to Lodz to learn of the fate of Julian's parents. Julian and Maria married and moved to Australia in 1949.

Maria has written about her experiences in prose and poetry, including the award-winning autobiographical novels, *Come Spring* and *No Snow in December*. Her writing has also been published in important anthologies of Australian literature, as well as educational curricula. Maria began volunteering at the Jewish Holocaust Centre in 1996 and has worked tirelessly as a guide to share her wartime experiences with visitors to the Centre.

We wish Maria a hearty *mazel tov*!



# Max Rose: using his wartime experience to educate others

Irene Rose



Max Rose

Max Rose was born in 1936 in Leipzig, Germany and his early years were defined by the Holocaust. His father was picked up during *Kristallnacht* and sent to Buchenwald, where he was interned until Max's mother was able to pay a bribe for his release a few weeks later. The family then decided to flee Germany. Max's father and older brother escaped to Belgium

with the view to finding somewhere to live and then organising for the rest of the family to join them using false papers. When it came to making their escape, Max's mother, who suffered from severe asthma, was in hospital. So Max's sister Sonia, who was nine years old, and Max, who was not quite three, boarded a train together. Showing amazing maturity, Sonia managed to get them to their destination in Brussels where they were reunited with their father and brother. A little later, their mother was able to join them.

When the Germans invaded Belgium, the family was on the move again. Max's mother was once more in hospital, and once again Sonia and Max boarded a train on their own. They were supposed to go to the coast to join the rest of the family and catch a ferry to England, but the train lines to the coast were cut and none of the family reached the ferry to freedom. Max and Sonia's train was diverted to the south of France where they disembarked and somehow managed to live in a small French hamlet. For Max, as a four-year-old, this was quite an adventure and he had absolute faith in his sister's ability to look after him. After all, she was already eleven! Later, the Red Cross sent them back to Belgium and they were reunited with their parents. Then followed years in hiding and another illegal escape, this time with Max's father to Switzerland, to join Max's brother and sister-in-law who had escaped from Belgium at the beginning of the war.

When the war ended, the whole family was miraculously reunited in Belgium. They decided to go to Australia, where they had close family, and arrived in Melbourne in 1949. Max settled here very quickly and learnt English rapidly, adding it to the French and Flemish he had learnt, and of course his first language, German.

With the opening of the Jewish Holocaust Centre, Max was able to put his personal knowledge to use as a volunteer guide. His greatest satisfaction as a guide was to meet groups of school children from non-Jewish

schools who showed keen interest in his personal stories and his knowledge of the Holocaust. He was particularly excited about organising a visit for a group of young men and their parents. These young men had left antisemitic messages on the telephone at the Melbourne Jewish Friendly Society where Max was Chief Executive Officer. They had looked up the word 'Jewish' in the telephone book and randomly left crude messages at Jewish organisations. With the help of Victoria Police, the boys were traced and invited to come to the Holocaust Centre for a little 'reality check'. Max acted as their guide and the boys' apologies, both oral and written, as well as the parents' appreciation, indicated that it had been a very worthwhile exercise.

As a guide at the Holocaust Centre, Max had the opportunity to tell some of his own stories, as well as to learn from others. His contribution at the Centre is valued by staff, volunteers and visitors and he will be sadly missed.

*Irene Rose is Max Rose's wife.*

## Ode to Max

Sonia Kempler

My brother Max was a real *mentsch*  
 He volunteered as a JP and on the Magistrates' Bench  
 At the Holocaust Centre he was a guide  
 And as a wedding celebrant he married many a groom and bride  
 He loved painting, bowling, sailing and biking  
 He loved nature and often would go hiking  
 New adventures he would always seek  
 He climbed Kilimanjaro to its peak  
 He loved his country and Israel too  
 He was a loyal Aussie and a very proud Jew  
 From the day he was born he stole my heart  
 And we were never very far apart  
 My darling brother, so young and strong  
 I can hardly believe that you are really gone  
 Rest in peace

*Sonia Kempler is Max Rose's sister*

### Engagement

To Paul Kegen on his engagement to Jenna Wainstein

### Wedding Anniversary

To Eva and Stan Marks on their 60th anniversary

To Lusia and Mark Lenk on their  
65th wedding anniversary

### Births

To Henri and Sandra Korn on the birth of their  
granddaughters, Emily and Sasha Korn

To Berenice de Silva on the birth of her grandson  
Charlie de Silva

To Sam and Tamara Schneier on the birth of their  
granddaughter Oriyah Hurwitz

To Zvi and Marian Civins, on the birth of their grandson  
Emmitt Morsman

To Silvana Layton on the birth of her granddaughter  
Natalie Ricki Grossman

### Birthdays

To John Bialylew on his 60th birthday

To Eva Rose on her 60th birthday

To Issy Prince on his 60th birthday

To Stefa Rutman on her 90th birthday

To Shirley Ernest on her special birthday

### Bar Mitzvah

To Sofie and Les Fried on the bar mitzvah of their  
grandson, Mackenzie de Bortoli

To Eva and Ben Slonim on the bar mitzvah of their  
grandsons Elliot and Joshua, sons of Aviva  
and Henry Debinski

### IN MEMORIAM

My parents

**Moshe Szyja and Masha Cykiert**  
and siblings

**Adela, Mirla, Shulem Yitzhok, Bluma, Bajla,  
Miriam & Abraham Cykiert**

Remembered by daughter, Tove Tauber,  
children and grandchildren

### CONDOLENCES

To Silvana Layton on the death of her husband Richard  
To Fredzia, Isaac and Ronald Schweitzer on the death of  
their husband and father Nahum

To Hersh and Lyla Burston on the death of their mother  
and mother-in-law Rysia

To Alex and Helen, Eve, and David and Serena Recht on  
the death of their mother and mother-in-law Pearl

## What's on at the Jewish Museum of Australia

### Exhibitions

Current, until 11 March 2012

#### ***Mameloshn – How Yiddish Made a Home in Melbourne***

The vibrant, tumultuous, cultural and linguistic  
community built in Melbourne by Yiddish-speaking  
migrants.

4 September – 16 October

#### **Tsvia Aran Shapir *Bereshit***

A collection of stoneware and fibreglass sculptures explore  
an abstract reality beyond the boundaries of daily life.

### Public programs

16 October, 5.30pm

#### **An evening of Yiddish poetry, prose, and song**

In association with *Mameloshn*, an evening of bi-lingual  
readings about the shtetl in gems of Yiddish literature  
and song. Readers include Arnold Zable, Danielle Charak,  
Anna Epstein, and Marcia Jacobs who will read from  
the work of her late father, award-winning author, Jacob  
Rosenberg. Music by Freydi Mrocki and Tomi Kalinski.

Please check website [www.jewishmuseum.com.au](http://www.jewishmuseum.com.au) for  
details or phone the Museum on 8534 3600.



## MUSICAL EXTRAVAGANZA

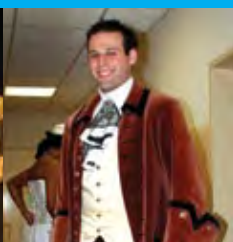
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Adrian Glaubert



Southern Area Concert Band

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**Adrian Glaubert** is an international performer well known in the Jewish community for his great talent as a tenor.

**Southern Area Concert Band** performs regularly both in Victoria and nationally at concerts and eisteddfods. This ensemble is a competing band and has won many awards over its 40 year history.

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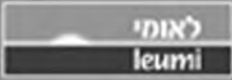
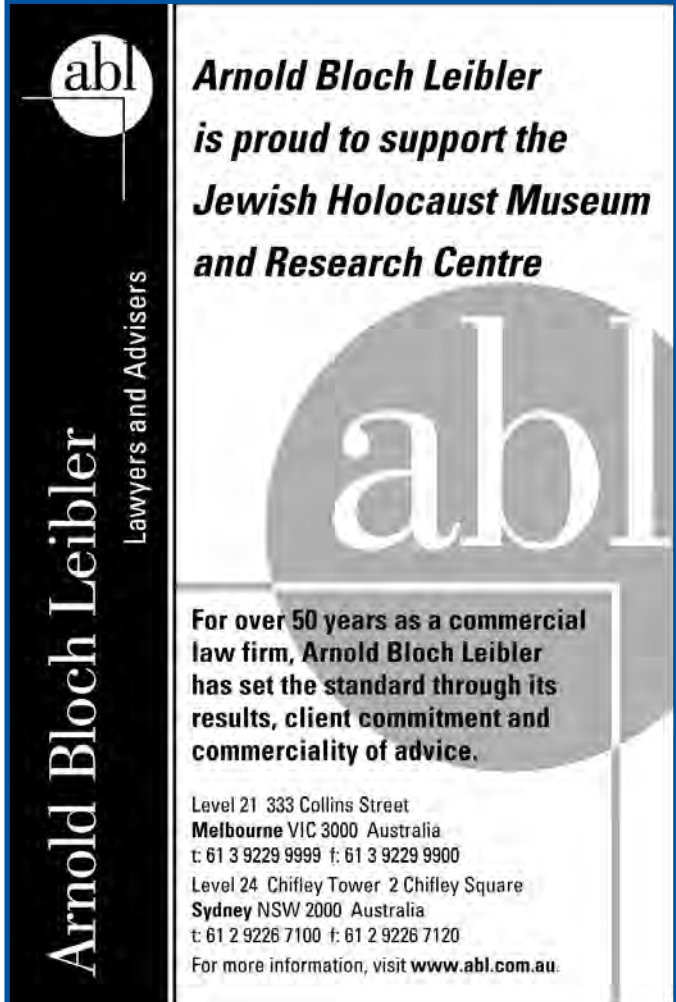




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## פון א זאמל-בוך.

עס איז געקומען א באפעל, אז די סאלדאטן וועלכע פירן אדורך דאס "אויסקעמען" זאלן זיין באוואפנט מיט העק, האקמעסערס און פאשידענע אינסטרומענטן ווייל כמעט אלע אריינגענג, טירן און בידעמער זענען פארשלאסן און מען קען נאר אריינגיין מיט כוח, אפילו ווען מען קען נישט געפינען קיין ארויפגאנג דארף מען שטרענג און אויפמערקזאם אונטערזוכן אלע בידעמער און קעלערס, ווייל דארט באהאלטן זיך אויס יידן. עס פאדערט זיך ארומצוטאפן און אויפברעכן פאדלאגעס און אלץ ארום די שטיבער, כדי זיך צו פארזיכערן, אז מען האט געטאן אלץ ווי נאר מעגלעך, ביים "אויסקעמען" די שטאט.

כדי צו אנטפלעקן די באהעלטענישן רעקאמענירט מען צוציען מינדעריעריקע קינדער, מיט צוזאגן, אז מען וועט זיי שענקען דאס לעבן.

קיין גענויע דאטעס ווען מען האט ליקוידירט דעם פינסקער געטא זענען נישט אנגעגעבן.

דער מאסקווער פארלאג ביי דער פרעסע אגענטור "נאוואסטי" (נייעס), האט באקומען א פארארדענונג ארויסצוגעבן א זאמל-בוך פון דאקומענטן אונטערן קעפל "די דייטשישע פאשיסטישע פארבאפער, קעגן דער יידישער באפעלרערונג אין די צייטן פון דער צייטווייליקער אקופירטער טעריטאריע צווישן די יארן 1941-45".

די מיליטערישע אפטיילונג וואס איז געשטאנע אין דעם שטעטל קאברין האט באקומען א באפעל צו פארן קיין פינסק, "אויסצוקעמען" דעם פינסקער געטא. א טייל איז באשטימט געווארן צו פארשטעלן אלע ארויסגענג פון געטא. די ערשטע "אפעראציע" איז דורכגעפירט געווארן מיט גרויס דערפאלג אין יוני 1942, מען האט ארויסגעפירט 10 טויזנט יידן צו דעם זאמלפונקט פון טראנספארט. 15 טויזנט מענער, קינדער און קראנקע, וועלכע זענען געבליבן אין געטא האט מען דערשאסן אויפן ארט.

## בנימין דער "פערטער".

(לויט מיכאל קרוטיקאו.)

געווען דער מחבר פון עטלעכע לערן ביכער אין זיין פאך. איינע פון זיינע ווערק איז א זאמלונג פון דערציילונגען וועגן זיין לעבן אין די סאוויעטישע לאגערן, און געזען יענע תקופה מיט די אויגן פון א מאדערנעם העברעישן שרייבער און א מענטש וואס איז געווען אריינגעטאן אין דעם טראגישן לעבן פון סאוויעטן פארבאנד.

פרייגעראנס סטיל האט מיט דער צייט אדורכגעמאכט עטלעכע גילגולים. ווי א מאדערניסט האט ער געזוכט פאסיקע אויסדרוקן כדי צו דערציילן וועגן דער ירידה פון יידישן לעבן אין סאוויעטישן ראטן-פארבאנד אין די 1920-ער יארן. נאך זיין באפריינג פון די לאגערן האט פרייגעראזאן זיך גענומען צו פארשרייבן די שווערע דערפארונג פון זיין דור. א באזונדער ארט אין זיינע שאפונגען איז "דער טאג-בוך פון זכרונות" א קינסטערלישער פרוו צו רעקאנסטרוירן זיינע איבעלעבונגען פון זפרון. שרייבנדיק דאס בוך האט דער מחבר נישט געהאט קיין אנונג צי עס וועט אמאל דערגרייכן א ליענער. מיט 20 יאר שפעטער איז עס דערשינען אין תל-אביב.

דער העברעישער שרייבער, צבי פרייגעראזאן, וועלכער איז געבוירן געווארן מיט 110 יאר צוריק האט געהערט צו דעם לעצטן דור פון דער רוסיש יידישער אינטעליגענץ, וועלכע האט זיך אויסגעפורעמט פאר דער רעוואלוציע. ער איז אויך געווען דער לעצטער פון די העברעישע שרייבער פון יענעם דור אין רוסלאנד. ביז 1934 האט ער פארעפנטלעך זיינע העברעישע דערציילונגען אין אויסלאנד, און דערנאך האט ער געשריבן "פארן טיש" פאר דעם ליענער וואס וועט אנטדעקן זיינע ווערק אין דער צוקונפט.

אין 1949 איז פרייגעראזאן ארעסטירט געווארן פאר "נאציאנאליסטישער" טעטיקייט און האט "פארבראכט" זעקס יאר אין סאוויעטישע לאגערן. נאך זיין באפריינג אין 1955 האט ער פארגעזעצט זיין ליטערארישע ארבעט. אים האט זיך אפילו איינגעגעבן צו פארעפנטלעכן זיינע ווערק אין ישראל. אין די לעצטע יארן האט פרייגעראזאן געשריבן זיינע העברעישע ווערק בסוד-סודות, געוויינטלעך ביינאכט. אין זיין "לעגאל" לעבן איז ער געווען א באקאנטער אינזשינער, א מומחה אין דער טעכנאלאגיע פון קוילן-בארייכערונג. ער איז

צוזאמענגעשטעלט דורך משה אייזענבנד.



# דייטשלאַנד פאַרגרעסערט די אויסצאלונגען צו די לעבן געבליבענע.

ווייטער צו וווינען אין זייערע היימען. "דאָס איז נישט דאָס ערשטע מאל וואָס די דייטשע רעגירונג האָט אנערקענט איר היסטאָרישע אחריות צו העלפן די יידן, וואָס האָבן דורכגעמאַכט דעם חורבן, אין זייערע לעצטע יאָרן." האָט דערקלערט, סטואַרט אייזענשטאַט, דער הויפט פאַרמיטלער פון דער תביעות-קאָנפערענץ. במשך פון צענדליקער יאָרן האָט די רעגירונג אַרויסגעוויזן איר איבערגעגעבנקייט צו פאַרגרינגערן די שוועריקייטן פון די עלטערע געליטענע. זינט דעם יאָר 2004 האָט די תביעות-קאָנפערענץ פאַרהאַנדלט מיט דער דייטשער רעגירונג לטובות די לעבן געבליבענע צו פאַרגרינגערן זייערע שטוב באַדינונגען. די קאָנפערענץ האָט אויך געפועלט ביי דער דייטשער רעגירונג אַ העכערונג פון די פענסיעס פאַר די לעבן געבליבענע. פריער זענען בלויז די יידן, וואָס האָבן דורכגעמאַכט 18 חדשים, געווען ראַוי צו באַקומען די שטיצע, אָבער איצט וועט די דייטשע רעגירונג באַטראַכטן אויך יענע יידן, וועלכע האָבן געלעבט אין די געטאָס ווייניקער ווי 18 חדשים.

די דייטשע רעגירונג וועט פאַרגרעסערן אירע אויסצאלונגען צו די לעבן געבליבענע פון חורבן אויף 15%. לויט אַ נייעם אָפּמאַך, וואָס איז געשלאָסן געוואָרן צווישן דייטשלאַנד און דער תביעות-קאָנפערענץ, וועט די דייטשע רעגירונג אין יאָר 2012 געבן בערך 180 ביליאָן דאָלאַר פאַר היים-באַדינונג פאַר די לעבן געבליבענע איבער דער וועלט, און אין יאָר 2014 וועט עס דערגרייכן כמעט 200 מיליאָן דאָלאַר. "נעמענדיק אין באַטראַכט, אַז עס איז לעצטנס געפאלן די צאָל קוואַלן פון פאַרגיטיקונג פאַנדן, איז דער איצטיקער אָפּמאַך זייער וויכטיק ביים באַהאַנדלען די וואַקסנדיקע באַדערפענישן פון די חורבן-געליטענע," האָט דערקלערט דער פאַרזיצער פון דער תביעות-קאָנפערענץ, דזשוליוס בערמאַן. די תביעות-קאָנפערענץ וועט אויסטיילן די דייטשישע געלטער צו די געהעריקע אַגענטורן איבער דער וועלט, וואָס שטעלן צו שטוב אַסיסטענטן צו העלפן די עלטערע יידן צו נעמען זייערע מעדיקאַמענטן, עסן, זיך אַנטאָן, זיך באַדן און אַנדערע באַדינונגען וועלכע פאַרגרינגערן דאָס לעבן פון דער שרית-הפליטה און דערלויבט זיי

## זיך אָפּגעפונען נייע קאַסעטן פון אייכמאַנען.

יידן איז געווען אַ פראָדוקט פון די אליערטע. אייכמאַן האָט זיי אַרויסגעפירט פון טעות דערקלערנדיק, אַז דער סיסטעמאַטישער פאַרברעכן איז צוגעגרייט געוואָרן דורך דעם נאַציסן רעזשים. ער האָט זיך אויך באַרימט, אַז ער איז געווען צווישן די אויספירער פון די אָנגענומענע באַפעלן. "איך בין געווען אַ טייל פון די אויספירער - איך בין געווען אַן אידעאָליסט," האָט ער צוגעגעבן. די דעקלערונג איז געמאַכט געוואָרן אין יאָר 1953 אין אַרגענטינע. דאָס באַווייזט די אָפּנקייט אונטער וועלכע די געוועזענע נאַציס האָבן געלעבט.

אין די קאַסעטן, וועלכע מען האָט, נישט לאַנג צוריק געפונען, באַווייזן, אַז אייכמאַן איז געווען פאַרבונדן מיט דער פלאַנירונג פון אומברענגען אַלע יידן. ער באַדויערט וואָס עס אים נישט געלונגען אַדורכצופירן זיינע פלענער. די רעקאָרדירונג איז געמאַכט געוואָרן בשעת אַ שמועס צווישן געוועזענע נאַציס, וועלכע זענען אַנטלאָפן קיין אַרגענטינע. איצט זענען זיי פאַרעפנטלעך געוואָרן אין דעם דייטשן זשורנאַל "דער שפיגל". לויט דעם באַריכט, זענען די נאַציס וועלכע זענען נישט געווען דירעקט פאַרבונדן מיט די קאָנצענטראַציע לאַגערן האָבן געגלייבט, אַז דאָס פאַרשפרייטן די ידיעות וועגן אומברענגען די



## מענגעלעס טאג-וך.

צוגעגעבן, אז עס וועט זיין איינע פון די מאטעריאלן וואס וועט העלפן באקעמפן די חורבן פארלייקענער. דאס בוך אנטהאלט 180 זייטן, דאטירט פון יוני 1960 אריינרעכענדיק באטראכטונגען וועגן דער נייטווענדיקייט פון סטעריליזירן מענטשן מיט "שעדלעכע דזשינס". דאס פראבלעם איז געווען, ווען צו דעצידירן וועגן מענטשלעכע לעבנס. "עס איז ווערט מען זאל דאס נעמען אין באטראכט" האט געשריבן מענגעלע אין זיינע באמערקונגען.

דער שמעון וויזענטאל צענטער אין לאס אנדזשעלעס (פ.ש.) האט באקומען אנאנים א טאג-בוך געשריבן פון יאסיף מענגעלע, דער דאקטאר פון אוישוויץ. דאס איז א וויכטיקער דאקומענט ווי א ביישטייער צו די דאקומענטן וועלכע וועלן פרעזערווירן די געשיכטע פון חורבן. אין א דעקלערונג, פארטיינדדיק דאס קויפן פון דעם טאג-בוך האט דער צענטער דערקלערט, אז דאס בוך וועט העלפן און איז נייטיק פאר די יורשים פון די חורבן געליטענע, עס ווערט אויך

## פראמינענטע יידן פאלאזן אמסטערדאם.

האט דערקלערט, אז די פרומע יידן האבן נישט קיין צוקונפט אין האלאנד צוליב דעם שטייגנדיקן אנטיסעמיטיזם. "זיי וואלט געדארפט עמיגרירן קיין אמעריקע אדער ישראל" האט ער געזאגט.

זיינע קאמענטארן זענען אפגעדרוקט געווארן אין א בוך פון מאנפרעד גערשטנפעלד.

באלקענשטיינס קאמענטארן האבן ארויסגערופן גרויסע מחלוקות, און דער האלענדישער פארליאמענט האט צונויפגערופן א ספעציעלע סעסיע ארומצורעדן דעם ענין.

פראטעסטן זענען געקומען פון אלע פאליטישע שטראמען אין האלאנד. גערט ווילדערס, אן עקסטרעם רעכטער פאליטיקער האט געזאגט "מען דארף הייסן די מאראקאנער אנטעסטימטן צו עמיגרירן און נישט די יידן." די פירערין פון דער "גרינער פארטיי האט באטאנט; "די מענטשן וואס ווערן באדראט דארפן באשיצט ווערן אין זייער אייגן לאנד"

די קריסטלעכע דעמאקראטן האבן פארגעלייגט, אז מען זאל רופן א שפיצן-קאנפערענץ צו באקעמפן דעם אנטיסעמיטיזם, און סיי די מוזולמענישע סיי די יידישע ארגאניזאציעס זאלן זיך אין איר באטייליקן.

דער האלענדיש-מאראקאנער אינפארמאציע צענטער האט באצייכנט באלקעשטיינס רייד ווי "סתם פאניק העצע".

דער זון פון א בארימטן ארטאדאקסישן רב אין האלאנד האט לעצטנס געמאלדן, אז ער פלאנירט עולה צו זיין צוליב דעם נייעם אנטיסעמיטיזם אין לאנד. בן-ציון עווערס, דער זון פון הרב רפאל עווערס, האט מיט צוויי וואכן צוריק איבערגעגעבן דער צייטונג "דע טעלעגראף" אז ער פילט זיך "ווי אין א שטייג" אין זיין היימלאנד.

"ס'איז נישט דווקא ווייל איך קען נישט ארויס פון שטוב; אבער איך דארף זיך תמיד היטן" האט ער דערקלערט. "כימז אויסמיידן געוויסע געגנטן און באהאלטן מיין יארמלקע ווען איך גיי דורך די ערטער ווו עס וויינען א סך מוזולמענישע עמיגראנטן, בפרט פון מאראקא און טערקיי". מען זעט אין האלאנד אויך אנטיסעמיטיזם ביי די געבילדעטע מענטשן, וואס פארשטעלן עס ווי אנטזי ציוניזם, האט עווערס באטאנט.

פינף קידער פון דער משפחה עווערס האבן שוין פארלאזט האלאנד

און דער טאטע, הרב רפאל עווערס, האט שוין אויך בדעה זיך ארויסצוציען פון לאנד, ווי נאר ער גייט ארויס אויף פענסיע. "מער ווי א העלפט פון די פרומע יידן ציען זיך ארויס פון לאנד" האט בן-ציון דערקלערט. מיט וואכן צוריק האט דער האלענדישער פאליטיקער, פריץ באלקעשטיין, א געוועזענער פירער פון דער קאנסערוואטיווער "פאלקספארטיי פאר פרייהייט און דעמאקראטיע" ארויסגערופן א שטורעם פון פראטעסטן ווען ער



# נייעס צענטער



September 2011

Jewish Holocaust Centre



Nazi Bestiality II  
by Maria Grodnitzka  
Jewish Holocaust  
Centre Museum