

child survivors of the holocaust

CONNECTIONS

VOLUME 4 NO. 3

SEPTEMBER 2016



Dear Child Survivors

We are pleased to let you know we have a number of wonderful new child survivor projects to offer you all.

Child Survivor Portrait Exhibition:
Drawn from Oblivion

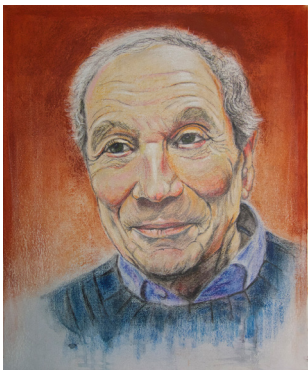
Artist Jeffrey Kelson has offered to paint 20 portraits of child survivors for a very special exhibition. The portraits will be on canvas using mixed media (oil and acrylic paint) dim: 50 x 60 cm. There is no obligation to purchase your portrait. If you would like to, the cost is \$300. Half of the proceeds will be donated to the Jewish Holocaust Centre who in turn provide for our child survivor events.

The first portrait completed for you to see is of Paul Valent. There is a separate 50 x 60 cm artist statement next to Paul's portrait with Paul's story. Jeffrey has also provided a sketch of Paul as a child.

If you decide to participate (15 places left) please phone Viv Parry on 0419 819 131 to book your place. Jeffrey will then contact you, take 4 photos, and then send you the one he wishes to you use for your approval. In 2-3 weeks you can see your portrait. If you want to purchase the artist statement, the cost is a further \$150.

Please let me know as soon as possible if you wish to take part in this exciting Child Survivor Portrait Exhibition to be held at the Jewish Holocaust Centre.

Viv Parry, Chairperson, CSH



PAUL VALENT

Paul Valent as a child survivor of the Holocaust is founder of the Child Survivors of the Holocaust Group in Melbourne, Australia. His professional background is psychiatry, psychotherapy, and traumatology. He co-founded and is past president of the Australasian Society for Traumatic Stress Studies. He has written books and many papers, with a special section on the Holocaust.

His family fled Nazi-occupied Slovakia for Hungary in 1942 when Dr. Valent was four. His parents were later captured and put on cattle trains bound for Auschwitz, but managed to escape.

During this time, Dr Valent was cared for by aunts on his grandparents' farm. After the family was reunited, they moved to Budapest and saw out the war in "open hiding".

Dr. Valent founded a group of child Holocaust survivors, all eager to peel open the "cocoon" of silence. His thinking on the subject was aided by a worldwide resurgence in trauma studies that created an elaborate science around the subject.



New Child Survivor anthology: "My Story... My Life..."

The second Child Survivor Project is a new volume of child survivor stories. Working Title: ***My Life... My story.***

Mentioned in the last Connections Newsletter, I was able to raise \$10,000 for this project. The book is different in several ways. There will be a short family history / family tree at the beginning of each story together with a photo of the CSH family to show the early days. There will also be a recent photo at the end and a few lines about how your life evolved – the aftermath.

Julia Reichstein, Librarian at the JHC, has written the following letter to child survivors to tell you about the project. There will be updates in forthcoming editions of ***Connections***.

The JHC publishing house is very honoured to be working

with Viv Parry and participating child survivors in this endeavour.

Mid-2017 is our target date for publishing this latest anthology from the CSH Group.

Very soon we will work out a timeline of short term goals for achieving our publication date. We are very fortunate to have Danielle, our compassionate and caring pioneer interviewer who thus far has interviewed three child survivors and documented a snapshot of their Holocaust experience, as well as gained an insight into their pre-war life.

Our interviewer has been so humbled and awe-struck by the courage and humanity that has shone through with each interview undertaken.

We are in the process of finalising our story formatting style to best represent each participating survivor who

has stepped forward to share a moment in time of their Holocaust experience. In particular, we seek to know of an experience of each child survivor that particularly resonated for them and shaped their worldview and life philosophy. We are currently starting to recruit additional interviewers to assist and help us collect a wider array of Holocaust survival experiences for this anthology.

From these moments of Holocaust memory compiled into one volume, we hope to produce further volumes and spark an all-important dialogue, ensuring, that your voices will continue to be heard and met with love and empathy. Should you wish to register your interest in this wonderful project please call Viv Parry 0419 819 131.

Julia Reichstein, JHC Librarian

"We were the children of silence"- Our Legacy



The year was 1981, the place Jerusalem. It was here, at the World Gathering of Jewish Holocaust Survivors that Robert Krell, a hidden child from Holland, was "struck like lightning" by the realisation that "there were children like us who experienced the Holocaust first hand but had not been recognised as Holocaust survivors"

Krell, a Professor of Psychology living in Vancouver, Canada, found that youths and adults, particularly those from concentration camps, identified themselves as the survivors "In fact a hierarchy, had already formed as to who had survived the worst. Child survivors did not even find a place on that unofficial list". By that time children of "older" survivors the ones who became known as the Second Generation, have also organised. "But somehow we children were missed. We were first generation Holocaust survivors too young to have had advocates for our existence and experiences".

The reason said Dr. Krell was, in part because "we were the children of silence" who had practised learning "the language of silence" in hiding or camps. And even well-meaning adults "encouraged us to remain silent and get on with life. They... insisted that the youngest amongst us, had few or no memories and in fact were therefore not particularly traumatised". Although there were children who wanted to talk and be heard, they were silenced, even by the mental health professionals "who should have known better.

Defining Child survivors: Later that year, as he published the proceedings of this event in a professional journal, Dr Krell also proposed the first authoritative definition of "who could be considered a Child Survivor". He concluded that a "Child Holocaust Survivor.... (should be defined) as one aged sixteen and under in 1945 and those seventeen and over would be considered adult survivors" The definition was also meant to make a distinction of "what happened to youngsters in the immediate post war period. While the older group had a degree of independence... the majority of those under sixteen were placed under some kind of

guardianship that led to placement in homes or orphanages and in many instances, a resumption of education"

Dr Krell emphasised that in "our gatherings we make no such distinction. We welcome the Kindertransport children.... the children who managed to survive concentration camps, and the hidden children – we are all brothers and sisters under one roof" Our losses were so great that we cannot afford to exclude one single person who needs to be part of us in healing and remembrance, in education and the preservation of memory." Another reason we needed to be together. "Who else would listen to our stories? Who else could assist to break through our silence?"

We have also struggled with shame and rage said Dr. Krell. He pointed out that children "hunted unto death" are likely to conclude that it all happened because they were bad:" To feel responsible in some way invites a sense of shame. I have done something wrong" But that is not all. Because of the horrendous experiences in our early lives "a sense of rage develops. "It is not the kind of rage to which one can or even wishes to respond with revenge. But one can respond with a desire to seek justice, to teach and to document the story". Dr. Krell suggests that this desire may very well be at the root of the fact that a very large percentage of child survivors have gone into the professions of medicine, psychology, and social work, to "serve as our legacy, and a passionate commitment, born of our healing one another, to healing others"

Our thirty year journey has taken us from a life of silence and attempts to maintain that silence to sharing our intimate experiences with each other: empathetic, loving listeners... whose experiences have empowered us to share those stories with others". He urges all of us who "have not done so, do this year commit to recording your testimony. Our children and grandchildren will cherish it. The story must be told and it must be passed on. I trust they will figure out how to use this legacy to attempt to build for themselves and others, a better world.

Child Survivor : Robert Krell ,M.D.
Vancouver B.C. Canada.

Extract from **Mishpocha** www.Holocaustchild.org

My Story... My Life... *"Fragments of Memories"*



Zsuzsi (Suzi) and her younger brother Ivanka (Steven).

Recollections of an era that filled us with fear and brought so much anguish to me, my family and the millions who are not here to testify. It still fills my heart and mind with mixed emotions as I write about some of the events of my early years.

There was a time throughout the years establishing our family's future, working

towards a comfortable lifestyle, raising children, enjoying freedom mixed with amazement at the beauty and fancy-free feel of our new homeland. We were too young, too busy and far too pre-occupied with just getting on with our daily life, to take time out to dwell on the past.

While I continued correspondence with my relatives I avoided the subject of why I had to leave behind all that was dear and meant so much during my formative years. Why my father chose to take refuge in the unfamiliar far away land of Australia and thus I became estranged and separated from all that I knew.

My entire childhood was strongly influenced by a close family environment, my birthplace, the City of Budapest, and its community, all of which ultimately shaped my personality and attitude for the many decades that followed.

Persecution of the Jewish community in Hungary became unbearable by 1942, the year of my birth. The cruelty, hatred and merciless atrocities against fellow citizens took a turn for the worse as Europe entered the final phase of WWII. Our family name was Deutsch. My father Arpad Deutsch changed the name to the Hungarian version, in 1946 we became the Demeter family.

Arpad was taken to the Russian front and on his return to Budapest, he was put on wagons heading to the concentration camps of Landsberg, Germany.

In the month of April 1944, my mother Arika died aged 34. I was 18-months-old. Her photograph sits on my bedside table, but apart from the image and a faint remembered sound of her soothing voice, sadly I hold no personal memory of her presence.

My father returned once more. His survival was nothing short of a miracle. His recovery from typhoid and physical injuries was rapid because of his love for sport always took priority in his "previous" life. Unfortunately his hope and efforts for rebuilding a solid future for us, was short lived, as it was for most people living in Hungary.

By 1949 down came the Iron Curtain followed by the effects of the Cold war. Constantly threatening our safety and confidence.

Enter: The Stalinist regime, more fear, oppression, prison sentences, brain

washing and with it: Exit Freedom of choice, of speech and individual development.

In other words persecution did not end at the time of Liberation and as one would expect learning from history, the reaction of a nation to rebel against its oppressors, is inevitable.

The 1956 Uprising of Budapest youth was crushed by Russian tanks and the military. How can I ever forget the excitement, fear and panic for my father's life as he ran through the cross fire in our street; the hopes and the disappointment that one can experience at the impressionable age of 14. Witnessing these dramatic moments in history stays carved in o ones conscious forever.

I have nurtured my memories, gathered small icons, and every little item that reminds me of times of distress and hardship... the remnants of a fragmented period of my journey.

I would like to add as part of "My Story" one of these fragments, written to me by my cousin George who now lives in the USA. George was 15-years-old when he witnessed my mother Arika, my grandmother and me as a tiny baby, being taken away.

"The Jews were compelled to wear a yellow star outside their home. Most elderly men, women, and children wore them, younger men had been taken away to the Russian front for forced labour. The Jewish population of Budapest was crammed into the ghetto. In country towns the deportations took place at high speed with the keen assistance of some locals and the Arrow Cross Militia. Strict curfew laws limited movement to a few hours of daytime for the city residents. Our family Arika, Arpad, his sisters along with their spouses and children lived in the V11 district where they had their apartments and family business, a piano showroom, on the opposite side of the Grand Boulevard.

Once German occupation took over, the power was



Zsuzsi (Suzi)'s family album before the war.



Zsuzsi (Suzi) and her husband John Vati.

knew what was happening, large groups were led along the boulevards towards an unknown destination.

I slipped from our house and stood on the sidewalk to observe the groups, guarded by Police and the black uniformed Arrow Cross militia.

Soon I glimpsed what I was most afraid of, Arika with her mother Lusztig Oma with Zsuzsi bundled in their arms. I approached them as closely as I dared, lest I be picked up by the guards and thrown into the line. I shouted to Arika to try to give me the baby.... I had no idea how that

transferred to the Arrow Cross, armed thugs, who soon charged the ghettos and many apartment buildings, rounding up and herding all the inhabitants into the streets. It was terribly intimidating, nobody

could be done! Of course she refused and the line moved along. I remember having followed them for a while, then turned back for home.

By the time I found our building it was under siege, many residents were herded out and made to join the long line of victims winding along the street. I ran upstairs where my parents were waiting, frightened to death because of my absence."

This group of ours was one of thousands of Jewish women and children of Budapest, held at gunpoint, marching through the streets towards their destination, the last station of "Yellow Star Bearers" before their execution took place at the Danube river bank.

Too many innocent lives were lost! May our martyrs who perished, rest in peace and always be remembered.

Lest we forget. Susan M. Vati.



Message to Child Survivors.... from Eva Marks

How time flies. In between not being well in the last few years I have been pondering (reliving) the many engaging and rewarding years I have spent as treasurer of the Child survivors and assistant curator to Saba Feniger, at the Holocaust Centre.

Time for reflection and trying to gauge through life's mist what is ahead for us all, especially future generations, including my great grandson born last year.

Being a child survivor means many things to different people. I can see the faces of people at our well attended meetings as we discussed various topics of interest to us. How we interacted with each other. The feeling for all of us was and indeed is, that our past impacted on our lives in so many different ways, so many individual stories. The differences, similarities and above all, exchanging ideas about different experiences. The various reactions and how much we gained from each other.

We have been going for 26 years, a generation with numerous milestones in our highly motivated Melbourne group. I wonder how a child survivors group will be in another 26 years and how the Holocaust will be seen and

reflected upon when we witnesses of what happened, who were there, as author - Nobel Prize winner Elie Wiesel has described us, are no longer able to pass on our messages. Help to ensure its lessons remain and it never happens again.

This seems more important than ever in these uncertain, dangerous and complicated days.

Wondering whither our world and people in general.

I am saddened by the death of Elie Wiesel.

We used to end Child Survivors meetings with an anecdote or joke, which usually fell to me. Let me pass on one now, imagining it is the end of a Child Survivor meeting:

"When you marry the right woman, you are complete. When you marry the wrong woman, you are finished.

When the right one catches you with the wrong one, you are completely finished!"

Wishing you all a very happy and healthy New Year!

Much love and shalom in its true meaning in our troubled world.

Eva Marks

and husband Stan joins me in these wishes).

Searching for Leisl Levy

Dear Child survivors,

I am trying to track down Leisl Levy who left the UK for Australia after WWII and has not been heard from since. She came to the UK on a Kindertransport from Germany. She was born in Cologne on July 12th, 1927 and went to Dovedale School in Liverpool which was evacuated to Flint

in Wales. After the war Leisl was known to have arrived in Australia by ship. This is all I know. A friend of mine who knew her at the time would love to contact her or at least find out what happened. I would be most grateful for any information. Anthony Rudolf, London.

Contact viv Parry 0419819131 or viv.parry@bigpond.com.

Wishing all Child Survivors a Chag Sameah!

JHC Calendar of Events

Monday 12 September to Sunday 30 October

Exhibition

"Pictures of Resistance: The Wartime Photographs of Jewish Partisan Faye Schulman"

Enquiries: 9528 1985 or admin@jhc.org.au

Sunday 2 October

Erev Rosh Hashanah

MUSEUM CLOSED

Monday 3 October

Rosh Hashanah

MUSEUM CLOSED

Tuesday 4 October

Rosh Hashanah

MUSEUM CLOSED

Thursday 6 October, 6.00pm

Public Lecture & Book Launch

His Grace Jovan (Culibrk),

Serbian Orthodox Bishop of Slavonia

Historiography of the Holocaust in Yugoslavia

Enquiries: 9528 1985 or admin@jhc.org.au

Tuesday 11 October

Erev Yom Kippur

MUSEUM CLOSED FROM 1.00PM

Wednesday 12 October

Yom Kippur

MUSEUM CLOSED

Sunday 16 October

Erev Sukkot

MUSEUM OPEN 12.00pm - 4.00pm

Monday 17 October

Sukkot

MUSEUM CLOSED

Tuesday 18 October

Sukkot

MUSEUM CLOSED

Tuesday 18 October

Sukkot

MUSEUM CLOSED

Thursday 20 October

JHC Social Club

Megan Goldin

"How the media covers Israel"

Enquiries: Barbara Sacks on 0404 224 498 or

barbaras9@bigpond.com

Office: 9528 1985 or admin@jhc.org.au

Sunday 23 October

Erev Shmini Atzeret

MUSEUM OPEN 12.00PM - 4.00PM

Monday 24 October

Shmini Atzeret / Erev Simchat Torah

MUSEUM CLOSED

Tuesday 25 October

Simchat Torah

MUSEUM CLOSED

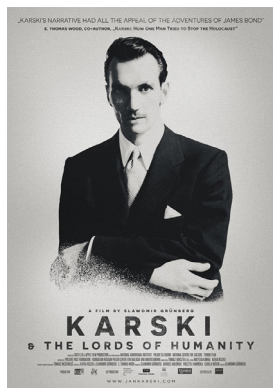
27 October - 23 November 2016

Melbourne Jewish International Film Festival

Classic Cinema & Lido Cinema

<http://jiff.com.au/>

JIFF: screening of "Karski & the Lords of Humanity" followed by Q&A



Wednesday 2 November, 6.45pm

The **Jewish Holocaust Centre** presents a Q&A with director, **Slawomir Grunberg**, following the screening of his documentary, **Karski & The Lords of Humanity**.

Hosted by historian and author, **Professor William Rubinstein**.

Co-presented by the Jewish Holocaust Centre.

Recounting the efforts of Polish underground fighter **Jan Karski** to expose the horrors of the Holocaust during WWII. Karski relayed his eyewitness accounts of atrocities to the Allies in the hope of galvanizing them into action, thus preventing the annihilation of Europe's Jewish population.

Tickets: www.jiff.com.au

Public Lecture: *"Historiography of the Holocaust in Yugoslavia"*



Thursday 6 October, 6.00pm

Guest Speaker: His Grace Jovan (Culibrk), Serbian Orthodox Bishop of Slavonia, author of *"Historiography of the Holocaust in Yugoslavia"*

His Grace Bishop Jovan Culibrk, who will discuss his new book and the long struggle of historians to provide a full account of the Holocaust in Yugoslavia, completed his post-graduate studies on Jewish Culture at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem and was the recipient of the 2004 Golda Meir Award. He is currently writing his PhD thesis on the subject.

The talk will include the launch of Bishop Jovan's book by Dr Paul O'Shea, a member of the NSW Council for Christians and Jews and a former Carmelite, whose doctoral research on Pius XII and the Jews has been published as *A Cross Too Heavy: Pius XII and the Jews of Europe*.

JHC Social Club: Megan Goldin



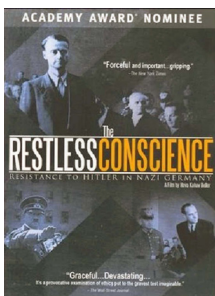
Thursday 20 October, 11.15am

Megan Goldin
Journalist, Radio & TV Producer
"How the Media covers Israel"

Megan Goldin was a former radio report and TV producer for Foreign Correspondent and the **7:30 Report** early on in her career. She then worked for Reuters as a Middle East correspondent and news editor covering the Second Palestinian Intifada and she worked as a regional editor for Reuters in Asia.

Most recently Megan has worked for Yahoo setting up its media and editorial operations in Asia. Megan has recently returned to Melbourne.

JHC Film Club: *"The Restless Conscience: Resistance to Hitler Within Germany 1933-1945"*



Sunday 4 December, 4.00pm

"The Restless Conscience: Resistance to Hitler Within Germany 1933-1945"
(1992) 113 mins, USA

Directed by Hava Kohav Beller

Guest Speaker: Dr Adam Brown
Senior Lecturer In Media, Communication And Public Relations, Deakin University

In 1944, at least 170 German citizens were brought to trial and convicted as participants in a plot to assassinate Adolf Hitler. This was not an isolated act, but rather the last of more than 20 attempts to overthrow the Nazi Regime.

Powerful and provocative, Academy Award nominee THE RESTLESS CONSCIENCE explores the motivating principles and activities of the anti-Nazi resistance inside Germany from 1933 to 1945. The film is a deeply moving portrayal of individual destinies, focusing on the moral and political evolution of individuals whose conscience was at odds with an overpowering national consensus.