

Centre News

April 2014

Jewish Holocaust Centre



Jewish Holocaust Centre: four generations celebrating 30 years.

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30 YEARS
1984-2014
Remember the Past
Change the Future

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On the cover:

**Rosa Krakowski, Jewish Holocaust
Centre survivor guide, with her family.**

Photo: Zina Sofer.

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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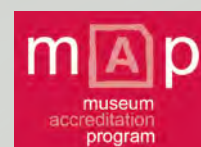
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Pauline
Rockman OAM

This year is a very special year at the Jewish Holocaust Centre as we mark 30 years since that day in March 1984 when the doors at 13 Selwyn Street were opened to the public for the very first time. The Centre was the fulfilment of a vision by Melbourne Holocaust survivors to create a memorial to the millions of Jews who were murdered between 1933 and 1945.

What a different place we encounter today! Established in a small former ballet school that housed our original museum, the Centre now occupies two buildings that are home to our museum, archives, testimonies, library, education and administration departments.

We are now planning for the next 30 years and will unveil building plans later in this special anniversary year. Although our buildings have changed, and will continue to change, the legacy of our founders lives on. Indeed, our mission is as relevant today as it was three decades ago:

The Jewish Holocaust Museum and Research Centre is an institution dedicated to the memory of the six million Jews who were 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 anti-Semitism, racism and prejudice in the community and foster understanding between people.

This anniversary of the Jewish Holocaust Centre gives us the opportunity to commemorate those extraordinary 30 years. During this time the Centre has grown from a small institution created and staffed by volunteers, to one that today has a staff of 15 people, the majority of whom are part-time, Holocaust survivors who serve as guides and who speak about their experiences, and volunteers.

Mrs Pieterella 'Nell' Van Rangelrooy passed away last year at the age of 101, and Jayne Josem and I represented the Centre at her funeral. Nell's was a truly remarkable life. She was a resistance fighter in Rotterdam during the Second World War who hid Jews in her home, and sent her two sons away to stay on a farm, not only because food was scarce, but also in case they inadvertently divulged anything to the Nazis. She migrated to Australia after the war and lived quietly in Melbourne.

Nell was recognised by the Israeli Government as a Righteous Among the Nations in the 1970s. Like others who performed remarkable acts of courage, endangering their own lives, she did not think she had done anything particularly heroic.

We have a panel in our museum entitled Acts of Courage where we honour the Righteous Among the Nations and other special people who risked their lives to save Jews and other persecuted groups during the Second World War. It is such an important part of the learning process for students who come to our museum, as it is for all of us.

Over the next twelve months we shall embark upon a new journey to create an extraordinary space to house our museum and collections, and to enable us to continue our legacy of educating the over 21,000 students who come through our doors annually.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you, our survivors, donors and supporters for your continued support. May your enthusiasm for the Centre and your valuable role in contributing to our success continue for the next 30 years and beyond!

To commemorate this special anniversary there will be many events, including a gala dinner with a special guest. It should prove to be another fulfilling year for our Centre.

EDITOR'S LETTER



Ruth Mushin

How do you commemorate a milestone like the 30th anniversary of the Jewish Holocaust Centre? Some may turn to overseas experts for learned dissertations about our Centre, or invite messages of support from local and overseas dignitaries. While I do not deny that there are experts who have worthwhile things to say, I believe that we need go no further than the people who

have created and run the Centre for the past 30 years – the survivors and other volunteers with their wealth of knowledge, their amazing commitment, and their passion for passing on the message of education and understanding that is at the core of the Centre. So, in this special edition of *Centre News*, we have handed the task of commemorating the past 30 years to our survivors, and to the volunteers of all ages who have played such an important role in helping to run the Centre. Contributors have written about the history of the Centre, their role, and the people or events that are important to them, and together they provide a kaleidoscope of facts, opinions and insights that capture what the Centre has been, and what it is today.

This year also marks the 100th

anniversary of the American Joint Distribution Committee, known as the 'Joint', an organisation that helped so many Holocaust survivors establish new lives after the Second World War, and that continues to support Jewish people in need all over the world. To mark this anniversary, we have an article by the Joint's Executive Vice-President, Dr William Recant.

We also feature two distinguished Holocaust academics, Dr Gideon Greif and Professor Dan Michman. Dr Greif writes about the role of the *Sonderkommando* in Auschwitz-Birkenau, and Professor Michman addresses the question 'Is the Holocaust different from other genocides?'

I hope you enjoy this edition as much as I have enjoyed putting it together.



Warren
Fineberg

This year the Jewish Holocaust Centre (JHC) celebrates its 30th anniversary. From humble beginnings to establish 'an educational program which aims to combat antisemitism, racism and prejudice in the community and foster understanding between people,' the Centre has become an organisation with over 100 active volunteers. We reach over 20,000 students from more than 700 schools annually, and open the museum doors to more than 10,000 members of the general public. This is underpinned by a sound and forward-thinking model of governance and good financial management.

While we acknowledge our achievements and thank volunteers and staff who have served over the past 30 years, it is also now the time to think ahead to the next 30 years. We face significant challenges, the greatest of which is to retain the connection with the history and events of the Holocaust as the energies of our survivors diminish. Our current volunteers, and the younger volunteers who commit to the Centre, are the key to our survival. So too are our staff members, who not only lend their expertise to the work of the Centre, but put in many extra voluntary hours, essential to the conduct of programs, events and operations.

Where to from here? During the next 30 years we shall need to manage the increased number of schools and students who will use our resources. We anticipate that student numbers will grow by at least another 25% before stabilising, and that the number of other visitors will increase by a further 50%. Our current building is too cramped to accommodate these increasing numbers, so we are embarking on a planned capital improvement program to provide more space for our museum, temporary exhibitions, a place where volunteers and guides can congregate, and a fitting memorial space to honour the memory of the victims of the Holocaust.

I am pleased to see the growing number of child survivors of the Holocaust who attend JHC functions, and I commend the committee members of the Child Survivors of the Holocaust for their ongoing support and activities and, too, for the group's recent publication, *Connect*.

Major projects on which the Centre embarked last year included the introduction of a new contact database titled 'ThankQ', sponsored by Friends of the Jewish Holocaust Centre, and the Information Management portal, 'Presto'. The latter, sponsored by the Helen McPherson Trust, is an ongoing development, to be implemented fully during 2014.

The Centre has benefitted from generous bequests over the past year. Members of the Board, volunteers, and the Development Department are working together to encourage members of the community to consider a bequest to the JHC. The JHC Foundation continues to improve its financial

standing and its ongoing generous support of the Centre. Further generous support was given through the proceeds of the Jewish Holocaust Centre Friends Art Auction, a fundraising event with plenty of excitement and community spirit. The Centre has continued to benefit from public grants, and grants, trusts and gifts from benefactors. This support has been critical: it has enabled the JHC to ensure that we are able to fulfil our brief.

A number of new programs in our Education and Collections Departments are currently in train, spearheaded by Lisa Phillips, our newly appointed Director of Education, and Robbie Simons, Testimonies Assistant Coordinator and Audio-Visual Producer, and we look forward to implementing them during the course of 2014.

Towards the end of last year we held a graduation ceremony for students and new guides following their successful participation in the Holocaust Education Course and Guide Training program. Certificates were awarded to students who completed the course. Those who undertook guide training were presented with lanyards by Zvi Civins. Zvi, who retired as Director of Education in December, is an outstanding educator who has made an enduring contribution to the Centre, especially in the professionalisation of the Centre's education program. While Zvi has left us to explore other interests, he will remain involved at the Centre in an informal capacity.

As we mark the Centre's 30th anniversary, we look forward to another active and productive year in 2014.

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Lisa Phillips

It is with great excitement that I have recently joined the Education team, staff and volunteers at the Jewish Holocaust Centre. As I slowly familiarise myself with the Centre, I am in awe of all who work so tirelessly to ensure the Centre's mission statement becomes a reality. I have been very grateful for the warm welcome I have received and look forward to getting to know the guides and volunteers over the coming year. This column gives me an opportunity to share a little about my background with those I have yet to meet directly.

I am a passionate educator, who has been involved in education most of my life, first in a youth movement as a *madrichah* (leader), graduating from the *Machon Le Madrichei Chutz La'Aretz* (Institute of Youth Leaders from Abroad), then qualifying as a history teacher at the University of Melbourne. With over 20 years' teaching experience, my last school position was as Head of History at Korowa Anglican Girls' School.

I have always been focused on the delivery of meaningful curricula to students. I consider myself

innovative in my approach to teaching, always seeking new and improved ways to ensure the effectiveness of learning. This has largely been influenced by my involvement in the PEEL Project (Project for Enhancing Learning) which aims for students to become better and engaged learners. I have also worked extensively with learning technologies, an area of focus for my Masters of Educational Studies.

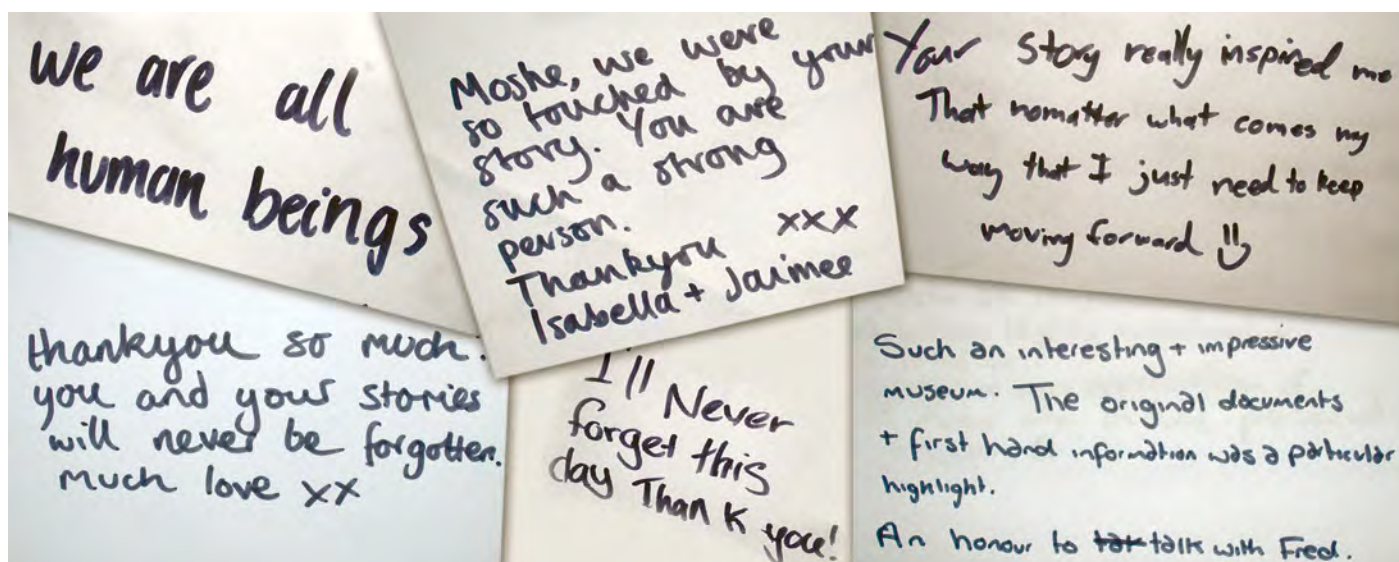
Although born in Australia, my background is South African, where my late father was an anti-Apartheid activist. As a result, social justice values were instilled in me from a young age, particularly regarding the scourge of racism and prejudice. This has influenced my involvement as a volunteer with Courage to Care and Mercy Connect, where I have worked with refugee children and visited asylum detainees at Maribyrnong Immigration Detention Centre.

Despite not having a direct Holocaust background, by growing up in Melbourne where many of my Jewish friends are children of Holocaust survivors, the Holocaust has loomed large in my life. Sadly, despite my belief and that of my husband, Anton Grodeck, that neither of our families had been directly touched by the Holocaust, we discovered through the probing of our son, Adam, that Anton's great-grandmother had two sisters who were murdered in the Shoah. It took Adam's investigation as part of his trip with Hashomer Hatzair to Poland in March

2001, commemorating the 70th anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising, for this tragic truth to be revealed. This was something that was unknown to us when Adam's older brother, Ben, visited with Habonim Dror in 2009.

I first visited the Jewish Holocaust Centre with my Year 11 history class in 1987. My last school visit was in 2011. Despite the span of over 20 years, there is no doubt about the profound impact a visit has on shaping students' understanding of the Holocaust and learning about the perils of hatred, prejudice and racism. After each excursion I felt a sense of satisfaction that I had made the effort to ensure the students had the opportunity to visit, and was deeply grateful to the Holocaust survivors they met who shared their very special stories.

I have always held strongly to the belief that education has the power to transform and change people's lives. It has the power to challenge people's prejudices and create new understandings, and it has the power to develop people with critical thinking skills, creativity and problem-solving abilities. My involvement in education as a teacher, writer and facilitator has been to achieve all these ends and shape young people to be concerned, active citizens. I look forward to working with the staff and volunteers to ensure the Jewish Holocaust Centre continues to provide outstanding educational programs that have the ability to influence and shape future generations of Australians.



Jewish Holocaust Centre guides a



Kitia Altman OAM

While all the volunteers at the Jewish Holocaust Centre (JHC) are engaged in maintaining and improving the Centre, the guides make its heart beat. They are the first people that visitors meet, and they are the ones who deal with all kinds of situations, among them, providing a tissue, a glass of water,

or a word of comfort to the distressed.

In my first few months as a guide at the Centre, it became clear to me what an enormous moral burden it was to share horrific experiences of human suffering and evil with young, unaware students. Now, as a guide of almost 30 years, I am often assailed with doubts, but when I reach at least one of them, I have a feeling of special accomplishment. Perhaps our young visitors may not be able to understand who we are and how we survived, but we hope our experiences will be stored away in their minds and be used in future as a point of reference that will influence their attitudes to individuals as well as communities.

The guides not only have an enormous responsibility to the people with whom they come in contact, but also towards the history of the Holocaust, of which the survivors are the most valuable witnesses.

During the years of its existence, the JHC has become both an excellent educational facility as well as a powerful tool to fight racism and intolerance. For me, the Holocaust Centre always was, and remains, a natural custodian of survivors' memories and pain.



Adam Brown

As a lecturer in Media Studies at Deakin University, my work these days mainly revolves around teaching and research. Although such activities bring their own forms of satisfaction, over the years it has been my work at the Jewish Holocaust Centre that brings a form

of fulfilment that cannot be replaced by other tasks.

I first came to the Centre in 1999 as a Year 11 student, and later worked with Phillip Maisel OAM as a volunteer in the Testimonies Department. I now bring my university students to listen to survivors speak about their experiences, and in July 2014 I will convene an international research conference in partnership with the JHC. As co-convenor of the JHC Film Club screenings, every month I am moved by the passion of interested community members who enthusiastically attend to watch and discuss a film, to debate its virtues or otherwise with a commitment that is far beyond that of many a student studying for a degree. The idea that understanding the Holocaust is important is taken as a given at the Centre, though it is not seen that way everywhere, and the daily activities at the JHC are a constant source of inspiration to anyone who passes through its doors.

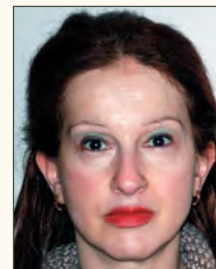
Gregoria Boursinos

The day I met George at the JHC

I remember meeting George
On that hot summer's day
It was January the 31st
On a lazy Friday.

I was at the Holocaust Museum
Listening to a guide
When George walked in
And stood right by my side
'This is George,' Tammy said,
'He survived a camp,'
'Which one?' I asked
'Auschwitz,' she said.
Then as Lisa continued
With the guiding session
I noticed George's tattoo
6 4 1 4 7.

As I began to stare
At George's left arm,
'This is my girlfriend's number,' he said
Full of charm.
'What if you have a new girlfriend?' I asked
'Then you'll have regrets,'
'Oh no,' he replied,
'This girlfriend, I'll never forget.'
I stood there staring at him
In disbelief,
Knowing that such a man
Had survived Auschwitz!
I simply do not know
How he found the strength
To live his life to the fullest
After such harrowing events.
I loved his sense of humour
And engaging personality
Which made me think
Of the grim reality!
That six million people
With their own individuality
Had turned into ashes
Because of one man's insanity.
Then I politely leaned over
And out of the blue
I gently touched
His Auschwitz tattoo.
He told me he was a Berliner
So that's why he was shocked
When his cultured nation
Had lost the plot.
The lesson of George's story
Is that we must speak out
When our citizens' survival
Is ever in doubt.



nd volunteers celebrate 30 years



Henry Buch

I spent my early childhood in hiding and came to Australia as a child with my mother. My father had been murdered in the Holocaust. At home we spoke Yiddish and Polish, and one of the many visitors to our home was Aron Sokolowicz, the co-founder of the Centre. We

had many meetings in our small flat in Royal Parade Parkville. The seeds of the Centre were planted, and my mother and stepfather, Avrom Jazwinski, together with my grandmother, Mrs Fryda Bialylew, helped in its development.

I vividly remember sitting in the front row at the opening of the Centre in 1984. Despite pursuing my career and being involved with my family, I continued to be involved in the Centre and enrolled in the first volunteers' training course.

My involvement has continued, and I have watched the Centre grow from a small and endearing organisation to one that is professional and internationally recognised. I am proud of its advancements, particularly in educating young and old about the Holocaust. I believe that the fine staff and volunteers who now run the Centre are helping to keep the memory of the Holocaust alive, and ensuring that such an event never happens again.



Christopher John Dargan

In the book *The Righteous Gentiles*, the author recounts the story of a man who had been woken from his sleep by a Jewish couple who had begged him to hide them. He had closed the door in their faces. The author must have been shocked because the interviewee

immediately asked, 'Well what would you have done?' That question haunted me and I came to the Jewish Holocaust Centre to find out.

My grand title is Reference Librarian, which involves helping people find particular books, suggesting readings, and writing articles to inspire discussion or give an indication of the resources available at the library.

For me, being a Jewish Holocaust Centre volunteer means making a difference by changing the way people think. An author was once asked how we changed the world, and answered: 'One person at a time.' For me, being a volunteer at the Centre is all about using education to change the world, one person at a time.

In the long term I hope that the Centre succeeds in its goal, and in the short term that it causes just one more person to be a little less likely to display unthinking prejudice.



Wolf Deane

In the early 1990s the Jewish Holocaust Centre archives were stored in the 'old' building. Beryl Chitiz was the only paid employee. We had a small fund-raising committee, with Myer Burstyn as the main fundraiser. Myer received

a donation from Mrs Hadasa Rosenbaum of \$500,000.00 towards the building. Mrs Rosenbaum had been recently widowed, and the building now bears the name 'The Hadasa and Szymon Rosenbaum Holocaust Research Centre'.

In 1997 the Centre's president, Shmuel Rosenkranz, asked me to become involved in the development of the proposed new building. As a result, I became the project manager – the liaison between the architect, Michael Bialek, and the JHC Board, its Building Committee and various sub-committees. We held weekly site meetings with the architects, builders and sub-contractors. All claims and payments had to be approved by me.

This was during pre-digital times and all testimonies were recorded on DVDs, which deteriorated after a relatively short time, causing great concern to Phillip Maisel. We therefore decided to provide a temperature- and humidity-controlled room.

The new building was officially opened on 24 October 1999. For a number of years after the opening I was in charge of maintenance.



Tina Dikanovic

I have always been interested in history and, having studied 20th Century Contemporary European Studies at university, I thought that I could use the skills I learnt at the Jewish Holocaust Centre, where I am a volunteer in the library. My main task has been to create an

Electronic Research Reference Directory.

Listening to the survivors' personal experiences has been a new and different form of education on the Holocaust for me. Through my research and interaction with survivors, I have learnt that while their experiences are different, they all share resilience and hope, even when life seems impossible.

At times I have found the work challenging, due to the subject matter, but I believe the Centre plays an essential role in providing education on the history of the Holocaust and through education, in preventing such events from ever happening again.



Debbie Dorfan

My work as a volunteer librarian in the Jewish Holocaust Centre library has been food for my soul. It feels really good to be part of such a professional organisation and to know that I contribute to something so vital.

I hope that the Jewish Holocaust Centre continues to prosper, making full use of the human and technological resources available to it to educate and inform of the horrors of the Shoah so that we learn from the past. May the stories that are told and shared inspire the Centre's visitors to act for some good, as evil prospers when good people do nothing.



Saba Feniger

My involvement with the Jewish Holocaust Centre began in September 1984, initially as a guide but soon in changing the museum's simple original exhibition. A few months later I was left in charge of the improvements, and this led to my becoming the museum's voluntary curator.

When the building was extended, the museum was transferred from upstairs to the ground floor. After one year of close cooperation with a freelance museum architect and my long hours of work at home, the new museum was ready to be officially opened in March 1990. I put my heart and soul into the remodelled museum and continued handling difficult exhibits. Through my persistence the museum became well known and visitors' comments were most favourable.

For me it was so important to give those silenced voices back their say through the museum's black and white images and Yiddish and English captions.

Throughout seventeen years, and with a helpful team, I presented numerous temporary exhibitions of importance to survivors, and relating to topical events. I also made contact with other museums.

I hope that the museum will continue to be of great value, both to students and to the wider community.



Stephanie Heller

The Novice's Story

I was a newcomer here
I came to listen and see
You welcomed my story and me
I entered somehow in fear
How will I tell them
What will they hear
Can I talk without shedding a tear?
Slowly I found my voice
Following Kitia by choice
And out gushes the word
To join you in teaching
The young and the old
How did we live, suffer and survive?
Now I think perhaps
That's why I am alive
To tell the world not to stand silently by
When evil reigns and murders
And innocent for help do cry.



Helen Hendy

I specialised in Holocaust and Genocide studies at university and had worked at the Imperial War Museum London, so I wanted to be part of an institution that valued remembrance, education and communication. My role as a volunteer research librarian at the

Jewish Holocaust Centre means shared learning and research experiences as well as friendship.

People ask why I am involved at the Centre, citing a darkness or negativity. However, for me it is a productive and engaging space, and my goal is to communicate more effectively why the Centre and those working within foster just the opposite – tolerance and engagement with others.



Freda Hodge

I realise more and more how great a privilege it has been to offer my services to such a remarkable organisation as the Jewish Holocaust Centre, which embodies the task of remembering the Holocaust and seeking reconciliation with the nations of the world in a spirit of great

generosity and forgiveness.

Some years ago, I attended a Limmud Oz panel discussion during which a number of Holocaust survivors described their experiences. I was deeply touched by their words, and I happily responded to Bernard Korbman's (then the Centre's Acting Director) invitation to serve on the Education Committee. I then joined Phillip Maisel as his assistant, and I continue to conduct interviews with him to the present time. Recently I also became part of the library's research team. My role as a volunteer is extremely rewarding, and I feel that I am contributing in a small way to the good of the Jewish people.

May the Centre go from strength to strength in educating people about the Shoah and the evil of racism and antisemitism.



Helen Leperere

On the Centre's 30th anniversary, my thoughts travel back to the late Aron Sokolowicz. I first met Aron when he was collecting funds to establish a Holocaust centre. His was not an easy task, as not many people – myself included – shared his enthusiasm. Why did we need

this? Why should we remind ourselves constantly of the Holocaust? Would it not be better for the money to go to Israel?

Aron, however, was relentless and his dream finally became a reality. On my retirement, I began working as a volunteer with Phillip Maisel, who was recording testimonies in a small office in a shed. It was cold in winter and hot in summer.

It was very emotional work, and often we had to help survivors with a strong cup of coffee. Some testimonies were harrowing, and all were tragic. With Phillip's guidance and enthusiasm, I felt I was involved in something important, and I felt a sense of belonging. When I left the Centre 16 years later, we had recorded around 1,200 testimonies.

Though I live in Sydney now, I feel nostalgic reminiscing about my time at the Centre. I wish Phillip all the very best and hope the Centre will continue to grow for many years after we survivors have disappeared. And I bless the memory of Aron Sokolowicz.



Willy Lerner

Although 30 years ago, I clearly remember the opening of our Centre on 4 March 1984. The idea of establishing the Centre came from a group of dedicated survivor volunteers, lead by Aron Sokolowicz, Bono Wiener and Mina Fink.

Some questioned whether the doors would ever open, but how wrong they were! Since 1984, over half a million students from all over Victoria, and over 100,000 local, interstate and overseas visitors have passed through our doors. We, survivors of the Holocaust, have also visited many schools, universities and community organisations. We have received thousands of letters of appreciation from students and teachers, and we have welcomed many dignitaries to the Centre.

When the Centre opened, part-time secretary Beryl Chitiz was the only paid employee, and everyone else was a volunteer, doing everything from painting to cleaning. Our first museum curator was Saba Feniger; the library was run by Sabina Josem and Rosa Freilich; the archives by Ursula Flicker OAM; the testimonies department by Phillip Maisel OAM; and the late Mali Kohn was the guides' coordinator. We were lucky to have professional people, including Jenny Weisenberg and later Ruth Adler, Ilona Openheimer, Bernard Korbman and Zvi Civins, running the education program.

In 2001, when Minister of Education Mary Delahunty presented our President Shmuel Rosenkranz with a certificate of accreditation for the museum, we felt very proud. Imagine, amateurs having done such a professional job!



Aron Lewin

I first came to the Centre on a moment of impulse to write a story about the Centre for a storytelling festival. Although the story never came to fruition, I went upstairs to the library after visiting the museum. As both a journalist student and a devout book reader with a particular

interest in the Second World War and the Holocaust, it seemed like a particularly appropriate place for me to volunteer.

My main role as a volunteer has been to interview child survivors of the Holocaust for an anthology of Holocaust survivor stories. Not only has this encouraged me to write more, but my work has also reinforced the importance of preserving the legacy of Holocaust survivors.

Apart from helping to preserve the memory of the Holocaust, it has been an additional privilege to meet with and listen to Holocaust survivors. I treasure being in a position where I can listen to their stories, which provide harrowing empirical evidence of a period in time which can otherwise only be discovered in books and videos.



Maria Lewitt OAM

On the 30th anniversary of our Centre, I wish to congratulate all my colleagues, young and old, who have been working here.

Something important is taking place in our museum. Day in and day out the students and other visitors meet

the remnants of the European Jews, authentic and alive. They catch glimpses of guides' lives, of their families, friends, of hunger and degradation.

Students from a mosaic of ethnic backgrounds hear of events that took place 70 years ago in Europe. It does not seem to matter whether the guides' English is correct or not. What matters is the students' attention as they listen to Holocaust survivors, members of the second generation of survivors and others who guide them. I am grateful to have had the chance to speak to visitors and see and chat with my museum friends and colleagues over so many years.

The same teachers bring their classes year after year. If only the German youth had been similarly educated, then perhaps Hitler would not have had so many followers: no followers; no war; no Holocaust – what a dream!

Our museum has changed and many of the original volunteers are gone. The younger people are taking over with enthusiasm and commitment – and the pioneers are leaving the Centre in good hands.



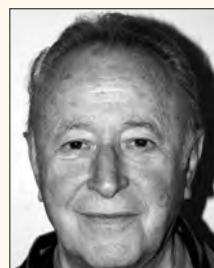
Phillip Maisel OAM

One day in 1992, Saba Feniger, then the museum curator, handed me a video camera and asked me to videotape the testimonies of Holocaust survivors. I was to use the office of The Federation of Polish Jews, as long as they could use it anytime they needed. Before an

interview, I would erect a makeshift screen and then guide a Holocaust survivor to delve deeper and deeper into his or her darkest memories. Inevitably someone would burst in, the screen would collapse, my camera would be dislodged and the survivor would jump out of his or her skin, convinced that the Germans had come to arrest them!

When the generous Henry Greenfield heard about our troubles, he donated funds to convert a shed at the back of the building into a designated interview room. Although it was tiny, this dark space made it easier for survivors to step back in time and recount their experiences for our testimonies' collection. However, on rainy days, we were often disturbed by water leaking through the ceiling. Our solution was to place a pot with an artificial flower under the drip, explaining that this enabled the flower to be watered! This usually drew a smile – the ideal way to begin the testimony.

Today, although we have a designated interview room with a solid door, watertight ceiling and an 'Interview in Progress: Do Not Disturb' sign, we are still interrupted! After over 20 years, I have come to realise that there is no such thing as the perfect location, and our work is so interesting that we cannot avoid the constant interruptions!



Adriano Marguiles

I wanted to learn more about the Holocaust, particularly the psychology of the human mind that allowed it to happen, and how millions of ordinary people could have turned their backs on justice and followed Hitler. I also want to understand how today's generation

of Germans is affected by the actions of Nazi Germany. Being at the Centre means so much to me: what happened to our people during our history, up to the present day, is

for me something that is not cognitive, but something I feel from the depth of my heart.

One of my roles as a volunteer in the Centre's library is to assist the librarian. I also read and review books, so that others can learn about them, although the book I am currently reviewing may take me 25 years to finish! On a serious note, however, the Centre plays an important role in helping people to understand the Holocaust, and I hope to be able to continue being part of this important work.



Eva Marks

'Have you got good hands?' Holocaust Centre curator Saba Feniger's question led me to becoming a Centre volunteer and spending almost 20 years in this amazing place, which was both confronting and rewarding, especially working with such

inspirational people. And what incredible and memorable times they were, helping to establish a Centre that would become an Australian landmark.

One of my initial projects was creating copies of the striped uniforms from the camps, and the various coloured triangles that identified the different prisoners. I also initiated and coordinated the wall hanging made by child survivors that now hangs in the main hall.

Preparing for the 50th anniversary exhibition of the Liberation of Auschwitz in 1995, Saba and I sat under umbrellas as rain came in through a leaking roof. When the museum was remodelled and officially opened by the Governor-General, Sir William Deane, we rehung all the exhibits. We also arranged specific exhibitions to mark Holocaust events and commemorations.

I was on the committee and was treasurer of the Friends of the Jewish Holocaust Centre and also the Child Survivors of the Holocaust for 17 years. I am delighted to be working with the active Child Survivors' group creating a time capsule for the Centre's 30th anniversary, to be opened in 50 years.



Stan Marks OAM

I have so many amazing memories of the remarkable and inspirational survivors, and especially of the looks in the eyes of students at the horror and inhumanity of what survivor guides were relating.

Planning VIP visits, the 20th anniversary book, *Reflections, Centre*

News and publicity, to get across the message of the Holocaust. Not an easy task in those early days when the Holocaust was not talked about that much, if at all, outside the Jewish community.

Memories of *Centre News* interviews with Angela Merkel, Samuel Pisar, Elie Wiesel, Yehuda Bauer, Jan Karski and Sir William Deane, all highly impressed with the Centre, the dedicated volunteers and their promotion of understanding for *shalom* in its true meaning.

I recall the group of 20 Muslim high school students who listened to a survivor guide tell of her wartime experiences. Some wept and rushed forward to hug her, promising to work to prevent a Holocaust recurring. I remember the teacher who told students they should visit the Melbourne's unique Jewish Holocaust Centre where they would 'learn more history there than I can teach in a lifetime.'

What a wonderful privilege to have been a long-time Centre volunteer among such people who care.



Hannah Miska

Soon after my arrival in Melbourne in 2006, I stumbled across the Jewish Holocaust Centre. Surprised to find a Holocaust centre in Australia, I walked in and met Stephanie Heller. Stephanie was the first Holocaust survivor I had met and our conversation left a deep

impression. A few months later I began working at the Centre as a volunteer, continuing until I left Melbourne in 2010.

Looking back, this was the biggest career change in my life. I soon realised that the Centre was a place with 'living history', and that I was no longer interested in going back to my previous field of Human Resources. At the Centre I was engaged in translating, researching the stories of donors, interviewing survivor guides to record their biographies, and participating in the Holocaust Education course.

The most interesting aspect of my work was the opportunity to speak with survivors. To my amazement, they showed no resentment in talking with a German, nor did they seem to harbour any hatred towards Germans.

I have now completed a book based on my conversations and interviews with survivors that will be published in German this year. I am still in touch with many at the Centre and am deeply touched by their warmth, friendship and loyalty. I wish them and the Centre every success in their endeavours to convey their message of tolerance to the people of Melbourne and beyond.



Mareike Montgomery

I was always interested in history and in particular the history of the Second World War. I was born and grew up in Germany. As a German, I felt ashamed and angry about our history and wanted to do whatever I could to prevent such horrible things from ever happening again.

My first visit to the Centre was in April 2008, and I now volunteer in the library. I have also completed the Holocaust Education Course and have worked as a museum guide.

Before I came to the Centre, I had never met a Holocaust survivor. The survivors' acceptance of me and their willingness to tell their stories have been inspirational. As a volunteer, I feel that I am helping to keep awareness of the Holocaust alive, which is not only important for the Jewish community, but for everyone.



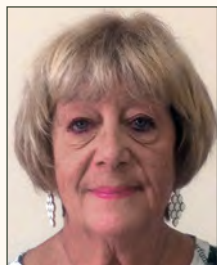
Ruth Siegel

My parents arrived in Australia from Bialystok shortly before the beginning of the Second World War. Most of their families and friends were victims of the Holocaust. Although they preferred not to discuss the horrific details, it was always clear they honoured the

memory of those who were murdered. This inspired me to become a volunteer at the Jewish Holocaust Centre.

Through my work in the library, preparing inventories of books held by the Centre, I have learnt so much about the Holocaust and the personal stories of donors. Most of the books originate from personal libraries, often donated in honour of deceased relatives, and have handwritten inscriptions with heart-warming messages of friendship and congratulations on the occasions of special events, such as birthdays and barmitzvahs.

Even the summaries in the blurbs of the books have greatly increased my knowledge of the Holocaust and the desire for me – and my children – to learn more about this aspect of our heritage.

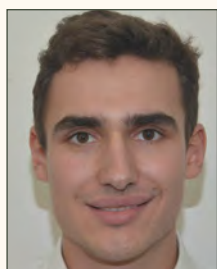


Ruth Tang

The first time I visited the Jewish Holocaust Centre was to attend the Anne Frank Exhibition last year. By the end of my visit, I felt a very strong connection and was compelled to speak to someone about volunteering.

I have always loved reading, and I am in 'reader's heaven' in the library, surrounded by books. My role is varied and challenging and includes coordinating the Local Holocaust Survivor Memoir Collection and writing book reviews.

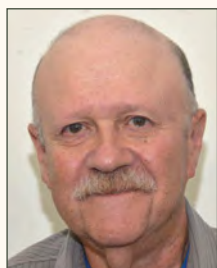
Working at the Centre has given me a connection to the Jewish community that I did not have before, and every project I complete gives me personal satisfaction. I look forward to being involved in many more projects in the future.



Adam Thalhammer

More than half a year has passed since I commenced my work as a representative of Austrian Service Abroad at the Jewish Holocaust Centre. As an Austrian-Australian dual citizen who grew up in Austria, I am grateful for this opportunity to contribute to the cause of Holocaust

remembrance while discovering my Australian roots in the amazing city of Melbourne. My time at the Centre so far has been a period of learning – learning the stories of the survivors, getting to know all the talented individuals whose tireless efforts fill this place with warmth and insight, and discovering how I can further the mission of the Centre. With the help and guidance of the dedicated staff, I have taken charge of energising the Centre's presence on Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter, engaging members of the public, students, and JHC staff and volunteers alike. My day-to-day activities are very diverse, encompassing translations, software development, writing for *Centre News*, and even gardening. I would like to express my gratitude to the JHC for enabling me to become involved in a way that is both meaningful and rewarding.



Len Wittner

I volunteered to work at the Centre as I have always had an overwhelming interest in the Holocaust and, like many others, I have experienced the loss of family members during the Holocaust. I believe very strongly in the Centre's mission to remember the past and

to change the future, and wanted to be involved in the education of school children and provision of information

and assistance to the general public. My main roles are as a museum guide and library volunteer.

It means a great deal to me to volunteer at the Centre, not just because of its aims, but also because of the relationships I have with other volunteers, staff, and in particular with the survivors. The survivors' life experiences and strength of character are overwhelming, and their dedication to the Centre's work is inspirational. I only regret that I did not begin volunteering at the Centre until 2012!

Mazal tov to Sue Hampel, OAM



Sue Hampel OAM

Sue Hampel has been awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) for service to the community through the promotion of understanding and tolerance.

The daughter of a Holocaust survivor, Sue's father taught her the importance of memory and the value of tolerance, and his wartime experience was her motivation for working in the field of education.

A Board member of the Jewish Holocaust Centre since 2007, Sue was the founding Director and Coordinator of the Australian March of the Living educational program from 2001 to 2012. She has taught Holocaust, Jewish Studies and English at Mount Scopus College for 34 years, and teaches Holocaust, Genocide and Post-conflict studies at Monash University's Australian Centre for Jewish Civilisation (ACJC). She co-leads Monash University study groups to Eastern Europe and Rwanda, and also teaches adult education classes at the Jewish Museum.

'I teach the Holocaust because I want to educate the next generation of Jewish and non-Jewish students about the dangers of intolerance. It is important to listen to the compelling voice of the survivors who experienced first hand the consequences of ignorance and prejudice. I am very proud and honoured to receive this award,' she said.

Sharing the Joint's 100-year history

William Recant



My parents were Holocaust survivors from Poland and Belarus. My in-laws, both from Poland, survived the Second World War in Siberia. The only Jewish organisation that was ever discussed before, during and after the war was the Joint (American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee or JDC).

My father told stories of seeing the Joint's three-starred candle on a sack of food in Wengrow, Poland. My mother has her JDC medical card from the displaced persons' camp in which she was accommodated after the war. My in-laws always talked of the assistance they received from the Joint after the war. My father worked as a security guard at a Joint-administered DP camp in Uhlm, Germany, and did not leave until the camp closed in 1949.

My father was the sole survivor in his family. After fleeing to the Soviet Union, he was jailed and sentenced to 10 years in forced labour in Siberia. He survived malaria in Uzbekistan and the ravages of Stalingrad, returning home in 1945 to find that his entire family and community had been exterminated at Treblinka. He then decided that he would go to Australia and start a new life, but just three days before his ship was scheduled to depart, he received a cable from an uncle who had come to the United States after the First World War. My father changed his mind and boarded a ship to New York instead of one to Sydney.

I grew up in an apartment above my parents' grocery store in the 'shtetl' of Manhattan, New York. I had the privilege of attending Ramaz Yeshiva in New York, the University of Louisville in Kentucky on an athletic scholarship, and then the George Washington University in Washington, D.C., where I received my doctorate in political science. I wrote my doctoral dissertation on the struggle of Soviet Jewry. I guess I was always haunted by the questions of the Holocaust: How could this have happened? Where was American and global Jewry?

I became the Executive Director of the American Association for Ethiopian Jews (AAEJ), a small, single-issue organisation dedicated to the rescue and relief of Ethiopian Jewry. In May 1992 – one year after the dramatic airlift of Operation Solomon – we closed the AAEJ and, in a twist of fate, I was recruited to work for the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee.

Established in 1914, the Joint, as it is commonly known in more than 70 countries worldwide, is currently celebrating its centennial anniversary. The organisation's mission,

unchanged since inception, is the rescue of Jews in harm's way, the provision of life-saving care for the neediest Jews, and the revitalisation of Jewish communities outside of North America. In the United States and Canada, the Jewish Federations of North America serve as an umbrella body to support local Jewish communities.

There are many Jewish communities, like the Australian Jewish community, that have the capacity to care for themselves and the economic viability to sustain themselves and their local communal needs. However, there are many that do not, and these are the communities that the Joint Distribution Committee supports. Many Holocaust survivors know the JDC because we have been assisting needy communities since 1914. My parents, my in-laws, and the 'survivor community' all know the Joint because it was there for them and ran the displaced persons' camps after the war.

While on a field trip to Tbilissi, Georgia in February last year, I met a 92-year-old woman named Leah. Because I do not speak Georgian or Russian, we were left with Yiddish. When I introduced myself and said I came from the Joint, her face lit up and she said, '*Do zeist mine mishpoche* (you are my family.)' She recounted every program that the JDC runs for her and said that without the JDC, she could not survive. She is homebound, in a four-storey walk-up apartment. The JDC supplies her with a homecare assistant, food packages, and arranges regular visits from Jewish children and others in the community. She kissed me as I left and, when I asked her what her message is for other Jews, it was 'thank you for not forgetting me. I only have you.'

Having worked for the Joint for 20 years, I have seen Jewish communities from Argentina to Uzbekistan. I have heard stories and received expressions of thanks from hundreds of our brothers and sisters around the world. My children, now 26 and 24, have worked with communities in Cuba, Lithuania, Ethiopia and, of course, Israel. I have had the unique privilege of participating in JDC's timeless mission and am pleased to share the wonders and responsibilities of the global Jewish world with Australian Jewry through Joint Australia.

Kol Yisrael Arevim Ze La'Zeh – all Jews are responsible for one another. At the Joint, we take those words, turn them into actions and have the ability to respond to any Jew in need anywhere in the world today.

Dr William Recant is the Joint's Assistant Executive Vice-President and disaster relief expert. He spoke at the Jewish Holocaust Centre in May 2013.



The Joint at work in the Philippines



Confronting the Holocaust: keeping the memory alive

Christopher Woodthorpe

The 2014 commemoration of United Nations International Holocaust Memorial Day was held at the St Kilda Town Hall on 27 January under the auspices of the Jewish Holocaust Centre. The audience included representatives of non-government organisations, Jewish community organisations, Federal, State and local government and members of the diplomatic corps.

The founding principle of the Charter of the United Nations, 'to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war', is testimony to the indelible tie between the United Nations and the unique tragedy of the Second World War.

While the twentieth century produced great achievements, it also witnessed terrible acts of inhumanity and destruction. At one end of the spectrum were dazzling scientific discoveries and technological developments, made by some of history's most brilliant and talented individuals. Paradoxically, human beings during this period also witnessed world wars, destruction, starvation and mass atrocities.

While the United Nations adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention for the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in 1948, and established numerous courts and tribunals to bring to justice the perpetrators of such crimes, the killing and maiming of vulnerable groups persists today.

It is incumbent upon us to ask how such acts of brutality could occur in modern, well-educated and sophisticated societies. What is the driving force behind such aggression and how can it be stopped? How do we ensure that people everywhere enjoy the advantages and fundamental freedoms available in democratic societies, allowing for non-violent conflict resolution within states and between states? What can we learn about human nature by examining these past tragedies to ensure that they will not recur?

Recognising the need to find answers to these vital questions, the United Nations designated 27 January as the annual International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust, commemorating the date in 1945 when Soviet troops liberated the Nazi death camp at Auschwitz-Birkenau.

Member states were urged to develop educational programs to teach future generations the lessons of the Holocaust in order to help to prevent future acts of genocide. The resolution requested that the Secretary-General establish a program of outreach, as well as measures to mobilise civil society for Holocaust remembrance and education. The UN Department of Public Information was mandated to be the lead agency. Since 2006, the theme 'Remembrance and Beyond' has maintained the focus on remembrance and education. As a counterpoint to the

ideology that led to the Holocaust, which sought to strip victims of their humanness, remembrance focuses on the individual and works to give each person a face, a name and a story.

The outreach program works closely with Holocaust survivors to ensure their stories are heard and heeded as a warning against the consequences of antisemitism and other forms of discrimination. In all its activities, particularly with students and educators around the globe, the program draws crucial links between the underlying causes of genocide, the lessons to be learned from the Holocaust and the promotion of human rights today.

A key element of the program is the annual observances held around the world on 27 January. The 2014 observance is centred around the theme 'Journeys through the Holocaust', recalling the journeys taken during this dark period, from deportation to incarceration to freedom, and how this experience transformed the lives of those who endured it. These are stories of pain and suffering, yet ultimately also of triumph and renewal, serving as a guiding force for future generations.

'Journeys through the Holocaust' are at the heart of remembrance events in New York this year, including an NGO briefing on the deportation of the Hungarian Jews and a panel discussion on the rescue of Jews in Albania.

Filmmaker Steven Spielberg delivered the keynote address at the UN commemoration to mark the 20th anniversary of the University of Southern California Shoah Foundation Institute, which was founded by Mr Spielberg following the filming of *Schindler's List*.

As noted, commemorations are held around the world, many organised by the Department's Information Centres located in 63 countries. These United Nations Information Centres (UNIC), of which Canberra is one, extend the educational reach of the United Nations by observing the International Day with civil society groups, government representatives and citizens around the world. Last year, UNICs took part in 66 events in

Europe, 32 in Africa, 13 in Asia and the Pacific and 21 in the Americas. Events included exhibitions, film screenings, educational activities, annual memorial ceremonies and social media activities.

While we realise that no one person or organisation has all the answers, the UN works closely with groups such as the Jewish Holocaust Centre and other not-for-profit, government and educational organisations to confront the Holocaust and keep the memory alive.

Christopher Woodthorpe is the UNIC Canberra Director. This is an abridged version of his keynote address to the 2014 JHC International Holocaust Memorial Day commemoration, which also included a review of the work undertaken by other UN entities, as well as the message of the UN Secretary-General.



Zac Chester

The *Sonderkommando* in Auschwitz-Birkenau: the death factory's squad of Jewish workers

Gideon Greif

'The creation of the special squad, the *Sonderkommando*, has to be considered as the worst crime of the National Socialist regime,' wrote author Primo Levi, himself an Auschwitz survivor, in his well-known book, *The drowned and the saved*. He was absolutely right! To force Jews to work in the Auschwitz death factory, where over 1,300,000 Jews were poisoned to death, is the utmost of evil, cruelty, barbarity and sadism.

This was exactly the intention of the Germans in compelling male Jewish prisoners to become slaves on the biggest assembly line in the world, producing human ashes. Humiliation was an integral and permanent part of the 'Final Solution', and this was humiliation in the extreme.

It is important to note at the outset that the Jewish *Sonderkommando* prisoners were present in all parts of the industrial process, with one crucial exception: they did not kill a single Jew with Zyklon B, the poisonous gas used in the gas chambers. This murder, with no exceptions, was perpetrated by the Germans.

The *Sonderkommando* were slaves who had no alternative but to obey the orders of their tormentors. Their only way of escape was to commit suicide. Few chose this alternative, hoping to survive somehow to tell the world about the Nazis' crimes in Auschwitz and to keep the memory of the murdered Jews alive.

In all killing sites and camps, a central principle of the Germans was the complete elimination of any sign of their crimes. For this reason, they decided not to leave even one survivor of the Jewish *Sonderkommando* slaves alive. So, from the moment of their recruitment, the *Sonderkommando* men were automatically condemned to death. The Germans almost succeeded in achieving their goal, but after murdering more than 3,000, between 80 to 100 miraculously survived. Today there are only four remaining Jewish *Sonderkommando* survivors alive worldwide.

The survival of these Jewish men has enabled us to document the mass killing of 1,500,000 innocent people, mostly Jews, in Auschwitz and Birkenau. Since 1986, I have systematically interviewed those last survivors, who have provided essential information about the inner life of the *Sonderkommando* prisoners and the deceitful

methods of the Germans. My other important source has been the collection of texts called *The Auschwitz Scrolls*, clandestine notes which *Sonderkommando* men wrote and hid in the grounds of the crematoria in Birkenau. These two main sources, supported by a few reports of former SS-Crematoria guards, have enabled us to portray the daily life and routine deaths of the *Sonderkommando* prisoners and the crimes perpetrated by the Germans at Auschwitz-Birkenau.

The first stage of mass killing in Auschwitz began in the Main Camp, in the 'Old Crematoria', where the *Sonderkommando* was born. Still of modest dimensions, in the first months of 1942, some provisional installations were used in Birkenau for the killing of the masses of Jews who were deported to Auschwitz by freight train from all over Europe. As the two provisional installations – Bunker 1 and Bunker 2 – were too small to cope with the huge transports, between March and June 1943, four modern and sophisticated gas chambers and Crematoria, numbered 2 to 5, came into operation in Birkenau. Those facilities were planned to murder as many Jews as possible each day, as quickly and as efficiently as possible. Since so many transports were arriving in Auschwitz-Birkenau – especially during the mass murder of the Hungarian Jews in spring and early summer of 1944 – the German perpetrators had to find a way of organising the process of killing as effectively as possible. As a result, German engineers from technological companies, including Topf und Söhne, planned the more modern four 'death factory' facilities in Auschwitz-Birkenau. These worked just like any other factory, with two main differences: its raw material was human beings, and its end product was ashes from burnt corpses.

The death rate in all gas chambers and crematoria, working non-stop day and night from May 1944 to September 1944 during the Hungarian transports, was between 10,000 and 20,000 murdered Jews per day. During this period *Sonderkommando* prisoners had to work in two shifts, 12 hours per shift.

Without murdering anybody themselves, the *Sonderkommando* men were involved in the process of murder from beginning to end. The first stage was the 'Undressing Hall', part of the deceit of the Germans to

hide their criminal intentions. In this hall, decorated as a changing room of a public bath, they helped sick, old and disabled Jews to undress. Usually they refrained from telling the victims the truth about what was about to happen, in order to grant them a few more minutes of calm.

After the gassing, the *Sonderkommando* men evacuated the hundreds of corpses – sometimes more than 2,000 – from the gas chambers, removing each with their bare hands or trouser belts. In Crematoria 2 and 3, which had an underground compound, they used an electrical elevator to bring the bodies to ground level. In Crematoria 4 and 5 they carried the bodies from the gas chamber to the cremation hall.

The Germans were greedy and wanted to profit from their crimes, so a third group of *Sonderkommando* men was ordered to search the bodies thoroughly to remove all valuables including rings, diamonds, bracelets and gold teeth. They also removed the women's hair, which was later used by the textile industry and for other purposes.

After the body searches, a fourth group of *Sonderkommando* prisoners took all the corpses immediately and threw them into the furnaces, where they burned for approximately 30 to 45 minutes. The remnants which had not been completely burnt were then crushed to become ashes. Incineration aimed to ensure that there were no traces of the crime. As the final stage of the industrialised killing process, the prisoners took the ashes and scattered them in several places, mainly in the Sola and the Vistula (Weichsel), rivers surrounding Birkenau and Auschwitz.

The process of reducing a living person to ashes took four hours. In the words of Shaul Chasan, a *Sonderkommando* survivor from Thessaloniki in Greece: 'At 9:30 in the morning, 3,500 Jews arrived at the Ramp in Birkenau. Four hours later, it was as if these Jews never were born, as if they never reached Auschwitz, as if the earth swallowed them completely.'

The *Sonderkommando* prisoners had much better conditions than any other prisoner in the camp – especially food and accommodation – but they were living on borrowed time, a fact which was known to them from the very beginning. From time to time, the Germans murdered groups of a few hundred *Sonderkommando* men, depending on their ability to recruit new members immediately.

Despite their improved living conditions, they did not lose their values and remained moral and humane. From their testimonies and from the *Scrolls of Auschwitz* we can learn about their inner life and witness their behaviour patterns, which did not surrender to the total evil surrounding them. Furthermore, their hidden scripts reveal the surprising fact that many of them continued to pray to God, keeping their religious traditions and study from the Holy Scriptures, all within the Crematoria buildings. To keep their faith in a 'hell on earth' like Auschwitz-Birkenau required strong inner resolve, and the *Sonderkommando* prisoners proved that their spirit had not been broken and that the Germans, who had tried to break their spirit, had failed.

Members of the *Sonderkommando* also took part in trying to smuggle information about the mass murder out of Auschwitz-Birkenau to inform the free world about

what was happening there. They also participated in the organised resistance movement, and tried to warn the Jews of Hungary, who were about to be deported to Auschwitz, about their fate. One such attempt involved a series of photos taken by a member of the *Sonderkommando* in spring 1944, but the photos never reached their destination. *Sonderkommando* members, however, did assist the most famous two escapes of Jewish prisoners from the camp in spring 1944, and equipped the four escapees with proof of the crimes committed by the Germans in Auschwitz.

The biggest achievement of *Sonderkommando* prisoners in resisting the Nazis was their role in planning and staging the only armed uprising which took place in Auschwitz during the five years of its existence: the *Sonderkommando* uprising, which began on Saturday, 7 October 1944 in the yard of Crematorium 4. This uprising, the third of the Jewish uprisings in the extermination camps (following Treblinka and Sobibor), resulted in severe damage to Crematorium 4, the killing of three SS-guards and the wounding of many others. All brave 451 fighters directly involved in the uprising were killed on the same day, and many of their comrades were murdered in the next days as a reprisal. Four brave Jewish women prisoners were also publicly hanged for their support of the uprising.

One cannot imagine the psychological tension the members of the *Sonderkommando* experienced every day. Some described their reaction to the surroundings and the cruel work they were forced to do as a 'transformation into becoming robots'. The monotonous work at a factory of death became something they did without thinking, in order to preserve a remnant of humanity in their inhuman surroundings.

For many years, the story of the *Sonderkommando* squad was suppressed. The few who survived appeared in very few trials of Auschwitz murderers, generally preferring to stay out of the limelight – opening a new chapter in their lives, creating families, and overcoming the unprecedented trauma they had experienced. For several years they were the targets of false accusations, slander and defamation, allegedly labeled as 'collaborators'.

One of my goals over many years has been to challenge these unjust accusations. My research has revealed that the *Sonderkommando* prisoners were not collaborators at all, but were the most miserable among the miserable prisoners in Auschwitz. In the shadow of hell, they remained humane, and they guarded their moral standards despite their unimaginable circumstances. They were heroes, tragic heroes of Auschwitz.



Dr Gideon Greif is Professor of Jewish and Israeli History at the Schusterman Center for Jewish Studies, University of Texas, and Chief Historian and Researcher at Israel's 'Shem Olam' – Holocaust and Faith Institute for Education, Documentation and Research. This is an edited version of an address he delivered at the Jewish Holocaust Centre in August 2013.

Introducing Pawel Milewski, Polish Ambassador to Australia

The Hon Pawel Milewski took up the post of Ambassador of the Republic of Poland to Australia in April 2013. Izi Marmur speaks with him about his background, his role as Ambassador, and how issues relating to the Holocaust are being addressed in Poland today.

Tell us something about yourself – your background, work experience and your family.

I was born in 1975 at the time when Poland was a communist country and a satellite state of the Soviet Union. I spent my childhood in Warsaw, living in the north of the city with my parents and younger sister. It was a very difficult time, when Poles were struggling for the freedom and independence of their country.



His Excellency, Mr Pawel Milewski, Ambassador of the Republic of Poland.

There are a few things in my life that I will never forget. One is the time when martial law was imposed in Poland in December 1981, and there was a fear of Soviet intervention. Although I was quite small at that time, the dark atmosphere in Warsaw, with tanks and soldiers all around and on the streets, as well as people suffering from the economic crisis during a cold winter, will always stay in my mind. I will also always remember 4 June 1989, the first free elections in Poland, when a free Poland began to be reborn and Lech Walesa, leader of Solidarity, became the first president of non-communist Poland. This makes me confident in saying that my generation is an extremely fortunate one, witnessing Poland peacefully managing to regain its independence and freedom after the suffering experienced during the 20th century – the First and Second World Wars, followed by the communist regime. This has opened a new chapter of its history, with Poland finally becoming a fully-fledged European state.

I grew up in Warsaw but studied in Poznań and in China as a scholarship student. In 1999 I successfully passed the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs exams to become a member of the Polish Foreign Service. Due to my educational background and interests, in 2003 I was posted as a diplomat at the Polish Embassy in Beijing. I was accompanied by my wife, Elizabeth. During our six years in Beijing, our two sons, Julian and Michael, were born. In 2009 I was placed in charge of the Asia and Pacific region,

including Australia, based in the Polish Foreign Ministry in Warsaw. I moved with my family to Canberra in 2013.

What are you aiming to achieve as the Ambassador to Australia?

The crucial target of my mission in Australia is to represent Poland as an important member of the European Union, to promote Polish interests in Australia and to enhance our bilateral relations. Poland and Australia represent the dynamic and fast-developing economies that, among only a few in the world, avoided the recession during the global financial crisis. That is why my priority is to boost and further develop bilateral economic and trade relations, as well as to encourage more investments by both countries. There are approximately 170,000 people living in Australia who identify themselves as being of Polish origin, and the Polish community plays an extremely important role in people-to-people links, which are at the very heart of our bilateral relationship.

Having visited the Jewish Holocaust Centre museum, what are your impressions of the way in which the Holocaust is presented?

The Jewish Holocaust Centre museum was one of the first places I visited in Melbourne in June 2013, less than two months after I began my mission in Australia. I visited the Centre with Honorary Consul General of Poland, Dr George Łuk-Kozika. We were very warmly welcomed by President Pauline Rockman OAM, who was our guide. It is an amazing and unforgettable place, an absolute must-see while visiting Melbourne. With its valuable documentation and well-displayed photos and information, it is a great place in my opinion for educating students and learning about European and world history. The fact that since its opening in 1984 over 400,000 secondary school students have attended its educational programs, is something of which the Centre can be proud.

As a young man growing up in Poland, how much were you taught and what did you know about the Holocaust?

The Holocaust was a part of my history lessons at school. As young people, it was very difficult for me and my fellow students to understand the Holocaust as the process of systematic, bureaucratic, state-sponsored persecution and murder of millions of Jews by the Nazi regime and its collaborators. I remember one day as a teenager, together with my colleagues and teachers, visiting the concentration camps of Auschwitz-Birkenau in the city of Oświęcim in southern Poland. This place, which was the largest of the death camps, has for many nations become the international symbol of terror, genocide and the Holocaust.



(l-r) Dr George Luk-Kozika, Pauline Rockman OAM, Moshe Fiszman, His Excellency the Hon Pawel Milewski and Warren Fineberg

For us as students, our visit was the best history class we had during our schooling on the tragedy and suffering of human beings in 20th century. It was never to be forgotten!

How is the current generation of children being taught about the Holocaust?

Holocaust education is a mandatory part of the Polish education system. School children are taught about the Holocaust during history lessons in the last grade of primary school and the first grade of senior high school. Holocaust-related issues are also raised during Polish literature and civic education lessons in junior high school. Since 2004, each year on 19 April – the anniversary of the beginning of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising in 1943 – all Polish schools observe *Dzień Pamięci o Holokauście i Przeciwdziałaniu Zbrodniom Przeciwko Ludzkości* (Day of Remembrance about the Holocaust and Counteracting Crimes against Humanity). In addition, the Ministry of Education distributes a special textbook titled *Understanding the Holocaust* free of charge to schoolteachers. Edited by an academic and an experienced Holocaust educator, Dr Piotr Trojański, and Robert Szuchta, this book is now in its third edition.

How are issues relating to the Holocaust addressed in Poland today, both officially and at the community level?

The Holocaust has been a topic of public debate in Polish society for decades. It was taken up in earnest after the fall of Communism in 1989 and covers the following aspects: general Polish-Jewish relations shortly before and during the Second World War; the German policy of extermination of the Jews and the German anti-Polish policy; the Polish underground (from the right-wing Narodowe Sily Zbrojne or NSZ, through the mainstream Armia Krajowa or AK, to communist partisans) and the Jews; Polish Government-in-Exile (in London) and its efforts to inform the free world about the plight of the Jews in German-occupied Poland; Polish charity organisations extending help to Jews, specifically the Żegota – the Council for Aid to Jews (co-funded by the Polish Government in London and the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee); Polish

individuals helping the Jews – Polish Righteous Among the Nations; Polish blackmailers and extortionists; Poles denouncing hidden Jews and their Polish hosts; Jews murdered by Poles during and shortly after the Second World War; and German punishment for help offered by Poles to Jews.

The debate about the Holocaust is quite difficult and at times even painful, specifically when it addresses such issues as instances of Poles helping Germans in killing Jews. In 2001, the Polish President, Aleksander Kwaśniewski, officially apologised and asked for forgiveness for Polish participation in the Jedwabne pogrom of 1941. A similar apology was offered in 2011 by President Bronisław Komorowski.

Because of the very nature of the issue, some right-wing elements in Poland find it hard to admit that part of Polish wartime society betrayed their Jewish neighbours during the Second World War and collaborated with the German occupiers in persecuting Jews. Still, ever more Polish historians today delve into the complex subject of Polish-Jewish relations during the war. More and more people in Poland are now ready to accept the fact that – though generally Poles as a nation were a prime victim of German Nazi occupation and lost about six million citizens (including close to three million ethnic Poles) – some Poles became morally corrupt during the war, to the extent of betraying their compatriots, both Jews and Poles, including members of the underground. The debate is a challenge for Polish society at large, but it has resulted in the expression of differing opinions and outlooks and, at the end of the day, difficult truths are being accepted by people from all walks of life. Of course, this is an on-going process that will continue into the future.

What is the general opinion in Poland about the March of the Living?

The March of the Living was initially a closed event, where not only Poles, but also Polish Jews were not welcome. However, in 1998, for the first time a small group of Polish youngsters was invited to participate. Since then, the number of Polish participants has grown. Organised mainly by the Polish Ministry for Education, today around ten school buses with 300-400 Polish schoolchildren join their Jewish friends on the March of the Living. However, the Polish Jewish community would like to be more involved in meeting and having dialogue with March of the Living participants. In addition, for years March of the Living participants were told that Poles were antisemites and that Poland was just a large Jewish graveyard. This has changed to a significant degree through the education of March of the Living participants, but a more open and welcoming approach from the March organisers would be appreciated. In this way, participants would learn more about the legacy of Polish Jewry and gain a fuller, more nuanced picture of Polish-Jewish relations.

Is the Holocaust different from other genocides?

Dan Michman

The issue at stake

What is the relation between the Holocaust and other genocides? Is the Holocaust *a* genocide? Is it the ultimate case of genocide? Is it only/just a genocide?

British historian Donald Bloxham has emphatically stated that:

Between 5,100,000 and 6,200,000 Jews were murdered during the Second World War, an episode the Nazis called the 'final solution of the Jewish question.' The world today knows it as the Holocaust. The subtitle I have chosen for this book – *A Genocide* – uses the indefinite article not to diminish the magnitude of the Holocaust but to encourage the reader to think of it as a particular example of a broader phenomenon.

For Bloxham the lay and historiographical term 'Holocaust', the Nazi administrative term 'Final Solution of the Jewish Question' and the historical act of the murder of close to 6 million Jews mean the same – a genocide. American historian Timothy Snyder, in his best-selling book *Bloodlands: Europe Between Hitler and Stalin* (published in 2010), claims that the murder of the Jews occurred together with, and in the context of, a broader scale of spiralling mass-killing actions carried out by the Hitler and Stalin regimes in a clearly defined time period (the 1930s and 1940s) and in a geographical area – the 'Bloodlands' – stretching from western Poland to the Black Sea. In this interpretation, 'the Holocaust' is not exceptional and does not stay apart, but is a sub-chapter of a bloody epoch occurring in precisely those 'Bloodlands' and not elsewhere because it resulted from 'the Germans and the Soviets... [provoking] one another to ever greater crimes.' 'These atrocities,' says Snyder, 'shared a place, and they shared a time: the bloodlands between 1933 and 1945. To describe their course has been to introduce to European history its *central event*' [my emphasis]. That is, the Holocaust is *not* an event by itself, but part of a much greater murderous event.

In fact, these recent interpretations challenge the understanding that has developed over decades of research, that the Holocaust was exceptional in its nature, 'unique', unprecedented, or the ultimate and most extreme case of genocide (Yehuda Bauer is probably the most outspoken favouring this approach.) Australian historian A Dirk Moses expressed the critical stance bluntly by saying (in 2002): 'Whether similarities [between the Holocaust and other genocides] are more significant than the differences, is ultimately a political and philosophical, rather than a historical question... Uniqueness is not a category for historical research; it is a religious or metaphysical category.' In 2011 he and Bloxham added, regarding the atmosphere in the scholarly community, that 'the relationship between study of the Holocaust and study of genocide warrants reflection, because it has been both negative and positive, characterised variously by synergies, processes of self-definition by mutual exclusion, and occasional resentment.' Australian genocide scholar



(l-r) Warren Fineberg, Dan Michman, Johnny Baker and Michael Cohen

Colin Tatz even described the situation as follows: 'Our maturing discipline [of genocide studies] needs to find a sense of collegiality, consensus on terminology, and yardsticks with which to measure scales, dimensions, and degrees of the crime... *Foremost is the challenge of finding a space for encompassing and embracing the Holocaust with some comfort. The judeocide is an ally, not an enemy, and not on the margins!*' That is, Tatz discerns an enmity in the camp of genocide scholars towards the status of the Holocaust and a tendency to marginalise it. This is, of course, amazing, not to say alarming.

Illustration 1: Yehuda Bauer's view – the Holocaust is the most extreme case of the genocide phenomenon

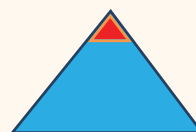
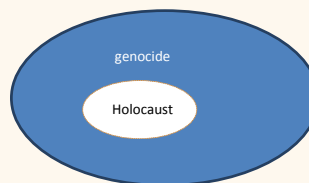


Illustration 2: The view of many genocide (and some Holocaust) scholars – the Holocaust is one case of genocide, perhaps bigger, but not essentially different



Shoah, Holocaust, Churban and more: some remarks on the terminology

Shoah, meaning 'catastrophe' or 'disaster' and, to a lesser extent, *Churban* (in Hebrew) or *Churban* (the Yiddish pronunciation of the same word) meaning 'destruction', are the Hebrew words that have remained in use over the past seven decades in the internal Jewish discourse designating the fate of the Jews during the Nazi era; they had already been used in internal Jewish discourse from 1933. More terms arose during the period itself and immediately after 1945. *Holocaust*, a Greek word meaning 'entirely burnt sacrifice', originally relating to pagan sacrifices, was used in the Greek version of the Bible to translate the Biblical *korban* 'ola. It gradually entered the

discourse as the leading term for Jews' fate in the Nazi era towards the late 1950s, precisely when the cumulative results of the first wave of scholarly research on the perpetrators, first and foremost carried out by German researchers, concluded that antisemitism and anti-Jewish policies had not just been one of the many facets of the Third Reich but were central to its totality. In other words, the 'Jewish' ingredient of the Nazi period was recognised as having special, pivotal importance and *that* fact raised the quest for some clear designation, that is, an epithet.

Approaching the issue methodologically

One should pay methodological attention to the above-mentioned fact, that the terms *Shoah*, *Churban* and *Holocaust* (as well as the other ones that faded away) were *existing* words that were picked up in the discourse relating to the fate of the Jews during the Nazi period, not originally coined to represent this event. Additionally, they are vague and do not indicate what exactly happened and when. The term 'genocide', on the contrary, was newly coined in 1943 and made public in 1944 by Raphael Lemkin, with the purpose to designate – in a universalising mode – crimes such as the murder of the Jews. Although the mass killing of the Armenians by the Turks in 1915 had been the starting point for Lemkin's contemplation (as early as 1933), the Nazi crimes with the murder of the Jews as their peak served as the final catalyst for his initiative. He defined genocide as follows:

... a coordinated plan of different actions aiming at the destruction of essential foundations of the life of national groups, with the aim of annihilating the groups themselves. The objectives of such a plan would be disintegration of the political and social institutions, of culture, language, national feelings, religion, and the economic existence of national groups, and the destruction of the personal security, liberty, health, dignity, and even the lives of the individuals belonging to such groups. Genocide is directed against the national group as an entity, and the actions involved are directed against individuals, not in their individual capacity, but as members of the national group.

Does 'The Holocaust' fit the definition proposed by Lemkin or the varying definitions proposed later – in the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (1948) or by scholars?

Conceptualisation of 'the Holocaust'

Over the years, scholars have proposed differing conceptualisations of the Holocaust; they can be found in comprehensive histories of the event and in encyclopedias and dictionaries. Yet in recent years it has become gradually common to identify the Holocaust with the systematic murder of the Jews – a misconception which led to the understandings quoted in the beginning of this article.

A thorough examination of the Nazi enterprise will show that the core of what we should use the term Holocaust for is the attempt to eradicate the 'Jewish spirit' from the universe. Hitler and his adherents believed in the idea that Jews and Jewish ideas polluted and haunted the world. SS-man Dieter Wisliceny, one of Adolf Eichmann's aides, explained in 1946 that in Nazism's view,

the world is directed by forces of good and evil. According to this view, the principle of evil was embodied in the Jews... This world of images is totally incomprehensible in logical or rational terms [because] it is a form of religiosity that leads to sectarianism. Millions of people believed these

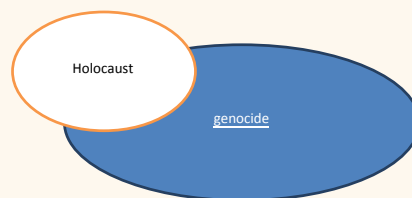
things... something that can be compared only to similar phenomena from the Middle Ages, such as the mania of witches (Hexenwahn).

In other words, the Jewish spirit had to be exorcised though the removal of its human-like carriers – the physical Jews – as well as through the Sisyphean *Kampf* (struggle) against all expressions of 'Jewishness'. Yet Jewishness was not what Jews perceive as such, but all kinds of ideas and political systems which are based on and promote equality. The *jüdischen Geist* was worldwide and polluted the universe; among the many enemies of Nazi Germany, the Jews were the only group to which the terms 'world' or 'international' were attributed (*das Weltjudentum* or *internationales Judentum*). Jews were described as being everywhere in the world; moreover, they were the 'binding element of the obstacle front of all adversaries of National-Socialism.' For Hitler, within his grand version of restructuring the world on the basis of the racial principle, the war against the Jews became a central obsession, accompanying his political career throughout; indeed, his September 1919 expression '*Entfernung der Juden überhaupt* (the total removal of the Jews)' was and remained the guiding principle of his endeavor. This extreme vision was not only Hitler's, important as that was: it was shared by many lower echelon functionaries 'working towards the Führer,' but also outside the bureaucracy, within and outside Germany. Nazi antisemitism took the lead, but it radicalised other types of antisemitism too, and thus could become a European enterprise.

The attempt to exorcise Jews and Jewry was not simple at all. For that purpose the Jews, who were scattered, with multiple identities and often unidentifiable, had to be cast out. This was done through a variety of means: legal definitions, visual marking, expropriation, expulsion and finally – well-organised wholesale murder. But the all-embracing campaign against the Jewish spirit also included self-purification – an *Entjudungskampf* (battle for de-judaisation) of the German language, legal system and the like. As such, 'the Holocaust' went *beyond* the typical pattern of one group aiming at the disappearance of another one: it was the attempt to exorcise the Jewish destructive spirit, and this included a genocidal chapter – the murder of the carriers of that spirit – as well as the erasure of its imprints wherever they could be identified.

My conclusion is that the murder of close to 6 million Jews was the *partial* result of the Final Solution, which itself was only one chapter of the Holocaust.

Illustration 3: The Holocaust as an event going beyond the genocide model



Professor Dan Michman is Head of the International Institute for Holocaust Research and Incumbent of the John Najmann Chair of Holocaust Studies at Yad Vashem and Full Professor of Modern Jewish History and Chair of the Arnold and Leona Finkler Institute of Holocaust Research at Bar-Ilan University, Israel. In August 2013 he was Mandelbaum Scholar-in-Residence at the University of Sydney and spoke at the Jewish Holocaust Centre Melbourne. This is an edited version of his address.

Nazi and Stalinist legacies: implications of EU commemoration

Stefan Kunath



Stefan Kunath

The European Union (EU) has commemorated the victims of Nazism and Stalinism annually on 23 August since 2009, the date on which the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact was signed in 1939 between Nazi Germany and Stalinist Russia. The aim of the commemoration is to promote European unity and democracy, and to honour the victims of Nazism and Stalinism. It has, however, achieved

none of these objectives. This annual commemoration is instead used to promote the revisionist, Europhobe and anti-democratic agendas of far-right groups and even those of the political mainstream in Eastern Europe.

The uniqueness of Nazism was its inherent antisemitism, the culmination of which was in the industrial, organised, state-sponsored mass extermination of European Jews. Rationally planned and executed, the purpose of Auschwitz and other death camps was irrational. German-American historian Moishe Postone notes that ‘the extermination of the Jews seems not to have been a means to another end. They were not exterminated for military reasons or in the course of a violent process of land acquisition... The extermination of the Jews was not only to have been total, but was its own goal – extermination for the sake of extermination – a goal that acquired absolute priority.’ According to Postone, this ‘qualitative specificity’ distinguishes the Holocaust from other genocides.

This blatant distinction – the uniqueness of the Holocaust – is denied by the Prague Declaration of 3 June 2008, signed by leading public figures across EU society, most of whom originated from former East European Socialist states. Notably, the declaration was signed by Joachim Gauck, who became President of Germany in 2012, the late Margaret Thatcher, and Václav Havel of the Czech Republic. The signatories argue that both National-Socialist Germany and the Stalinist Soviet Union were completely equivalent criminal regimes. Consequently, they lobbied to implement a common memorial day for victims of Nazism and Stalinism. Moreover, they demanded recognition of communist crimes to be labelled as crimes against humanity, in the same way that Nazi crimes were assessed by the Nuremberg Trials.

The so-called European Day of Remembrance for Victims of Stalinism and Nazism was first marked by the European Parliament on 23 August 2009. The document which served as the basis for the commemoration had been drafted by European conservatives, liberals and greens

together with the Union for Europe of the Nations. This former EU parliamentary group, which existed between 1999 and 2009, comprised ultra-nationalist and extremely Europhobe members, most of them from Eastern Europe. Hence, it is doubtful that their aim was to strengthen mutual European understanding of history; rather, they utilise the day to spread revisionist positions that downplay Nazi crimes. Austrian historian Heidemarie Uhl has noted that the day is institutionally used to propagate the myth of Eastern European people as collective victims of a double genocide which they faced from both Germany and the Soviet Union. They argued that they were passive victims, thus exonerating themselves from perpetrating crimes against the Jews during the Holocaust.

This strategy, for those who committed crimes against the Jews to claim that they in fact were victims rather than perpetrators, is not only a contention of far-right organisations but also of the political mainstream, primarily in Eastern Europe. Israeli-born German historian, Michael Wolffsohn, has accused Latvian Sandra Kalniete, a member of the European Parliament in the conservative European People’s Party and former EU commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development, of ‘virtually unbearable, almost provocative ... embellishment of Latvian collaboration with German occupants during the Holocaust.’ Kalniete claims the perception of Latvians as fascist and antisemitic was nothing other than Soviet propaganda. She argues that the documentation proving the voluntary and brutal collaboration of Latvians with the Germans in the oppression and killings of Jews was falsified by the Soviet security agency, the KGB. Yet, during Germany’s occupation of the Baltic States, around 95 percent of Baltic Jews were murdered – the highest proportion of Jews exterminated in the Holocaust. The German forces could not have achieved this without the collaboration of sections of the local populations of Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia. Furthermore, the extensive amount of existing documentation makes the involvement of Baltic nations in the crimes against the Jews incontrovertible. It appears that the Baltic States, which regained their independence less than three decades ago, are today attempting to foster a positive view of their national history and, by so doing, aim to deny any involvement in the Holocaust.

The European Remembrance Day was implemented to strengthen mutual European consciousness to consolidate trans-national democracy in the EU. The effect, however, has proved to be diametrically opposed to the intention. By conflating Nazism and Stalinism under the umbrella of totalitarianism, Eurosceptics and Europhobes have been afforded the opportunity to rally against the EU itself, claiming it to be a totalitarian organisation. On the one hand Eastern European nationalists accept the EU as they perceive it to be a loose confederation of nation states arrayed against Russia. On the other hand, however, they are opposed to giving up their national sovereignty to the EU. They deem the EU to be the new ‘EUSSR’ that erases all cultural differences into one superstate.

Despite the fact that the Baltic States argue that they adhere to democratic principles, they are nevertheless prepared to discriminate against, and even to prosecute, those who endorse the view that there was widespread collaboration between Balts and Nazis during the Holocaust. A well-publicised example of this was the case of Yitzchak Arad, former director of Yad Vashem. In 2006 Lithuanian authorities commenced investigations, subsequently dropped, against Arad for committing war crimes against humanity during the Second World War. Arad had fought in a Soviet resistance group against German troops and Lithuanian collaborators.

The EU must reconsider its remembrance policy. Firstly,

the current Memorial Day should be divided into two to commemorate the victims of Nazism and Stalinism separately. The two should not be conflated. Secondly, while it is important to memorialise the victims of Stalinism, the commemoration should not serve as a ploy to foster revisionism and nationalism. Thirdly, commemoration should serve as an opportunity for national introspection – for all states, especially those involved in crimes against humanity – to examine their own past.

Stefan Kunath is a post-graduate student of European Studies in Frankfurt (Oder) who completed an internship at the Jewish Holocaust Centre in March 2014.

The Betty and Shmuel Rosenkranz Oration: commemorating the 75th anniversary of *Kristallnacht*



(l-r) Helen Mahemoff, Judy Goldman, Rabbi James Kennard, Nina Bassat AM and Pauline Rockman

In November 2013 the Jewish Holocaust Centre held the Betty and Shmuel Rosenkranz Oration at the Centre, co-hosted by the Jewish Community Council of Victoria (JCCV). The oration is held annually to honour Shmuel and his late wife, Betty, for their outstanding contribution to the Jewish Holocaust Centre and to the wider Jewish community generally.

This year's oration, which marked the 75th anniversary of *Kristallnacht*, was delivered by Rabbi James Kennard, principal of Mt Scopus Memorial College. Rabbi Kennard's address was followed by a panel discussion of young people, moderated by Bram Presser.

Rabbi Kennard addressed the question of whether Holocaust commemoration should be bound up with commemorating other genocides. He argued that the danger of linking the Holocaust with other historical events was threefold: trivialisation, contextualisation and comparison. Rabbi Kennard stated, 'We have lost the concept of the word Holocaust as we know it, as Holocaust imagery is used in other broader contexts.' For example, Stalin's atrocities in the Soviet Union and the carpet bombing of German cities by the Allies are compared with the Holocaust. In this way, the Holocaust is not seen as unique, and the actions of the perpetrators of the Holocaust are portrayed as less evil in this broader context.

Rabbi Kennard questioned the date of 27 January chosen by the United Nations as Holocaust Memorial Day, as that was the day that soldiers of the Soviet Army liberated Jews at Auschwitz. He suggested that the Hebrew date of

27 Nissan, the actual date of the Jewish remembrance day Yom Hashoah might have been more appropriate.

Rabbi Kennard argued that it is important to perpetuate the memory of the Holocaust. He said, 'We remember communities, families and individuals because it gives humanity back to the people we remember.' Commemoration also enables us to learn from the past – to ensure that such things will never happen again.

During his address, Rabbi Kennard identified six factors, the combination of which he believes made the Holocaust unique: the fact that it was state-sponsored and organised; its systematic program of dehumanisation; the industrialisation used for the process of death; its scale – not just the murder of six million Jews, but the extent to which the entire German war machine was dedicated to one purpose, the destruction of the Jews; the use of the killing of Jews, not as a means to an end but as an end in itself; and the fact that the killing was not carried out by monsters, but by ordinary people.

These elements, Rabbi Kennard argued, are not found collectively in any other event in human history, and Holocaust relativism makes us forget what was unique about the Holocaust and takes away our power to remember and to learn. Although he said that it is important to understand that there were some elements of the Holocaust that are common to other events, he warned that we must be vigilant about using Holocaust symbols, language and imagery for those events, and we must continue to commemorate the Holocaust as a unique and separate tragedy.



(l-r) Josh Monester, Aaron Densham, Bram Presser, Yossi Reicher and Shifra Bendet

An unforgettable moment in Corfu

Sam Rychter



Zinos Moshe Velelis with his father's Auschwitz prison shirt

During our recent Mediterranean cruise, our ship dropped anchor at the island of Corfu. Together with many of the passengers, we disembarked in order to explore this beautiful island.

My wife, Sonia, and I wanted to visit the local shule. We referred to our map but could not find it. After a long and unsuccessful search we

were very disappointed and about to give up our quest. In desperation we asked a couple of old locals for directions. As luck would have it, one of them pointed to a shopkeeper across the road and said that he was the president of the Corfu Jewish community.

We walked across and were warmly welcomed by the gentleman who opened the modest synagogue and invited us inside. He gave us a short talk about the past Jewish history of Corfu, and told us that before the war there

were over 2,000 Jews living there. Nearly all of them were taken to concentration camps where they perished. Only 300 survived. The gentleman's father was one of the 150 survivors who returned to Corfu, while the balance went to Israel.

Today the Jewish community of Corfu numbers only 70 and the synagogue is only open on the High Holidays when a Rabbi arrives from Israel to conduct the services.

As we were about to leave, having said shalom to our 'guide', he suddenly called out to us to invite us into his store. We followed him thinking that he wanted to sell us something. He then took a plastic wrapping from the top shelf which contained his father's Auschwitz striped shirt. He spread it on the counter in front of us. As we touched the shirt, tears rolled from our eyes. This was a most emotional moment, something never experienced before, as suddenly we were in physical contact with the Holocaust. We stood in silence, trembling.

Sam Rychter is a child survivor of the Holocaust. This is an edited version of an article originally published in the Melbourne edition of the Australian Jewish News, 24 July 2008, and is reproduced with permission from the author.

Jewish life on the Greek island of Corfu

Freda Hodge

After reading Sam Rychter's description of his visit to Corfu, and his encounter with the son of a Holocaust survivor, I was inspired to delve into the history of the Jewish community of Corfu. Sam's emotional reaction to the sight of an Auschwitz uniform, worn by the father of a Corfu shopkeeper, was deeply touching.

The earliest written evidence of Jewish settlement in Corfu can be traced back to the 12th century. The small population of Jews on the island increased when a number of Jews expelled from Spain, Portugal and Italy during the 15th and 16th centuries settled in Corfu. The quality of Jewish life varied over time, depending on who was in power. During the Venetian occupation in the 16th century, the Jews were moved into a Jewish quarter which became a de facto ghetto. At that time the Jews comprised as much as twenty five percent of the island's inhabitants. With the advent of Napoleon in 1797, the Jews gained additional civic rights, and despite some antisemitic occurrences during the following centuries, relations between Jews and Greeks during the 20th century were amicable.

The Jews of Corfu spoke their own polyglot dialect which consisted of a mixture of Hebrew and Venetian (an Italian dialect). Native Jews of Corfu were of three distinct divisions – Greek, Spanish and Appulian, originating in different epochs.

With the German occupation of Greece during the Second World War, the Jewish community in Corfu, which numbered about 2,500 persons, was decimated. The Nazis evacuated 2,000 Jewish victims, most of whom were murdered in Auschwitz. A number of Jews were helped by sympathetic Christians, who enabled them to survive the war years.



Corfu Holocaust memorial



Corfu Holocaust memorial plaque

Today, the small Jewish community maintains the remaining synagogue (there were formerly three), named Scuola Greca, in Velissariou Street, in impeccable condition, thus preserving Jewish culture and identity. Services are conducted on High Holy Days, but few ceremonies are held there, as the young people have left. The last Jewish wedding took place in the synagogue in 1993.

Zachariah Soussis, the acting spokesman for the community, describes Jewish Corfu today as 'a shell of its former self'. In his opinion, the only remaining synagogue will eventually

become a museum because the Jewish community will no longer be in existence in the near future.

A 250-year-old Jewish cemetery still exists and contains graves of historical interest. However, present burials take place in a separate cemetery called 'the Greek cemetery'.

In 2001, the local government aided the Jewish community in setting up a Holocaust monument in the Square of the New Fortress. The monument is a bronze sculpture of a nude group consisting of a woman cradling an infant and a man attempting to protect a boy who hides his face against his father's thigh. On the stone base is a plaque which states 'Never again for any Nation.'

Angela Merkel visits Dachau

Hannah Miska

Chancellor Angela Merkel
and Max Mannheimer

(Photo: Stiftung Bayerische
Gedenkstätten, Sebastian Freller)



It was the talk of the town, and you could not escape the news: Angela Merkel, Chancellor of Germany, was going to visit the Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial Site. Days before, there was a discussion about it on radio, television and in the newspapers. The news even hit the headlines of *Le Figaro* and *The Times of Israel*.

The event was historic, as it was the first time in post-war Germany that a Chancellor would visit Dachau. Merkel had responded to an invitation from Max Mannheimer, Auschwitz and Dachau survivor and Vice President of the International Dachau Committee: when in November 2012 he read that Chancellor Merkel was planning to come to Dachau as part of her election campaign, he wasted no time in inviting her to pay a visit to the Memorial Site.

Built in March 1933, Dachau was one of the first concentration camps in Germany, serving as a prototype for all other concentration camps that followed. Initially used mainly for political opponents, the Nazis increasingly imprisoned Jews, clergy, Sinti and Roma, homosexuals, criminals and civilians from occupied countries. Dachau was the only camp that existed for the entire period of the Third Reich, from 1933 until 1945. During those twelve years, a total of 200,000 people were incarcerated there under very cruel conditions. Of those prisoners, at least 42,500 were murdered. Today, the Memorial Site is visited annually by 800,000 people worldwide.

Angela Merkel was 'very touched to be invited by a Holocaust survivor', and visited Dachau on 20 August 2013. I was fortunate to be included in the small number of invited guests. Our contingent of around 30 people included eight Holocaust survivors, and when we gathered on the former roll call square, we were totally outnumbered by approximately 100 journalists and photographers of the international press. Next to me stood an excited journalist who was attending his first assignment in Germany for the *New York Times*.

Angela Merkel was expected to arrive at 6:45pm, and it was becoming cool when the helicopter hovered above our heads and landed on a police airfield nearby. Shortly after, the Chancellor arrived, accompanied by other politicians. Karl Freller, director of the Foundation of Bavarian Concentration Camp Memorials addressed the dignitaries and members of the audience, emphasising the importance of Dachau as a memorial and educational centre. He spoke of a current neo-Nazi trial in Munich, reminding us of the ever-present dangers of racism, hatred and violence.

Angela Merkel started her speech with emotional and warm words, confessing that she is filled with deep sadness and shame when thinking about the murdered victims, and the survivors who would feel the pain for their entire lives. Meeting the survivors at this place where terror, violence and murder had been a daily routine for them and their families, she said, was a very moving moment for her.

'How could it happen in Germany that people were denied their dignity and their right to live because of their origin,

religion, political beliefs or sexual orientation; and that the vast majority of the Germans did not do anything against it or, at least, allowed it to happen?' she asked poignantly, only to answer that never again should anything like this happen in Germany.

'This is an enduring responsibility we inherited from the past,' she said. 'Therefore we support facilities like the Dachau Memorial Site which remind us of the victims and of the crimes of the Germans under National Socialism ... We know from the past that the memory has to be passed on from generation to generation. Young people have to know what suffering has been caused by Germany. They have to learn how to confront extremist views and tendencies. Those who are young today will have to tell their children and their grandchildren.'

At the end of her speech Merkel thanked Max Mannheimer and all the other survivors who bear witness tirelessly in order to combat antisemitism and racism. 'Many survivors,' she said, 'well advanced in years now, still work today. I hold you in high regard for what you do for us – for us, who did not have to experience the terror ... I would like to thank you for this because I know that

what you do cannot be taken for granted. It is a bridge from the past to the present that we will continue to build into the future.'

This gratitude goes far beyond the borders of Germany, and to me, having been involved with the Jewish Holocaust Centre in Melbourne, it felt as if Merkel was also addressing survivors at the Centre.

The Chancellor concluded her visit by laying a wreath and visiting the museum, where she took the time to talk to survivors without the presence of the press. Back on the roll call square, Merkel was given the *Death Book of Dachau*, in which the names of 33,205 victims of Dachau are recorded. She ended her visit with the words: 'I thank you for allowing me to be here today.'



Chancellor Merkel receives the
Death Book of Dachau

(Photo: Stiftung Bayerische Gedenkstätten,
Sebastian Freller)



Chancellor Merkel with Holocaust survivors
in the Dachau museum

(Photo: Stiftung Bayerische Gedenkstätten,
Sebastian Freller)

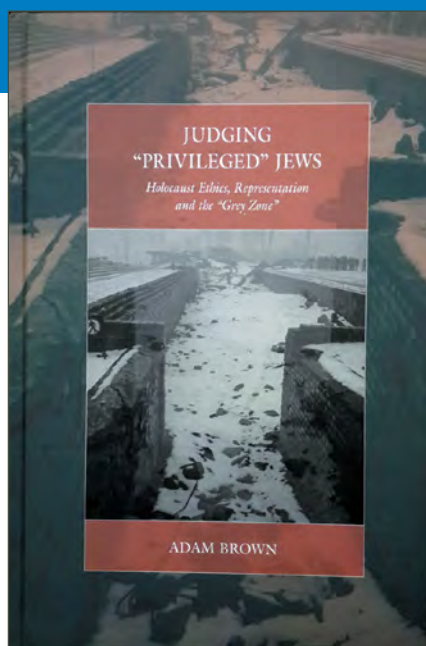
Judging 'Privileged' Jews: origins of a book

Adam Brown

The evolution of my book, *Judging 'Privileged' Jews: Holocaust Ethics, Representation and the 'Grey Zone'*, was – like most books no doubt – somewhat long and complex. To take the long-term view, the project began when I heard the moving personal stories spoken by survivor guides on a high school trip to the Jewish Holocaust Centre (JHC) in 1999. As a non-Jewish teenager with next to no background knowledge of the event, the visit to the JHC inspired a lasting curiosity and sense of obligation to find out more. A shorter-term perspective might see the book as beginning when a friend emailed me the program for the annual Jewish Film Festival at the Australian Centre for the Moving Image some ten years ago. On that program was a film called *The Grey Zone*, written and directed by Tim Blake Nelson and first released in 2001. The film depicts the traumatic experiences of the twelfth *Sonderkommando* (special squad) forced to work in the gas chambers and crematoria of Auschwitz-Birkenau, and offers a complex, unsentimental engagement with the extreme ethical dilemmas that many Holocaust victims confronted.

On the train journey to the screening, I read Primo Levi's highly influential essay entitled 'The Grey Zone', which influenced Nelson to delve into the same issues of moral ambiguity and 'compromise' in his film. Both of these texts, some of the few to focus explicitly and centrally on the taboo issue of 'privilege', have stayed with me to this day. In this context, the term 'privileged' Jews refers to those prisoners in the Nazi-controlled camps and ghettos who held positions that gave them access to material and other benefits beyond those available to other Jews, particularly the members of the *Judenräte* (Jewish councils), *Ordnungsdienst* (Jewish police), *Kapos* (chiefs) of labour squads, and other prisoner-functionaries. These victims have often been seen to have acted at the expense of fellow prisoners in various ways, for various reasons, and under varying levels of coercion. Meditating on their unprecedented circumstances, Levi provocatively argued that victims who were forced to cooperate with their Nazi persecutors in order to prolong their own or their families' lives should not be judged for their behaviour.

As Levi highlighted while writing in the 1980s, judgements of 'privileged' Jews are frequently problematic, and such judgements continue to permeate society and culture to this day. Yet whether or not moral evaluations are appropriate, they are also inevitable (the very nature of language makes them so), and Levi himself could not



suspend judgement of those he argued should not be judged. Taking Levi's 'grey zone' as a point of departure, *Judging 'Privileged' Jews* explores the portrayal of the *Sonderkommandos* and other categories of so-called 'privileged' prisoners in survivor testimony, historical writing, and documentary and fiction films. More specifically, I analyse the ways in which moral judgements are passed in various representations, from Raul Hilberg's influential writings to Claude Lanzmann's *Shoah* (1985) and Steven Spielberg's *Schindler's List* (1993).

The book does not claim to provide a comprehensive picture of this subject – far from it, as many new writings and films depicting 'privileged' prisoners have been and continue to be released. But I

hope it serves as a first step of many in addressing issues that have been left unexamined for too long; issues both fundamental to present-day attempts to understand the Holocaust and deeply relevant to reflections on human nature more generally. *Judging 'Privileged' Jews* was the product of several years of research as part of my PhD undertaken at Deakin University, though it has also been invaluable informed by my close contact with local Holocaust survivors, particularly my dear friend Phillip Maisel OAM, to whom the book is dedicated. My work in general also owes a great deal to the many conversations I have had with JHC volunteers and visitors, particularly at the Centre's public film screenings, which continue to reiterate the crucial importance of viewing and discussing films about the Holocaust. One film started it all for me (or nearly, anyway). I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has supported the JHC Film Club

over the past three years – and who will support the Club in future years. I congratulate the commitment and achievement of the Holocaust survivors and staff who have made the JHC what it has become over the past thirty years.

Please visit the Jewish Holocaust Centre website jhc.org.au or phone the Centre on (03) 9528 1985 for full screening details, or email Adam Brown (abrown@deakin.edu.au) to join the JHC Film Club mailing list.



Adam Brown

Once, Then, Now and After

A series of four books by Morris Gleitzman

Reviewed by Julia Reichstein



Morris Gleitzman's Jewish grandfather fled Poland before the Second World War, but his extended family was not so fortunate to escape the Holocaust. Gleitzman's *Once* series looks at the Holocaust from a child's perspective. Although the two main characters, Felix and Zelda, are fictional, the books are inspired by real people and events.

Felix is Jewish and his story begins when he is ten years old and living in a Polish

Catholic orphanage, masquerading as Catholic during the Second World War. Spanning four years from 1942 to the war's end in 1945, we follow Felix's life in hiding, the forging of an irreplaceable friendship with a non-Jewish girl named Zelda, and his incarceration in the Warsaw Ghetto. We learn how he acquired medical knowledge, quite incidentally, and how this knowledge was to serve as the key to his survival later on. We also read of his round-up and deportation to the Auschwitz concentration camp, his many escapes from death, the constant danger of being exposed as a Jew, and the family units he forms and loses along the way. Finally, the reader learns of his reluctant induction as a partisan and medical assistant, his liberation, and his present-day life as a Holocaust survivor residing in Melbourne, Australia.

Once

Once is Gleitzman's ironic reference to the idealistic fairy-tale opening line, 'Once upon a time...' Chronicling one year in the life of protagonist Felix in 1942, *Once* is the heart-wrenching tale of a boy's loss of innocence as he is forced to awaken from his thoughtfully woven tales and imaginings of happy endings to daily hunger, pursuits, prejudice, fear and immeasurable suffering. In many respects, *Once* puts adults on trial to cross-examine their motives and impact upon the children left to suffer at the hands of power, corruption and blind hatred. Felix discovers that no person will be spared this chapter of brutality – not even the reader.

Then

Then marks Felix's transition from a trusting, naive boy to a wary and cautious father figure who lives in anticipation of the evil which others are capable of inflicting. His focus

shifts away from himself as he develops a great sense of responsibility towards his new family, particularly towards Zelda, doing whatever it takes to keep her safe from what he believes to be her biggest threat – himself, a Jew.

Narrated with furious determination, the story is one of defiance and hope rather than despair.

Now

Now reintroduces the reader to Felix through the eyes of his granddaughter, Zelda, in February 2009. It is another adrenaline-pumping account focused on asserting life and self, empathy and forgiveness, against the backdrop of Australia's devastating Black Saturday bushfires.

In order to survive, the pair must confront their past, current fears, demons and bullies. *Now* is also a testament to the power of unconditional love, understanding and commitment to compassion despite – and because of – past sufferings and injustices.

After

After is a begrudging wink to the fairy-tale reference, 'All lived happily ever after.' In this fourth book of the series, the Second World War is nearing its end and we are reunited with a thirteen-year old Felix who reluctantly joins the Polish partisans as a surgeon-in-training.

Through the physical and emotional ravages that Felix has endured, a new desire surfaces – to kill, despite his innate yearnings to be merciful. This internal struggle proves Felix's greatest battle yet, and the reader's confrontation with the most heart-wrenching eyewitness account.

When Morris Gleitzman spoke at the Jewish Holocaust Centre last August, he was challenged about his protagonist's employment of storytelling to maintain a naiveté towards the realities of the Holocaust. His response was that storytelling serves as Felix's core survival strategy and means of resistance against his oppressors' attempts to crush his spirit.

While Felix does his utmost to employ his own narrative to explain the incomprehensible, what is truly occurring is not hidden from the reader. In this respect, I believe the author has acted responsibly. He has also painted an honest portrait of the average child, and the very tools he or she employs to remain resilient – imagination, curiosity, unwavering optimism and hope. These are the very strategies that can equip a child with courage to act in the moment, which in turn can cultivate the ultimate of courage, the courage of conviction.

In reading this series, I did have some reservation about primary school children being exposed to certain events depicted, as well as the protagonist's emotional turmoil. That said, I also felt that the author showed a great deal of respect for his readership in not trying to sugar-coat events or underestimate his readers' capacity to handle such accounts.

The *Once* series delves deep into the human psyche, allowing the characters to discuss, analyse and ask why. It permits the reader to cry with the characters, and though Felix (and the reader) can never find true consolation from their shared experience, there is much solace in knowing that conversation and compassion will continue long after the last page is turned. This powerful series absolutely deserves to be on the school curriculum's reading list.

Recognising the contribution of volunteers



Joey Borensztajn



JCCV Community Recognition Award recipients, including Irma Hanner and Lena Fisman (front centre) and Max Wald (back centre)

Members of Melbourne's Jewish community who give of their time unstintingly to the community were recently recognised in the annual JCCV Community Recognition Awards.

A number of Jewish Holocaust Centre (JHC) volunteers and staff were recognised for their work at the JHC and other affiliated organisations: Max Wald for his work with

the Australian Jewish Historical Society; Lena Fisman for her work with the Australian Society of Polish Jews and Their Descendents; Irma Hanner for her work at the Jewish Holocaust Centre; and Emmanuel Santos for his involvement in the March of the Living. Joey Borensztajn, a Trustee of the JHC Foundation, was awarded the prestigious General Sir John Monash Award for outstanding service.

Students and guides graduate from the Mina Fink Guide Training Course

On Sunday 15 December 2013, students of the 2103 Mina Fink Guide Training Course were invited to a graduation celebration at the Centre.

The course offers a comprehensive view of the Holocaust, while at the same time incorporating the stories of Melbourne survivors. As in previous years, the course was offered as a stand-alone enrichment program. However, students were also invited to undertake extra training to become accredited volunteer guides in the Jewish Holocaust Centre (JHC) museum. Over twenty people participated in the course, and seven graduates have become museum guides who have now commenced guiding.

The graduation was the culmination of another successful course designed by Zvi Civins and led by teacher, scholar and friend, Dr Bill Anderson. As in previous years, the course incorporated lectures by JHC educators Bill Anderson, Sue Hampel OAM, Zvi Civins and Michael Cohen, as well as some prominent international guest lectures. The students were also invited to join in a four-part lecture series by renowned Holocaust historian Christopher Browning at the Australian Centre for Jewish Civilizations and the Wheeler Centre, as well as lectures by academics Professor Gideon Grief and Professor Dan Michman at the JHC.

At the graduation ceremony, graduates were acknowledged for their dedication and achievements. They were presented with certificates and those who undertook guide training were presented with lanyards. There was a Q&A session with JHC Education Officer Tammy Reznik, and child survivor Paul Grinwald, and Barbara Sacks addressed the group representing the JHC guides.

In the words of course participant Naomi Saporta: 'I am so appreciative of how Bill and our other lecturers presented such confronting events and experiences, their compassion running through all they were teaching ... It is a wonderful thing to have the Holocaust Centre here in Melbourne, reaching out with great dedication and skill to so many, helping us to gain some understanding of events seemingly unfathomable. And, alas, too much that is still happening.'

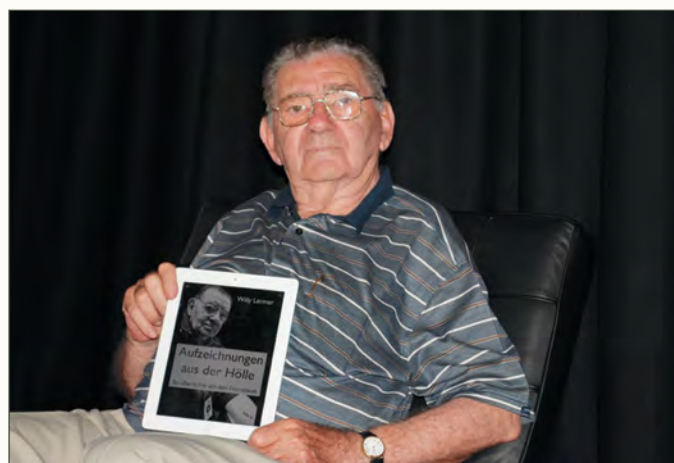
We are grateful to Dr Bill Anderson, who has both directed and taught most of the course on an ongoing basis, who continues to do so, and who volunteers his time so generously and unstintingly to the Jewish Holocaust Centre.



(l-r) Stephen Peterson, Judy Rassaby, Mary Slade, Elisa Gray, Gregoria Boursinos, Nikki Perzuck, Lily Weinberg, Anita Frayman, Irena Zaguri, Leah Kaplan, Mareike Montgomery, Shimi Zaguri, Bill Anderson and Zvi Civins
(Absent: Marcel Alter, Carol Armener, Lydia Bustin, Rebecca Harris, Kara Nelson, Elaine Ptasnik, Naomi Saporta, Ellen Suess and Brook Warson)

Willy Lermer's memoir published in Germany as an e-book

Hannah Miska



Willy Lermer with the German edition of his memoir

On 25 September 2013, a regional newspaper in Baden-Wuerttemberg (South Germany), the *Schwaebische Zeitung*, published an article entitled 'Lady from Wasserburg publishes *Aufzeichnungen aus der Hölle* (Notes from Hell)'. The *Schwaebische Zeitung* is a newspaper with one of the widest circulations in the region.

Behind the headline – *Aufzeichnungen aus der Hölle* (Notes from Hell) – unfolds a tale of an accidental meeting between Sabine Zürn and Willy Lermer. In December 2009, at the end of her Australian holiday, Sabine – the lady from Wasserburg – visited the Jewish Holocaust Centre, where she met Willy. The two of them quickly formed a bond and, via email and facebook, developed a friendship. Soon after, Sabine wrote Willy's story for the *Dachau Remembrance Book*, a project of the Dachau Memorial Museum established to provide personal accounts of former Dachau inmates and their families. Sabine presented the biography at a commemoration ceremony in Dachau on 22 March 2011.

Some time later, Sabine discovered that Willy had written his memoirs. After she had read his account of personal survival during the darkest times of Nazi persecution, it was clear to her that this important witness account should be translated into German. 'It is my objective to keep the memory of the Holocaust and the mass murder during the Third Reich alive, and to inform the next generation so that antisemitism, racism and xenophobia do not stand a chance,' she says.

On 24 September 2013, Willy's 90th birthday, the German edition of the e-book was launched at amazon.de.

Stolpersteine in memory of Bruno and Margarethe Danziger

Michael Danby, Federal Member of Parliament for Melbourne Ports, visited Rostock, Germany, for the laying of *Stolpersteine* in memory of his grandparents.

Stolperstein is the German word meaning 'stumbling block' or 'obstacle'. The artist Gunter Demnig has given this word a new meaning by creating brass cobblestone-sized memorials, each for a single victim of Nazism, set in the pavement in front of the building in which that person lived. These memorials commemorate individuals – survivors as well as those who died – who were deported by the Nazis to prisons, concentration camps and extermination camps. *Stolpersteine* have been erected for the many groups who were victims of Nazi persecution, among them Jews, Sinti and Romani (gypsies), homosexuals, Jehovah's Witnesses, members of the Communist Party and the Resistance, and people with disabilities. They can now be found all over Europe.

Three generations of Michael's family attended the commemoration before going to the cemetery to recite Kaddish. Michael said, 'The legacy my grandparents would be happiest to leave is the constructive and happy lives their sons Peter and Freddy lived as proud Jews in Australia. *Nie wieder* (never again).'



(l-r) Ari Sherr, William Currie, Angela Currie and the Hon Michael Danby MP

JHC Social Club Barbara Sacks



JHC Social Club

A highlight for many Holocaust survivors, volunteers and guides, as well as their friends, is the monthly meeting of the Jewish Holocaust Centre (JHC) Social Club. A considerable amount of time and energy is invested into securing speakers who provide information and insights into a variety of subjects. Meetings generate lively discussions and the feedback is invariably positive.

Over the past months the Social Club has enjoyed a many interesting, informative and entertaining speakers. Leah Justin, short course coordinator at the Jewish Museum of Australia, spoke about 'Perceptions from a trip to Germany', bringing her recent trip to Germany to life, while Eddie Tamir, owner of the Classic Cinema and Director of the Melbourne Jewish International Film Festival (JIFF), spoke to the group about his life and his involvement in the film industry. He also provided a preview of the annual Jewish International Film Festival (JIFF), held in November 2013.

Dr Anne Wolner, a lawyer and child psychologist with special interests in trauma, children and education, is a Senior Counsel at International Social Service and specialises in international parental child abduction. Her work served as the subject of her stimulating talk. Her talk was followed by Viv Parry's presentation. Viv, whose

mother's family fled from Berlin in 1938 and whose father experienced the horrors of war in New Guinea during the Second World War, chairs the **Child Survivors of the Holocaust**. She delivered a fascinating presentation in which she outlined her work with homeless people, asylum seekers and Aboriginal people, and discussed issues pertaining to the Aboriginal people and the Holocaust.

The club was also privileged to enjoy a presentation by Avigail Rivkah Hasofer, whose subject was 'My Journey to Judaism from Christianity'. A mother and gifted singer with a Masters degree in Business Administration, she outlined her fascinating journey from Louisville, Kentucky to Melbourne and from Christianity to Judaism. During the month which followed, well-known Melbourne personality, Brett Kaye, *chazzan* (cantor) at the St Kilda Hebrew Congregation and Jewish educator, gave an interesting presentation titled 'A Jewish Journey through the Baltics', based on his recent trip to Lithuania and Latvia.

All are welcome to join us for bagels and coffee, and for stimulating and lively discussion. The club meets monthly on Thursday mornings at the Jewish Holocaust Centre.

For further information about the JHC Social Club, please contact Barbara Sacks 0404 224 498.



(l-r) Jack Ginger, Leah Justin and Barbara Sacks



Eddy and Lindy Tamir



Avigail Rivkah Hasofer



(l-r) Susan Onas, Caroline Bryce, Faye Scholl, Rosi Meltzer, Sabbie Berger, Lauren Spitalnic, Sarah Saaroni, Sue Lewis, Goldie Birch, Tacye Ross and Silvana Layton

Twelve months of planning, preparation and hard work by an extremely dedicated team culminated last November in the *To Life 2013* art auction held at Leonard Joel.

Leading up to the event, the Friends of the Jewish Holocaust Centre held a pre-auction cocktail party launch of the art catalogue at the Centre in October. Coordinated by Silvana Layton, who ran the Friends' first very successful art auction in 2009, the cocktail party was attended by many of the people who had donated the 60 works of art for the auction, representatives of art galleries, the artists themselves, and the generous corporate and private sponsors of the auction. Silvana was assisted by Goldie Birch, Elly Brooks and the Friends' committee. The guest speaker, Sarah Saaroni, a Holocaust survivor, Centre guide and a talented artist in her own right, enthralled the crowd with her story of courage, determination and survival. As Sarah said: 'If you will and work for it, it really need not be just a dream, even if a world war and Holocaust intervene.'

The committee helped to cater for and co-ordinate the catalogue launch, and then ensured that many catalogues were distributed far and wide across Melbourne. This was an exciting prelude to the art auction itself, which was held on Sunday 10 November at Leonard Joel, South Yarra. We are indebted to John Albrecht, Managing Director Leonard Joel, staff member, Sophie Ullin and their team, for their cooperation and generosity. We also greatly appreciate the enormous effort made by Izi Marmur of Izigraphics in

Friends of the Jewish Holocaust Centre

Goldie Birch

undertaking the design work for the auction, the generosity of our sponsors, and the support provided by JHC staff.

Many members of the Friends' committee assisted with the preparation during the four days prior to the auction, and assisted with catering and welcoming the public on the day of the auction. We were delighted to have Emmanuel Santos, renowned documentary and art photographer, to introduce proceedings at the auction.

The 60 works of art that were auctioned included pieces by David Rankin, Imants Tillers, Matthew Johnson, Deborah Halpern, Judy Watson, Melinda Harper and Angelina Pwerle. The significant funds raised by the auction will be contributed to the Centre's educational program and testimonies department.

The Friends' team also assisted at the Centre's end-of-year function in December 2013, and ran the much-anticipated annual raffle. The Classic Cinema's Lindy and Eddie Tamir kindly hosted a movie night in January 2014, where the widely publicised movie *The Book Thief*, based on the book of the same name by Markus Zusak, was screened. Tickets were sold out many months before the event.

We look forward to seeing Friends new and old at the forthcoming dinner on 20 May to celebrate and commemorate the 30th anniversary of the Centre. Please join us in becoming a member of the Friends and receiving updates on all our activities, to which everyone is welcome.



Friends art auction at Leonard Joel



(l-r) Goldie Birch, Sophie Ullin and Silvana Layton

Become a Friend of the Jewish Holocaust Centre. Support the activities of the Centre.

The Friends of the Jewish Holocaust Centre plays an important role in providing financial support to the Centre through membership subscriptions, raffle book sales, sales of the Entertainment Book and social fundraising functions.

To become a Friend of the Jewish Holocaust Centre, simply download and complete the form from www.jhc.org.au/friends-of-the-jhc.html

For further information please contact Goldie Birch on (03) 9528 1985 or email goldiegb@bigpond.net.au.



(l-r) Michael Cohen, His Excellency Mr Haris Dafaranos, Abram Goldberg OAM, Dean Kalimniou and Yiannis Lekos



(l-r) Ellen Suess, Gita Ginger and Judy Rassaby



Michael Cohen (l), Warren Fineberg and Willy Lerner (4th and 3rd right) with Port Phillip councillors (l-r) Andrew Bond, Amanda Stevens (Mayor), Anita Horvath, Bernadene Voss, Vanessa Huxley and Jane Touzeau



(l-r) Warren Fineberg, Jane Josem, Pauline Rockman OAM and His Excellency Dr Charles Murigande, Rwandan High Commissioner to Australia



(l-r) Rob Blakis and Professor Paul Bartrop



(l-r) Associate Professor Mark Baker, Warren Fineberg, Dr Hasia Diner, Pauline Rockman OAM, Avram Goldberg OAM and Sue Hampel OAM



(l-r) Phillip Maisel OAM and Pawel Pietrzyk



(l-r) Warren Fineberg, Tara and Vivienne Schwartz



(l-r) Henri Korn, Dr Deb Waterhouse- Watson, Danielle Christmas, Dr Adam Brown and Sandra Korn



The Hon Gavin Jennings MLC and Sarah Saaroni



(l-r) Ephraim Finch and Viv Parry



(l-r) Edna Lipson, Warren Fineberg, Nicole Gandel, Jonathan Zimmet, Madeline Edwards and Dr Dvir Abramovich

Dignity lost; dignity reclaimed

Jayne Josem

*Dignity is as essential to human life as water, food, and oxygen. The stubborn retention of it, even in the face of extreme physical hardship, can hold a man's soul in his body long past the point at which the body should have surrendered it.**

A number of items have recently gone on display, most for the first time, in one case in the Jewish Holocaust Centre museum. The two themes explored in this case are women's experiences of the Holocaust and the value of maintaining dignity as a key to survival.

The centrepiece is an artwork – a bust created by Melbourne artist and Centre volunteer, Regine Szmulewicz. Titled 'Anguish', it depicts a despairing woman, naked, with arms folded, seemingly attempting both to protect and to comfort herself. Women in traumatic situations are often caregivers, reassuring and shielding others. However, here, all seems lost. There is no one left to comfort and no one left to comfort her, and the woman is desperately trying to look after herself.

At the rear of the case is a camp uniform – a dress, worn by Melbourne Holocaust survivor, Guta Scholl (nee Goldberg). Born in Warsaw, Guta was imprisoned in the Warsaw Ghetto after the Nazi invasion of Poland. She remained there until the infamous Warsaw Ghetto Uprising in April 1943, when she was captured by the Nazis and sent to Majdanek concentration camp where she was issued the dress. From there she was sent to the Skarzysko-Kamienna forced labour camp, located in the Polish town of the same name. The camp belonged to the German HASAG company. Guta worked 12-hour shifts in the munitions' factory. According to Yad Vashem, 'men and women, working together, were obliged to fill quotas they could not possibly fill. The sanitary conditions were unspeakable, and there was not nearly enough food. Prisoners were left to wear the same clothes for weeks.'

Guta was later sent to work in another HASAG factory, in Leipzig, from where she was liberated on 27 April 1945. A photo of Guta, wearing her uniform taken shortly after liberation, is also on display.

In the foreground of the case lie about a dozen pieces of rusting cutlery, found thirty years ago in the long grass of Auschwitz, around the site of the former 'Kanada' warehouse. The donor is journalist and broadcaster Jim Sherlock, who went to Auschwitz in the 1980s to undertake research for a book. He was allowed to take the cutlery he found, as there was so much of it around.

The items provide material evidence of precious lives before the Second World War. These knives and forks arrived at



Auschwitz in the prisoners' suitcases, along with other everyday objects and precious possessions like photos their owners carefully chose and packed prior to deportation. They would have thought: What will I need? What is most precious to me? They did not realise then that upon arrival at Auschwitz their belongings would be confiscated immediately, taken to a warehouse and sorted for redistribution to Germany.

The final few items on display are small but extremely precious. How powerful is it, in a situation of incarceration and extreme deprivation, to risk one's life to restore one's dignity? Gusia Honigman (later Ferst) and her friends, in the munitions' factories in Sosnowiec, Klettendorf, Blechhammer and Peterswaldau, were forced to work as slaves for the Germans making armaments. There they also secretly made jewellery for each other. Bracelets are not needed for survival, but how important is it to keep one's spirits up, to lift your friends' morale? A handmade piece of jewellery could not save a life but it could save one's sense of self.

One of the items was made for Gusia by her friend, Marysia Rosenzweig, on her birthday. Her initials 'GH' are etched into it. In the camp system prisoners lost their identity and were known by numbers. Gusia's friend reminded her that she was a person, a special person, with a name and with friends who loved her. Another piece is a brooch Gusia made for her cousin whom she met while working at Peterswaldau camp. When she made it she thought death was approaching. The brooch features a miniature album, as well as some good luck symbols. Among the inscriptions are 'Peterswaldau 28/3/1945', 'To Beloved cousin', 'For Remembrance, for ever', 'Remember your cousin, Gusia' and the number 26603, the number by which Gusia was known in the camp.

There are horseshoes on most of the bracelets, and perhaps they brought Gusia luck, for she did survive, unlike her entire family. Her father had died before the war but her mother and six older siblings and their families were all murdered during the war. Most tragic was the death of her brother Jakob, who survived the war but died a few days after liberation on 10 May 1945.

These items illustrate how the Nazi prison system dehumanised people before murdering them, how it took ordinary people and stripped them of their identities and their belongings, and how, against all odds and at great personal risk, some were able to restore their humanity and their dignity.

* Laura Hildebrand, *Unbroken: A World War II Story of Survival, Resilience, and Redemption*, Random House, 2010.

New acquisitions

Claude Fromm

The following are new additions to the Centre's collection from July to December 2013:

1. Correspondence and documents in German, English, Yiddish and Polish relating to the donor's parents.
Donor: Mrs Roslyn Sztar
2. A folder containing a series of foreign currency notes, including Deutsche Mark notes issued by the Nazis.
Donor: Mr. Michael Oliver
3. Correspondence between the donor and her aunt in London, and between the donor's other family members in Poland during the Second World War.
Donor: Mrs. Helen Gelb



Framed etching by an unknown artist



*Inscriptions on back of photo
of British soldiers*



*British soldiers who liberated Bergen-Belsen
Concentration Camp*

4. Mounted photograph of British soldiers who liberated the Bergen-Belsen Concentration Camp in 1945.
Donor: Melanie Raleigh
- framed etchings by an unknown artist relating to Holocaust.
Donor: Wendy Brumley
- Documents relating to the estate of the late Thea Kimla, Holocaust survivor and former volunteer at the Jewish Holocaust Centre.
Donor: The Estate of the late Thea Kimla
- Box of documents concerning Manfred Heyman, who at 14 years of age was imprisoned in Dachau, but who escaped and eventually migrated to Australia.
Donor: Valda Heyman

The Jewish Holocaust Centre (JHC) collection is a vital repository of Holocaust-era material. Artefacts and documents are carefully catalogued and stored in a state-of-the-art temperature-controlled facility to ensure their preservation for future generations. The JHC invites members of the public who have precious items relating to the Holocaust to consider donating them to our collection for safekeeping.

Phillip Maisel Testimonies Project

The Jewish Holocaust Centre has over 1,300 video testimonies, as well as over 200 audio testimonies in its collection. These provide eyewitness accounts of the horrors of the Holocaust, together with glimpses into the vibrancy of pre-war Jewish life in Europe. The collection is widely used by researchers and students of oral history, the Holocaust and a variety of other disciplines.

If you would like to give your testimony or know of someone who is interested in giving a testimony, please contact Phillip Maisel.

Phone: (03) 9528 1985 or email: testimonies@ihc.org.au



Helen Sharp: a generous bequest to the Centre



Helen Sharp

The Jewish Holocaust Centre (JHC) has received a generous bequest from the Estate of the Late Helen Sharp, a child survivor of the Holocaust and JHC volunteer for many years. We would like to share her story in honour of her generosity. Wolfe Sharp, to whom she was married for 51 years, spoke with our current Austrian Service Abroad representative, Adam Thalhammer.

When they first met, Helen was 17 years old and Wolfe had just bought his first pharmacy in Richmond. Helen had started an apprenticeship in a nearby pharmacy, and when she dropped by his shop on an errand, he immediately noticed her *Magen David*. Three years later they were married, but it was a long and gradual process before Wolfe learned Helen's full story.

Helen was born on 19 July 1941 in the Marais, in Nazi-occupied Paris. Her parents, originally from Poland, had made *aliyah* to (then) Palestine, and later moved to France. The family was completely secular and very poor.

Helen's father was rounded up by the French police, incarcerated, and finally transported to Majdanek in 1943, where he was murdered only six months before liberation. Helen was too young to know her father and felt his loss her whole life. Together with her mother and older brother Jack (Jacques), she had fled Paris to Vichy France and found refuge in the tiny hamlet of Tудay in the Dordogne. There they survived with the help of their gentile neighbours, growing their own vegetables for additional food.

After Paris was liberated, Helen's mother and brother returned to Paris to try to reclaim their flat and meagre belongings, leaving Helen in a convent near Tудay. When her mother returned for her three months later, Helen was near death from diphtheria. With no doctors or medicines, a medical student performed a tracheotomy on a kitchen table without anesthetic. This scarred her physically and emotionally, and for the rest of her life she had a great fear of abandonment.

In November 1946, the family boarded a cargo ship for Melbourne, where Helen's uncle lived. All other relatives had been murdered in Poland. They eventually arrived in Melbourne in February 1947, where they lived first with Helen's uncle, and later moved to South Melbourne and then Elwood. Adjusting to a totally different society was quite difficult.

Helen attended Elwood Central, MacRobertson Girls' High School and, eventually, Pharmacy College. She did not continue her studies after marriage, but was a great help to Wolfe in his various pharmacies.

Helen led a very busy life. With the arrival of three children (Stephen, Daniel and Ilana) she had her hands full, but in her thirties she took up painting, in which she excelled.

When Helen was about 40, she enrolled at LaTrobe University where, over an eight-year period, she completed a BA Honours majoring in Sociology. She immediately began a Masters Degree which was soon upgraded to a PhD, and tutored part-time in the Sociology Department.

During her course, Helen's latent interest in Judaism had been awakened and she attended many lectures and discussion groups with Rabbi Laibl Wolf and other Lubavitch *Rabbonim*. Her PhD topic was *The Impact of the Lubavitch Movement on the Melbourne Jewish Community*. She also began identifying with Jewish ritual observance, lighting candles on Shabbat, attending *shul* services on High Holidays, and fasting on Yom Kippur.

This journey gradually helped bring her a certain peace of mind, and gave her the opportunity to connect with her past. She became a guide at the Jewish Museum, but later found greater affinity with the Jewish Holocaust Centre. There she emanated an aura of calmness, understanding, and compassion, but in private she often said, 'I know I give the impression of being like a swan, gliding serenely on top of the water, but in reality, underneath I am paddling like mad just to stay afloat.'

By 1994, Wolfe had retired and wanted to travel, and grandchildren were beginning to arrive. Wolfe gave Helen a choice: 'I said you can either keep on with your studies and tutoring or you can put them aside for a while to spend time with the grandchildren and to come traveling with me. To her credit, she only thought about it for ten seconds.' She chose the latter course.

From 1995, Helen and Wolfe took many overseas trips and had wonderful adventures together. Helen passed away, quickly and totally unexpectedly, when they were visiting Bucharest at the end of their last trip. The family was devastated.

Though they never discussed her generous bequest to the Centre, Wolfe agreed to make an educated guess. 'I would say that the combination of personal satisfaction with her work as a volunteer, further identification with backgrounds and experiences similar to her own, and greater affinity with Jewish philosophy and culture were of great benefit to her. I think the bequest was her way of expressing appreciation, and helping with the continuity of the important work of the Centre.'

The many individuals she touched, both at the Centre and elsewhere, will remember her as an extraordinary person.

Nell van Rangelrooy: Righteous Among the Nations

The Jewish Holocaust Centre is saddened by the passing of Mrs Pieteralla 'Nell' van Rangelrooy, in October 2013 at the age of 101. Nell was a remarkable woman who hid Jews in her home. Nell was recognised as a Righteous Among the Nations in the 1970s.

Mazal tov to Stephanie Heller and Annetta Able, Susie Nozik, Sonia Waisenberg and Willy Lerner

The Jewish Holocaust Centre (JHC) is delighted to welcome five new members to our 90th Birthday Club. We congratulate long-time volunteers Stephanie Heller and her twin sister Annetta Able, Susie Nozik, Sonia Wajsenberg and Willy Lerner, who have worked tirelessly for the Centre over many years.

We wish them all *Mazal tov*!



(l-r) Sabina Josem, Sonia Wajsenberg, Fryda Schweitzer and Halina Zylberman



Sonia Wajsenberg and family



(l-r) Willy Lerner, Halina Zylberman and Anne Sztajer



Sula Rozinski and Willy Lerner



Susie Nozik



(l-r) Stephanie Heller and Annetta Able

Become a Partner in Remembrance

The Jewish Holocaust Centre Foundation ensures the continued existence of the Centre and supports its important work. Funds raised through the Foundation are invested, with the earnings providing an ongoing source of income for the Centre to support its operations and programs into the future. For more information on how you can help support the Foundation and how your support will be recognised, please contact Helen Mahemoff, Chair of the Foundation on 0417 323 595 or Email: jhcfoundation@bigpond.com.



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REMEMBRANCE EDUCATION MUSEUM

Engagements

To Joy Bloumis on the engagement of her granddaughter Katie Vinson-Bromberger to Jacob Rotstein

To Sharona and David Brott on the engagement of their daughter Gabi to Jason McKenzie

To Ester and Tibi Csaky on the engagement of their daughter Daniella to Alex Ikin

To Freda and Martin Freiberg on the engagement of their grandson Oren Golvan to Maya Simon

To Suzie and Gaby Nozik on the engagement of their grandson Adam Rogers to Samantha Duzenman

To Kim Richwol on her engagement to Ariel Brukarz

To Judy and Andrew Rogers on the engagement of their son Adam to Samantha Duzenman

To Elliott Schulberg on his engagement to Karra Jacobson

To Leah and David Schulberg on the engagement of Elliott to Karra Jacobson

Marriage

To Sue and Alex Hampel on the marriage of their son Bradley to Tobey Hofman

To Anatie Livnat on her marriage to Jason Fischman

To Michelle and Tony Marks on the marriage of their daughter Jaimie to Almog Ben Shetrit

To Avi Paluch on the marriage of his daughter Tamar to Shilo Ben Zeev

To Shmuel Rosenkranz on the marriage of his granddaughter Terri Goldman to Jonathan Lazarus

Bar Mitzvah

To Nina and Bob Bassat on the bar mitzvah of their grandson Jack Bassat

To Rosa Krakowski on the bar mitzvah of her great grandson Bradley Nirens

To Gary Rosenfeld on the bar mitzvah of his grandson Joshua Rosham

To Rona Zinger on the bar mitzvah of her grandson Daniel Waits

To Claudine and John Zukerman on the bar mitzvah of their son Michael

Births

To Anita and Johnny Baker on the birth of their granddaughter Adeline Baker

To John Berhang on the birth of his granddaughter Kiara Berhang

To Julie and Joey Borensztajn on the birth of their grandson Indiana Borensztajn

To George Braitberg on the birth of his granddaughter Mayan Sztrajt

To Beryl and Trevor Chitiz on the birth of their granddaughter Penelope Varasso

To Ester and Tibi Csaky on the birth of their grandson Noah Zipor

To Elaine and Sid Davidoff on the birth of their grandson Jonah Davidoff and granddaughters Stella and Norah Davidoff

To Faye and Andrew Dubrowin on the birth of their granddaughter Clementine Dubrowin

To Lesley and Peter Gaspar on the birth of their grandson Max Gaspar

To Gita and Jack Ginger on the birth of their grandson Luca Sheffield

To Ann and Yehuda Kabillo on the birth of their grandson Ezra Kabillo

To Esther and Leonard Koss on the birth of their grandson Elliot Goldin

To Esther and Eric Krause on the birth of their granddaughter Milla Cohen

To Fryda Schweitzer on the birth of her great grandson Tana Schweitzer

To Mary and Peter Stawski on the birth of their grandson Raphael Stawski

To Tami and Bradley Wein on the birth of their grandson Ari Viskoboinik

Birthdays

To Warren Fineberg on his 60th birthday

To Ziva Fain on her 70th birthday

To Floris Kalman on her 80th birthday

To Stephanie Heller on her 90th birthday

To Willy Lerner on his 90th birthday

To Susie Nozik on her 90th birthday

Condolences

To Fay and Jack Bock on the death of their mother and mother-in-law Jadzia Opat

To Elly Brooks and Allan Reid on the deaths of their father and father-in-law Leon Brooks, and mother and mother-in-law Maria Brooks

To Pearl and John Buchanek on the death of their father-in-law and father Ted Buchanek

To Susan and Daniel Feldman on the death of their mother and mother-in-law Rose Foxman

To Renata and David Gelb on the death of their father and father-in-law Frank Manier

To Anna and Ralph Glezer on the death of their mother and mother-in-law Cesia Kochan

To Geri and Barry Kras on the death of their mother-in-law and mother Rita Kras

To Rebecca and David Krycer on the death of their father and father-in-law Nathan Zajdband

To Herbert Leder on the death of his wife Viva Leder

To Anat and Peter Nadler on the death of their mother-in-law and mother Matylda Nadler

To David Prince on the death of his wife Ella Prince

To Wolfe Sharp on the death of his wife Helen Sharp

To Max Zilberman on the death of his wife Dora Zilberman



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The Gandel Family
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באשווינדלט דער קלאַימס קאָנפערענץ.

אין יאָר צווייטויזנט און איינס האָט מען זענען געווען דרויסנדיקע ראַטגעבער פון צוויי דורכגעפירט אָן אויספאַרשונג וועגן די פינאַנסן פאַרגייטיקונגס פּאַנדן. זיי זענען געווען אין פון דער קליימס קאָנפערענץ. די אויספאַרשונג צענטער פון דער אויספאַרשונג אין יאָר 2001. האָט גאַרנישט אויסגעפונען. אַ באַריכט, וועלכן זיי זענען געוואָרן באַשולדיקט אין פעדעראַלן די "יטא" האָט לעצטנס באַקומען און שטעלט געריכט אין אינסצעניזירן די אַפערע, וועלכע פעסט, אַז הויכע באַאַמטע פון דער קליימס האָט געקאָסט דער קאָנפערענץ 57 מיליאָן קאָנפערענץ, אַריינגערעכנט דעם וויצע דאָלער. מען האָט זיי באַשולדיקט אין פעלשן פרעזידענט, גידאָן טיילאָר און בערמאַן, וועלכע ווענדונגען צווישן די יאָרן 1993 און 2008.

דערפאַלגרייכע פאַרהאַנדלונגען מיט דער דייטשער רעגירונג.

דער פאַרטרעטער פון דער קליימס קאָנפערענץ, לויטן נייעם אַפמאַך וועט די קליימס סטואַרד אייזענשטאַט, האָט דערפאַלגרייך קאָנפערענץ קאָנען פאַרגרעסערן די צאָל פאַרהאַנדלט מיט דער דייטשער רעגירונג וועגן געניסער, אויסמיידן די צייט פון וואַרטן, אין ווייטערדיקע אויסצאָלונגען לטובות די קרבנות דער רשימה פון די איבערגעלעבטע און זייער פון נאַציזם. די דייטשע רעגירונג איז מסכים געווען די צאָל שעהן. אויסצוברייטערן איר אונטערשטיצונגס פּאַנדן לויטן בריוו וועלכן דער פרעזידענט פון דער פאַר די געליטענע קאַצעטלער. די דערגרייכונג קאָנפערענץ, יוליוס בערמאַן, האָט געשיקט צום איז געווען, אַז די דייטשע רעגירונג וועט געבן ראָט פון דער פאַרוואַלטונג, זענען דאָ אַ צוגאַב פון אַכטהונדערט מיליאָן דאָלאַר צו זעקסאונפופציק טויזנט איבערגעלעבטע, העלפן די חורבן געליטענע. דאָס וועט זיין פון וועלכע געניסן פון דער שטיצע פון דער קליימס יאָר 2014 ביזן יאָר 2017 דאָס וועט זיין אַ קאָנפערענץ. צוגאַב צו די 182 מיליאָן פאַר דעם יאָר סטואַרד אייזענשטאַט, וועלכער האָט געפירט צווייטויזנטפערצן, וועמען מען האָט שוין די אונטערהאַנדלונגען האָט געלויבט די אַרבעט באַצאָלט. אין יאָר 2015 וועט געהעכערט ווערן פון עקזעקוטיוו וויצע-פרעזידענט, גריג אויף פינף און פערציק פּראָצענט, ביז אומגעפער שניידער, וועלכער צוזאַמען מיט די באַאַמטע 266 מיליאָן, און דאָן צוויייהונדערט און פון דער קאָנפערענץ אַנדעקט און געענדיקט פינפאונזיבעציק דאָלאַר 2016. און מיט דער סכעמע אין 2009. דאָס לעבן פון צוויייהונדערט און אַכציק מיליאָן 2017. ווייל די צענטליקער טויזנטער קרבנות ווערט לייכטער געלטער ווערן באַרעכנט אין עראָס וועט די אין זייער עלטער, אַדאַנק גרעסס פעיקייטן און אייגנטלעכע סומע ווערן באַרעכנט לויט דעם וויזע, האָט אייזענשטאַט לויט דעם אַרטיקל 2 פינאַנסיעלן קורס אויף דער בערזע. די זיבאונאַכציק מיליאָן העכערונג וועט אויסצאָלן די נויטווענדיקע נאַצי קרבנות די רעפרעזענטירן די יאָרן 2014 און 2015. סומע פון 411 דאָלאַר אַ חודש. די יערלעכ פאַרגרעסערונג הייבט זיך אָן מיט דרייסיק מיליאָן דאָלאַר אין יאָר 2004.

צוזאַמענגעשטעלט דורך משה אייזענבוד.

א מוזעאום צום אנדענק פון יידן-רעטער.

אין א פראנצויזיש שטעטל ווו צענטליקער פון אויסבאהאלטן אן ערך פון פינפטויזנט יידן. איינוווינער האבן געראטעוועט טויזנטער יידן (לויט דעם יד-וושם) פון דעפארטאציע האט זיך געעפנט א מוזעאום מיט דער אקציע האט אנגעפירט דער ארטיקער אין אנדענק פון די דארטיקע איינוווינער, נישט גלח, אנדרע טאמקע און די פרוי מאגדא. די יידן, וועלכע האבן אנטיילגענומען אין דער מענטשן און 33 אדערע שכינים, ווערן אקציע. דאס שטעטל הייסט באצייכנט ווי חסידי אומות העולם. "שאמבאן-סיר-ליניאן", און געפינט זיך אין א טייל פון די יידן זענען ארויסגעשמוקלט דרום פראנקרייך. דער מוזעאום מערקט אפ די געווארן קיין שווייץ און אנדערע זענען געווארן האלונג פון פינפאונדרייסיק איינוווינער, אויסבאהאלטן אין דעם שטעטל, צווישן די וועלכע האבן אנטייל גענומען אין דער אקציע איינוווינער גופא.

קונסט-בילדער גערויבט דורך די נאציס.

א סך פון די האלענדישע מוזעאומס פארמאגן וועלכע געהערן צו יידן. בילדער געמאלן דורך קונסט-בילדער גערויבט דורך די נאציס בשעת יידישע קינסטלער. פודי עקהארט, דער פירער, דער צווייטער וועלט מלחמה. דער קאמיטעט וואס פירט אן מיט דער ארבעט פון קאמיטעט פאר מוזעאומס אין האלאנד האט פארעפנטלעך א האט דערקלערט, אז די ארבעט גייט ווייטער אן רשימה פון אומשאצבארע געגנטשאנדן, וועלכע און בעט די פאראינטערעסירטע זיך צו ווענדן געפינען זיך אין איינאונפערציק מוזעאומס. צו די מוזעאומס און בעטן אנטשעדיקונג אדער צווישן זיי זענען איינאונזעכציק געגנטשאנדן, זיי קענען מאנען דעם צוריקקער פון די בילדער.

עסטרייכישער פילהארמאנישער ארקעסטער

פארמאגט מיטגלידער, געוועזענע נאציס.

די היסטאריקער, אנגעפירט דורך פראפעסאר, מוזיקאנטן פון ארקעסטער. אליווער כאטקאלב, וועלכער איז פראפעסאר ער האט פארלוירן זיין פאסטן נאכן קריג, אבער פון היינטיקער געשיכטע אין ווינער צוריקגעקומען אין ארקעסטער אין אוניווערסיטעט (עסטרייך) האט אויסגעפונען, טויזנטנינהודערט זיבנאונפערציק. ער איז אז צווייאונזעכציק פון די הודערט שפעטער געווארן עקזעקוטיוו-דירעקטאר. אונדרייאנצוואנציק מיטגלידער בשעת דער איינער פון די היסטאריקער האט געזאגט, אז קריג, האבן געהערט צו דער ס.ס. איינער וואס די פארפאלגונגען פון יידישע מוזיקער האבן זיך האט געשפילט אויף א קלארינעט איז געווען א אנגהויבן א סך פריער, נאך פאר דעם אנשלוס צו שפיאן און ער האט דענונצירט יידישע דייטשלאנד אין יאר 1938.

אוישוויץ א גן-עדון פאר נאצי פאמיליעס.

אין אן ארטיקל אין "וואשינגטאן פאסט" האט אייגענע אייניקלעך. אין טויטן-לאגער דער שרייבער, טאמאס הארדינג, באהאנדלט "אוישוויץ" האט מען געקענט אומברענגען ביז דאס לעבן פון ברייט העס, וועלכע איז די צווייטויזנט מענטשן א שעה. טאכטער פון לאגער-קאמענדאנט אין צום סוף פון קריג זענען דארטן אומגעקומען "אוישוויץ", רודאלף העס, וועלכער האט העכער פון א מיליאן און הונדערטויזנט יידן, איבערגעבויט דעם טויטן-לאגער "אוישוויץ" אין דער זעלבער צייט האט מען אומגעברענגט פון אן אלטער קאזארמע אין א "מארד-מאשין". ציגיינער און פאליטישע געפאנגענע. זי האט זי איז אכציק יאר אלט און אין משך פון לאנגע געגעבן אן איטערווי צו א שרייבער וועגן א יארן האט זי געהאלטן דעם סוד, אפילו פון אירע בוך, ווי אזוי מען האט געכאפט העסן.

קײן פענסיע פאַר געטאַ אַרבעטער.

דער דייטשער פאַרליאָמענט האָט אָפּגעוואָרפֿן געטאַ-אַרבעטער. כאָטש מען האָט צוגעזאָגט דעם צוגאַב-געזעץ אויסצוצאָלן פענסיעס פאַר דער דאָזיקער גרופּע, אַז זיי וועלן באַקומען דאָס צוואַנציקטויזנט ייִדן, וועלכע האָבן געאַרבעט געלט.

אין די געטאַס. די געלטער האָלט מען דערווייל, צוליב

די געלטער זענען פאַראַן, אָבער זיי זענען נאָך טעכנישע און ביוראָקראַטישע שוועריקייטן און נישט צעטיילט געוואָרן.

דאָס איז דער צוגאַב צום געזעץ פון יאָר 2002 אָרגאַניזאַציע פון ישראליקע און דייטשע וואָס ווערט אָגערופֿן "געטאַ-אַרבעטס-געלט". יוריסטן האָבן אויסגעדריקט זייער אַנטוישונג עס וואָלט באַוויליקט אויסצוצאָלן געלטער צו די צוליב דעם באַשלוס פון "בונדעסטאָג".

צום אַנדענק פון חורבן וויסנשאַפֿטלער.

פּראָפּעסאָר ישראל גוטמאַן, אַן אַנטיילנעמער אין אָנגעהויבן זיין אַקאַדעמישע אַרבעט האָט ער וואַרשעווער געטאַ אויפשטאַנד איז געשטאַרבן אין יאָר 1950.

אין ישראל אין עלטער פון נייציק יאָר. ער האָט אין אויפשטאַנד אין וואַרשעווער געטאַ איז ער פאַרנומען איינע פון די וויכטיקסטע אַמטן אין געוואָרן לייכט פאַרווונדעט און געווען אין יד-ו-שם. ער איז געווען דער אָנפירער פון "מיידאַנעק" טויטן-לאַגער. דאָן איז ער אינטערנאַציאָנאַלן אינסטיטוט פאַר חורבן געגאַנגען אין דעם "טויטן-מאַרש" קיין פאַרשונג צווישן די יאָרן 1993 און 1996. "מאַטהאָזען" וווּ ער איז געוואָרן באַפֿרייט. געקומען קיין ישראל איז ער אין יאָר 1946. פּבוד זיין אַנדענק.

פינפאונזיבעציק יאָר נאָך "קריסטאַל-

נאַכט".

דער דייטשער קאַנצלער, אָנגעלאַ מאַרקל, האָט אַלץ זיין אונטער פּאָליצייאישער אין איר אַרויסטריט צום אַנדענק פון אויפזיכט.

"קריסטאַל-נאַכט" געזאָגט "די מענשן פון די באַמערקונגען זענען געמאַכט געוואָרן דייטשלאַנד דאַרפן האָבן ציווילן קוראַזש, אַנקעגנצושטעלן זיך קעגן אַנטיסעמיטיזם" דער פאַקט איז, אַז די ייִדישע אינטיטוציעס מוזן נאָך דער "קריסטאַל-נאַכט".

אַ דערמאָנונג פון דער היסטאָרישער געשעעניש

פון "בייליס פּראָצעס".

די ייִדישע געזעלשאַפֿט אין דער שטאָט אַרעסטירט אין דעם חודש יולי פון יאָר 1911 "קיעוו" (די הויפט שטאָט פון אוקראַינע) האָט און איז געזעסן אין תּפּיסה צוויי יאָר אונטער אָפּגעהאַלטן אַ צוזאַמענקונפֿט אָפּצוצייכענען דער באַשולדיקונג, אַז ער האָט דערמאַרדעט אַ דעם אַנדענק פון הונדערט יאָר נאָך דעם קריסטלעך ייִנגל פון דרייצן יאָר און געניצט זיין שענדלעכן "בייליס-פּראָצעס". מענדל בייליס בלוט צו באַקן מצות. ער איז באַפֿרייט געוואָרן איז אַלט געווען 34 יאָר און איז געווען אַ אין מיטן פון 1913 און איז אַוועקגעפאַרן קיין פּאָטער פון פינף קינדער. מען האָט אים פּאַלעסטינע און שפּעטער קיין ניו-יאָרק.

April 2014

Jewish Holocaust Centre

The Jewish Holocaust Centre is commemorating 30 years of keeping the flame alive with a Gala Dinner to mark this significant milestone.

Keynote speaker: Major General (Ret.) Ido Nehushtan
former Israeli Air Force Chief (2008-2012) and
Commander of Ground Forces during IAF flyover of Auschwitz
Special performance by singer/songwriter Lior

Tuesday 20th May 2014
Leonda by the Yarra
2 Wallen Rd Hawthorn
6:30pm for 7.00pm

Cost: \$110 per person (Kosher)

Appeal

Dress: Smart Casual

For further information or to book please contact Tosca on 9528 1985 or admin@jhc.org.au

30th Anniversary Supporters

Les & Kathy Janovic
(in memory of Dezso and Medi Janovic)

The Gandel Family and
Gandel Philanthropy



30th Gala Supporters

Sunraysia Foundation

Jeffrey Mahemoff AO and Helen Mahemoff

Pauline Rockman OAM and Sandra Jedwab

Regine Szmulewicz (in memory of Rushka & Ksiel Szmulewicz)

Family Kurc

