

Centre News

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The magazine of the Jewish Holocaust Centre, Melbourne, Australia



Be a light in the darkness

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**Jewish
Holocaust
Centre**

Judy & Leon Goldman
Centre For Holocaust Education

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

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

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NOTE: During the redevelopment the JHC will not be operating as a museum for the public but will continue to host events. These will be advertised via the 'In the Loop' e-newsletter. Please visit our website to subscribe.

On the cover:

Guta Goldstein, Holocaust survivor and Jewish Holocaust Centre guide, at the International Holocaust Remembrance Day commemoration in January 2021.

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From the Presidents

Pauline Rockman & Sue Hampel

At the Jewish Holocaust Centre (JHC) we have emerged from 2020, a year that turned out to be quite different from what was imagined at the outset. There was the reality that our museum was closed to the public, not only because of the relocation, but because of the coronavirus pandemic. It is a credit to Jayne Josem and her team at the JHC that we shifted gears rapidly to manage this situation.

In spite of the enormous challenges, there have been many opportunities as we transitioned to virtual learning. We are delighted that both the Ask A Survivor project and the Jewish Holocaust Centre Virtual Tour have been highly commended in a number of award ceremonies.

'It concerns me that if asked, most kids today wouldn't be able to explain what the Holocaust was. Antisemitism is on the rise around the globe and sadly we are not immune in our own Victorian community.' With these words, Victorian Education Minister, the Hon James Merlino, announced that all government secondary school students in Years 9 and 10 will be taught about the Holocaust in order to tackle rising antisemitism, racism and prejudice in our schools and broader society. The JHC's Lisa Phillips played an integral role in facilitating this. (See page 20 for details.)

The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) plenaries were very different in 2020. Instead of being held in Berlin and Leipzig, the sessions were all held virtually. (You can read more on page 24.)

On 27 January, the JHC, in cooperation with Holocaust museums across Australia, hosted the first joint virtual Holocaust



commemoration program to mark International Holocaust Remembrance Day. The theme, 'To be a light in the darkness', was expressed through the inspiring words of Holocaust survivors and others. In the words of Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks (z"l), 'For though my faith is not yours and your faith is not mine, if we are free to light our own flame, together we can banish some of the darkness of the world.'

The support of our members, donors, volunteers and community members has allowed us to keep working towards our mission by running online events, sharing video testimonies, publishing our collection of artefacts online, and holding online commemorations even though we could not gather in person. The redevelopment is well underway and we thank you for your support.

We look forward to the day when we can welcome our survivors back to the JHC.

Wishing you a Chag sameach.

Pauline Rockman OAM and **Sue Hampel OAM** are Co-Presidents of the Jewish Holocaust Centre.



Editor's note

Ruth Mushin

While COVID-19 has drastically affected our lives over the past year, it has also been responsible for some wonderfully innovative developments. So rather than gathering at a local town hall to commemorate International Holocaust Remembrance Day in January, the Jewish Holocaust Centre (JHC) was instrumental in organising the first Australia-wide virtual commemoration. We are delighted to celebrate the contribution

of Holocaust survivors from every state on our cover, and to feature the insightful and moving addresses by the keynote speakers, Sydney survivor Olga Horak and Gideon Reisner, grandson of former JHC museum curator, the late Saba Feniger.

We also bring you an illuminating article by renowned curator and educator Paul Salmons titled 'Auschwitz: artefacts as witness', as well as three moving survivor stories: a reflection on the pandemic by child survivor Paul Valent; the heart-warming story of Zvi Sharp, who celebrated his bar mitzvah 80 years after his 13th birthday; and Guta Goldstein's account of an act of kindness she experienced during the war. I hope you enjoy these and the other articles in this edition.

Ruth Mushin is the editor of *Centre News*.

2020: What has our museum learnt?

Jayne Josem



At the dedication of the US Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington DC in 1993, Elie Wiesel declared, 'The Museum is not an answer. It's a question.' Last year threw up challenges and raised questions for us all at the Jewish Holocaust Centre (JHC), but it also provided many opportunities and lessons. Here are a few of the important things we learnt:

- We can deliver our message, even without an operational museum;
- We realised how important our museum is, beyond the walls;
- We appreciated our Holocaust survivors even more than we thought possible;
- We do so much more than just educate the public; we are a community.

The rebuilding phase we are in is an opportunity for reflection, re-evaluation and reinvention, which all raise many questions for us to consider. One that recurs is the role of museums in today's society. At the JHC, we believe that we exist to provide

a transformational experience for visitors that has the potential to challenge the way they see the world. A visit to the museum should be unsettling, given the subject matter, but it should also provoke thought and be memorable.

Students can learn about the Holocaust in the classroom, accessing online resources and perhaps watching documentaries and films. Why even bother to visit a museum when there is so much material accessible through a screen while sitting at home or at school?

From our perspective the answer lies in the curated peak experience that can happen from the moment a student, or any other visitor, embarks on the journey to a museum. First there is the anticipation, which can run the whole gamut of emotions. For the students there is also the experience of being introduced to the subject matter in a very careful, considered way by our expert educators, who specialise in teaching the Holocaust.

'At the JHC, we believe that we exist to provide a transformational experience for visitors that has the potential to challenge the way they see the world.'

When students visit the museum, they are not in a classroom, but in a completely different learning space. The JHC educators will likely have a different style of teaching, and another difference is that each session begins and ends with questions.

Then there is the museum itself, which we are now in the process of developing. Our aim in putting the display together is to ensure that visitors encounter the primary source evidence and, through these encounters, they will be changed. It is through the contact with the real, be it artefacts, documents and photos, that the history comes to life. Of course this is amplified by meeting a Holocaust survivor, a true highlight. Today students can meet survivors, but some time in the future the encounter will only be digital. However, even with the digital, hearing the stories from real eyewitnesses always has a profound impact.

With all that is going on in the world today, we are working hard to ensure that our museum continues to provide a transformational experience to our visitor, one that leaves them, as Elie Wiesel suggested, with questions and not answers.

Jayne Josem is JHC Museum Director and CEO.

Reflections on the pandemic

Paul Valent

Who would have thought ... again? Still, we child survivors of the Holocaust have always known that catastrophes can happen. Our skins were always thin.

But wait. This is quite different.

I vacillate. There is something familiar in seeing empty shelves in the supermarkets, people struggling for toilet rolls. Will we be short of food? After much frustration I get on the Woolworths web site for home deliveries to old people. They can deliver in four days. Luckily, we have sufficient food till then.

But what if I run out of batteries, light bulbs, what if the phone or internet network seize up? What if I break a leg?

There is talk in the media of the apocalypse, or at least of a war footing, like in the Second World War. Yes, we always believed that what happened could happen again, but we did not really believe that it would. Who would have thought that in the dusk of our lives we would be thrust back into the world of our childhoods? That our world would change almost overnight from security to once again being the most threatened section of the community – then as children, now as the elderly? That we would have to hide inside our homes, afraid to go out, each outside person being a potential danger?

Police are starting to patrol the streets. It's difficult to trust our leaders. There is talk of selections. Who would be allowed scarce respirators?

Will our families, from whom we are separated, for whom we yearn, for whom I have a pain in my shoulders through the empty embrace, will they be alright? It is difficult to see them having to adjust to this abnormal world, the likes of which we hoped to spare them.

But then the pendulum returns. Of course, it's not true. I am oversensitive to the images that trigger childhood memories. It's not happening again.

And we child survivors of the Holocaust are at the forefront of those who can provide perspective. This is no Second World War. Men are not sent to the front, but home to be with their families. There are no bombs and, if we are short of food, it is because of panic buying, not because supplies are scarce.

Yes, we have to keep physical distance from others, but not emotional distance. We don't have to wait months for a letter to know if a relative is alive. Modern media bring them to life within seconds.

The Nazis had unlimited power and their reign seemed endless.



▲ Paul Valent

We were their victims and nine tenths of us died. Now we are not being persecuted or scapegoated, but are part of the general population fighting a common enemy. In fact, most of the population is sacrificing to keep all vulnerable people safe, including us.

Lastly, there is an end in sight and we know that we will win. Then, in the euphoria of survival there will be pent-up energy to renew, to enjoy. There will be a baby boom alongside an economic one, and who knows, people who have learned that the world can cooperate in the face of common dangers will tackle problems like climate change, nuclear build-ups and national rivalries.

So yes, features of this pandemic remind us of our early trials, but the differences are large. That's why we can reassure ourselves that no, it's not happening. Again. After reassuring ourselves we can reassure the world.

Paul Valent is a Melbourne psychiatrist and founder of the Melbourne Child Survivors of the Holocaust. His most recent book is *Mental Health in the Times of the Pandemic*, Australian Scholarly Publishing 2020.



JHC redevelopment commences

Photos: Sav Schulman

(l-r) Hon Josh Frydenberg and Abram Goldberg OAM ▲

The Jewish Holocaust Centre (JHC) redevelopment has begun with a traditional ground-breaking ceremony of turning the first sod at the site of the new building. Held in November 2020 after years of planning, this event sent a powerful message to the community and to Holocaust survivors that despite the challenges posed by COVID-19, the new museum and education facility remains on track to open in August 2022.

The event was attended by representatives of the Federal and State Governments, confirming the bipartisan support for this important project.

'It gives us great pleasure to announce that the building is being named in honour of Auschwitz survivor Josef Hellen, a major supporter of the project,' said Jayne Josem, Museum Director & CEO. 'Josef's substantial gift represents his firm belief in Holocaust education and its role in creating a better society.'

Josef Hellen suffered much during the Holocaust losing his entire family, his parents and three siblings, but he did not want the Holocaust to define him. He attributed his survival to good luck and great instincts. In Australia, he built himself up from nothing and valued living in a multicultural democracy. Sadly, Josef died earlier last year, but was grateful to have made his considerable gift beforehand.



The Treasurer of Australia, the Hon Josh Frydenberg, expressing his understanding of the value of Holocaust education in Australia today, said: 'The Jewish Holocaust Centre is an incredibly important place where Victorians can be educated about the tragedies of the Holocaust and learn the significance of tolerance and humanity.'



▲ (l-r) Nina Taylor MP, Pauline Rockman OAM, Jayne Josem, Debbie Taylor, Senator James Paterson, the Hon Josh Frydenberg, Sue Hampel OAM, Abram Goldberg OAM, Jonathon Lazarus, Terri Lazarus, Helen Mahemoff OAM and David Southwick MP

feature a thought-provoking new Holocaust museum that recounts a tragic history through powerful artefacts and the stories of Melbourne survivors. An innovative museum space for younger visitors, aged 10-14, will introduce the topic of discrimination and feature stories of children who survived in hiding and the righteous people who saved them. The aim is to reach all Victorian school students with this enlarged facility and support educators across the state with the challenging task of teaching this history.

'This moment is the start of something big,' said Jayne Josem. 'We are not just building a museum, we are building harmony, connection, tolerance, humanity and empathy. Holocaust survivors who came to Melbourne vowed to bear witness and spread vital messages to all. Our new Holocaust museum, the largest in Australia, will continue their legacy.'

The Jewish Holocaust Centre Museum redevelopment project began in August 2020 with demolition of the existing building. Kerstin Thompson Architects has designed a striking building incorporating glass bricks into the façade with the intention of bringing light and life into the building. The four-storey building, with an enhanced resource centre on the street frontage, will

This redevelopment will add significantly to the social fabric of this city that the survivors are proud to call home. We thank the Federal and State Governments both of whom are supporting the project, the Hellen family and all our major donors for their incredible support and express our gratitude to the survivors, our volunteers and all other supporters of this important project.'



▲ (l-r) Debbie Taylor and Pauline Rockman OAM

Josef Hellen

Josef Hellen was born in Hodonin, Czechoslovakia, in 1926. He had an older brother and two younger sisters. When war broke out, he was in school. In August 1942, following the attempted assassination of Reinhard Heydrich in Prague, a mass round-up of Jews took place. Police walked into Josef's classroom and ordered him and four other Jewish boys to come with them. He never saw his family again. Josef was first detained and

eventually transported to Auschwitz where he lied about his age to survive. He was tattooed with the number 64463 and selected to work in the infamous 'Kanada' warehouse. There he joined other prisoners, sorting the goods of Auschwitz deportees that was all part of the Nazi operation to steal the property of those they enslaved and murdered. Josef managed to secure his survival by ingratiating himself with an SS officer by teaching him to throw knives. While he was in Auschwitz, Josef witnessed seemingly endless lines of Jews and others being led to their deaths in the gas chambers.

During the death march from Auschwitz, Josef managed to escape and found refuge in a family's barn until liberation. He always attributed his survival to a mixture of good luck and great instincts.

After the war he lived in Hungary where he met and married Judith, also a survivor. They immigrated to Australia where he first worked in a factory and saved money to buy his first milk bar. This purchase marked the beginning of his property empire in Australia and the United States.

Josef believed strongly in the importance of Holocaust remembrance and education. He recorded his testimony and wrote his life story, *University of Life: To Be or Not To Be*. A very generous benefactor to many and varied causes here and overseas, he was so pleased to have made his commitment and finalised the arrangements for his gift to the JHC redevelopment before he died earlier this year at the age of 93.

Be a Light in the Darkness

For the first time a national coalition of Holocaust organisations joined forces to commemorate International Holocaust Remembrance Day and the liberation of Auschwitz on 27 January 2021.

The Jewish Holocaust Centre of Melbourne, Sydney Jewish Museum, Adelaide Holocaust Museum, Queensland Holocaust Museum, Holocaust Institute of WA and Australian Association of Jewish Holocaust Survivors & Descendants delivered a nationwide virtual event to commemorate this global day of remembrance. The theme was 'Be a Light in the Darkness'.

Speakers were Prime Minister the Hon Scott Morrison MP; the Hon. Josh Frydenberg MP; Senator Penny Wong; the Hon Justice Michael Kirby; Holocaust survivor Olga Horak; Gideon Reisner, CEO of Stand Up; and Mr. John Gandel, Chair of Gandel Philanthropy and ambassador for universal Holocaust education in Australia.

Holocaust survivors from NSW, SA, VIC, ACT, TAS, WA and QLD participated in a unique candle-lighting ceremony in which survivors symbolically passed the light to future generations of their family, to ensure that the memory of the six million murdered in the Holocaust is never forgotten.

Let us never forget

Olga Horak

I was born in Czechoslovakia, a beautiful place I once called home. Back then it was one of the only true democracies in central Europe, until the Second World War broke out in 1939.

On his quest to take over the world Hitler began by expanding Germany and annexing the Czech part of the republic to the great German Reich. He needed Lebensraum, space. Slovakia was transformed into a self-governing puppet republic, headed by a Catholic priest, who was installed as its president. He was a staunch antisemite and almost immediately exercised the cruel Nazi Nuremberg laws. He began to persecute the loyal Jewish citizens.

I still find it inconceivable how it was possible for the world to keep silent, as innocent people were collected, tortured, killed and burned.

I am a Holocaust survivor. I am a witness. I was in Auschwitz as an inmate, not a tourist. My entire family was killed there. Auschwitz was not conceived in heaven made by God. It was carefully planned by people for people. It was a place carefully designed by so-called 'cultured people'. Their aim was to destroy us, the Jewish people.

Sadly the Jewish people were betrayed by mankind. Humanity was not concerned. The world kept silent. The disappearance of so many people could not have gone unnoticed, but no one asked: where have my neighbours disappeared?

Killing Jews reached a point when it meant nothing. It became an entertainment value. National socialism was the most evil political theory and Auschwitz was the bottom of hell. It was the centre of evil that had no tomorrow, where the sun stopped shining and the birds stopped singing. It was easier to die than to live.

Survivors live with an ongoing trauma and to learn to live with what has happened is impossible. Humanity can never fully understand the world of a survivor. One could never comprehend what happened behind the barbed wire fence. Horror camps are now sanitised museums. There are no voices to be heard. There are no more walking corpses to be seen, no screams to be heard.

To describe the most hideous events in human history cannot be exaggerated. I was face-to-face with doctor Dr Joseph Mengele, 'the Angel of Death', on two occasions; I was on the threshold of death. Nothing can match the experience I have endured. Souls are wounded, scars can never heal.

The Holocaust was the tragedy of our Jewish people and our family's past. We are concerned that it should not be denied. Survivors telling their stories are not fairy tales. They are stories which have no happy endings.

Australian Jewish Holocaust museums are a great way to protect



Olga Horak. Courtesy of Sydney Jewish Museum.

Photo: Katherine Griffiths

Jewish culture and history. Holocaust education provides the foundations to equip generations with the power to challenge deniers with facts. We have to make sure that the factual events of the Holocaust remain in the national consciousness.

Hearts were broken, just like when glass hits the floor and shatters to pieces. After six long ugly years of the war I emerged from darkness, like out of a long dark tunnel to the end of light.

During our time in hiding my mother's future was read from her palm by a stranger. He said: 'Madam, you have two children, but one is somewhere in chains (my sister was already in Auschwitz in 1942). Your other child is safe and will survive the war. She will cross the ocean and land in a place where there is a lot of sunshine.'

Yes, I have arrived in Australia; there is a lot of sunshine; it's a wonderful place.

The survivors are now the last link with the millions who were murdered. We survivors are the graduates of Holocaust. We endeavour to teach in order to develop spiritual and moral strength. We promote dialogue to establish mutual understanding and respect, so people of different cultures can live in harmony.

Those following us must not think we have done so in vain. Holocaust education must be preserved. Holocaust history is based on facts. Please listen to a Holocaust survivor who has the strength to tell a vital story.

The survivors have a mission and obligation to speak out. We cannot let testimonies fade into oblivion. That subject can never be fatigued. It is a unique historical phenomenon. The memory of witnesses is more exact than the history written by those who were not there.

Auschwitz was liberated on the 27 January 1945, the date now commemorated as International Holocaust Remembrance Day. For many, however, liberation came too late. Sadly, I lost my mother on the day of liberation in Bergen Belsen. I was devastated.

Should we stop talking about the past? Is it possible to follow advice: to live in the future and not in the past? My answer, I do not live in the past, the past lives in me!

After the long ugly dark years, I emerged from the darkness, just like out of a long dark tunnel. There was a light at the end of the tunnel, and I arrived there. I often wonder why I have survived when so many did not, but I finally reached the light after years in the darkness.

Our memories and thoughts are here to share. We are strong and we conquered the evil impulses. Being alive, I find this to be a personal triumph. I shall never forget the past; it would be an insult to the victims. We should always remember and say 'never again!'

On Holocaust Remembrance Day we remember the good people as well, referred to as the Righteous Among the Nations, who provided shelter and hope under extreme danger. We also pay tribute to the Allied forces, the brave men who lost their lives fighting for peace. Let us commemorate and please let us never forget!

Olga Horak is a Holocaust survivor and volunteer guide at the Sydney Jewish Museum. This is an edited version of her presentation at the International Holocaust Remembrance Day commemoration.

Standing up for a better world

Gideon Reisner



Saba Feniger and family, 2014

My grandmother, Saba Feniger, was a survivor. In 1997, she gave video testimony to the USC Shoah Foundation, a project of Steven Spielberg. In the second part of her testimony, she is accompanied by her family, including me.

The duality of my grandmother's life was obvious and ever present. I remember walking into her room moments after she died in 2017 and gazing at her face. Yes, she looked peaceful—but I also saw relief and exhaustion etched into her expression.

Her history was always in her present. It wasn't just that the memory of the Shoah never left her—it was more. It was deeply woven into the surface of her consciousness.

In the testimony she didn't just triumphantly describe her family, she described us as a triumph. Sitting there, surrounded by her

offspring (minus one who was still on the way), I felt like she was comfortable, but grieving. She was satisfied, but defiant: as if she was not just looking at a camera from America, but leering into the depths of hell and challenging those who are doomed to toil there for eternity to 'come and get her', knowing full well that they couldn't, but if they did it mattered not because with us by her side she was invincible.

In her life, I often felt as if the armour of her victory was impossibly strong but stretched, like a thin veneer. It covered up her constant sense of loss but it didn't imprison it. It was ever-present but



▲ Saba Feniger

easily restrained. Her story of survival was never far from any conversation she had, with not just her friends, but her cleaner and her acquaintances. It did not haunt her, but it never left her. This duality defined her, all the way to the end.

The final question the softly spoken interviewer asked her was what should come forth from the testimonies the project was gathering. She replied, barely missing a beat:

My dearest hope is that nothing like it should ever happen again. That racism will eventually subside, that people will realise that we are all the same. Whether it will happen in this century or whether it will take more years, I don't know. But I really want to hope that prejudice and racism will not prevail.

A stranger would have expected, been satisfied with and, perhaps, a little moved by this response. However, a grandson who works at a Jewish organisation with this principle embedded at its core was suitably shocked.

The theme for this International Holocaust Remembrance Day commemoration was 'A light in the darkness'. For my grandmother, I was and am that light. But as I listen to her words again, I think she chose them carefully. She stated that her 'dearest hope' is that racism will eventually subside and that prejudice will not prevail. Her dearest hope. It did not feel like she was describing her own active effort, rather it was a powerless plea. An urge. I felt like she was, in 1997, actually passing on the torch to me to try and finish this job.

She states unequivocally that we were her triumph. But perhaps, in creating us, she also expended her greatest effort. What I mean is that my family and I are not a representation of her effort to overcome injustice, the effort is atomically and fundamentally us.

Of course, my grandmother worked and spoke widely, to thousands and perhaps tens of thousands of people, about these lessons and her hopes. But as I reflect on her words, her life and my own life, I realise that she was not going to do the hard work and the struggle that is required to defeat racism. She had done her bit. Clarity dawned on me. It was my job now.

One of my favourite quotes is from William Lloyd Garrison, an abolitionist and journalist. In the first issue of his abolitionist rag, *The Liberator*, he wrote:

On this subject, I do not wish to think, or speak, or write, with moderation. No! No! Tell a man whose house is on fire to give a moderate alarm; tell him to moderately rescue his wife from the hands of the ravisher; tell the mother to gradually extricate her babe from the fire in which it has fallen. I will not equivocate—I will not excuse—I will not retreat a single inch—and I will be heard. The apathy of the people is enough to make every statue leap from its pedestal, and to hasten the resurrection of the dead.

I am the CEO of Stand Up, a small organisation with the vision of an Australia free from systems and attitudes that entrench disadvantage. When I think of our work, and the work that I want to do, I think about this quote. Rabbi Joshua Heschel, when addressing a Civil Rights conference in the '60s, also quoted Garrison. He added that when a black person in America is offended, he was as well. When a black person was bereaved, so too was Heschel.

Whether or not we achieve radical action, systemic change or absolute victory, it must still be our goal. Our goal must be as lofty as it is personal. Heschel is telling me our connectedness means that true justice and equality mean more than sweeping change, but the minutia of relational change is our task as well.

At Stand Up, we have lofty goals, but we know that our programs will not alone achieve our vision. We know that partnering Jewish people with refugees won't eliminate racism; that our friendship with Aboriginal communities in Toomelah and Boggabilla won't achieve reconciliation between Jews and First Nations peoples. But, we take solace in the fact that we are part of a growing movement that will, inevitably, emerge victorious.

Different forms of 'darkness', like injustice, are not complicated or hard to see, but they are hard to solve. Performing acts of kindness is not how we will flood this darkness with light, but how we will see ourselves in the darkness. I think my grandmother was asking me to be more than a light in the darkness—she was asking me to build a sun.

At Stand Up, we're committing to work with marginalised people to tackle big problems through action and education. One day, I hope that I will be able to sit back with my children and grandchildren, staring comfortably into the camera without the duality of my grandmother, but with the knowledge that her triumph bred my own. That my work, along with the work of millions and billions of people, has led to the correction of injustice and solutions to the wicked problems that plague our planet and our people today.

Then, we'll all be at peace.

Gideon Reisner is CEO of Stand Up. This is an edited version of his presentation at the International Holocaust Remembrance Day commemoration.

Auschwitz: artefacts as witness

Paul Salmons



▲ Wheel set from steam locomotive.

Courtesy of ©Museali. Photo: Carlos Barea

'Auschwitz. Not long ago. Not far away.' is the world's largest travelling exhibition about the history and significance of the Nazis' most notorious concentration and death camp. Produced by Musealia in collaboration with the Auschwitz Birkenau State Museum, it opened in Madrid two years ago, receiving some 600,000 visitors. Currently at the Museum of Jewish Heritage in New York, it will move to Kansas City in June 2021. Paul Salmons, a curator of the exhibition, delivered the Betty and Shmuel Rosenkranz Oration in November 2020. This is an edited extract of the oration.

Auschwitz is a story of destruction. The murder of more than one million people, and then a desperate attempt by the killers to hide all trace of their crimes: destroying the gas chambers and crematoria, burning documents, killing witnesses. This exhibition documents that history; it safeguards the memory of the victims; and it indicts the society that created the largest site of mass murder on earth. It presents not only the material evidence of these vast crimes, much of it on public display for the first time, but also

artefacts that bear witness to the lives of the victims. Seemingly ordinary things, they are a tangible link to a murdered people – their clothing, the tools of their trades, the gifts they gave to one another, the items they cherished. Seven hundred artefacts. And each tells its own story, if we are prepared to listen.

One of the first artefacts the visitor encounters is a huge wheel set from a steam train locomotive. It is of a type that pulled wagon loads of Jews and others across the railways of Europe to Auschwitz, most of them to their deaths. In the exhibition it becomes a symbol of the wider perpetrator society, and the technology and bureaucracy necessary to carry out a modern, industrialised genocide.

Nearby, a huge photograph represents the vast number of victims: a mountain of shoes taken from the dead in Auschwitz. But beyond the image of the mass are individual lives; we need the visitor to understand the impact of genocide on the human scale. And so – in front of the photograph – we display another original artefact, in stark contrast to the train's wheels: one red fashionable shoe.

We do not know the woman who wore it, but her shoe provokes a series of questions. Who was she, and how did she live her life? Did she dance in these shoes? Is this the shoe she wore as she held her lover, or as she walked to work? This delicate object still bears the shape and form of its owner's foot, and when we see it without her, without being able to know her, we sense the void left by her absence. And when we see the shoe alongside the wheelset, we recognise the vulnerability of each individual and the enormity of a continent-wide destruction.

A risk in creating a very large exhibition focused on Auschwitz was that we would reinforce an Auschwitz-centric view of the



▲ Red shoe

Courtesy of ©Museali. Photo: Carlos Barea

Holocaust. So, we were careful not simply to tell the history of the camp, from the gateway of *Arbeit Macht Frei*, barrack by barrack, through to liberation. Rather, we follow Auschwitz as a narrative thread through what is otherwise a highly complex and potentially overwhelming history. By trying to understand how Auschwitz came to be and what part it played in the Holocaust, by moving in and out of the Auschwitz narrative, we are able to tell much of the wider history of the Holocaust as well, and also of the Nazis other crimes, persecutions and genocides.

Then, where to begin? It is the camp, of course, that dominates our popular imagination today. But Oswiecim – the town the Nazis' renamed Auschwitz – is a place where Jews, ethnic Poles and ethnic Germans lived alongside one another, often peacefully, for centuries. It is a kind of microcosm of some of the diverse communities that could be found throughout Europe, and by examining that world we seek an understanding of how it was possible for the continent to descend into genocide. This approach allows us to tell the story of Jewish life in Europe before the war, and of Roma and Sinti who also

became victims of Nazi genocide and were murdered in Auschwitz. We want to show something of the lives that were lived, and the richness and diversity of those cultures, in order better to understand what was lost. And we explore the world of those who lived alongside them, to ask how people across Nazi-dominated Europe became complicit in the murder of their neighbours.

Auschwitz was established in 1940, following Germany's invasion of Poland in 1939, and during the Second World War it continued to expand its territory, sites, roles and functions. What began in 1940 as an instrument of subjugation and terror of Polish civilians, in 1941 became also a site to house Soviet prisoners of war; and in 1942, it became central to the Nazis' 'Final Solution of the Jewish Question' in Europe – the mass murder of Jewish men, women and children from across the continent. Auschwitz also provided a vast pool of slave labour to German industry, mining, road building and agriculture. The huge Auschwitz complex eventually covered a vast area of over 40 square kilometres and some 50 sub-camps.

In tracing the origins of Auschwitz, we explore the impact of the First World War, the rise of the Nazis, development of the concentration camp system in Germany and, the course, of the Second World War. Under cover of war the German disabled were targeted, killed by doctors and nurses. Some 200,000 disabled people were murdered at six killing centres, with gas chambers disguised as shower rooms. These methods and the personnel who developed them were later sent east to build the death camps that would murder Polish Jewry, and the same techniques ultimately reached their crescendo in Auschwitz.

Throughout, we tell the stories of individuals and how they responded to the unfolding genocide. The stories of those in hiding; of the Jewish partisans who fought the Nazis from the forests of Eastern Europe; of escapees from Auschwitz who told the outside world what was happening; and of the revolt of the Jewish *Sonderkommando* who rose against their SS guards, destroying one of the Auschwitz crematoria.

We end with film of pre-war life showing people not as victims of Auschwitz but rather how they lived, and what we have lost. In reflecting on what this means for how we live today, the last word is given to Auschwitz survivor Charlotte Delbo:

*You who are passing by
I beg you
Do something
Learn a dance step
Something to justify your existence
Something that gives you the right
To be dressed in your skin in your body hair
Learn to walk and to laugh
Because it would be too senseless
After all
For so many to have died
While you live
Doing nothing with your life.*

Paul Salmons is an independent curator and education consultant specialising in 'difficult histories'. He has served on the UK delegation to the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance for some 20 years.

Ensuring a connection with the past

Charlie Holckner

My mother, Bronka Kuperberg, was born in Warsaw, Poland, the youngest of 19 children. After her mother's death, she moved with her father to Radom, where she met my father, Abraham Holckner. Bronka was already committed to joining her brother in Australia, but she and Abraham soon fell in love. They planned for Abraham to come to Melbourne as soon as Bronka found work and could pay for his passage, and were reunited in Melbourne in 1927. They were married soon after. I was born in 1930 and my sister Eva in 1933.

I was nine when the Second World War broke out. Although some foods were rationed and the newspapers were filled with such news as Germany's latest bombing of Great Britain, the war had little impact on my world as a child. I do, however, have a strong memory of my mother crying as she listened to the news on the radio. Most of her siblings were murdered by the Nazis and only a few survived.

When I was 13 years old, I met Lily Smorgon at Habonim youth group and, after several years of friendship, our relationship developed. We married in 1950 and were blessed with four children. Now with grandchildren and great-grandchildren, we are a large extended family. Sadly, Lily passed away in 2004.

Soon after Lily and I married, I joined the Smorgon family business, beginning work in the fruit canning department in what was to become Smorgon Consolidated Industries, Australia's largest family company. My sons, Mark and David, followed me into the business. In the 1990s, when the family decided to divest all business assets, the Holckners took over a small tissue business. Encore Tissue was born and grew into a thriving business, now involving three generations.

The story of my family and my wife's is one of transformation and growth. From the poverty and oppression of life in their native Poland, my parents travelled across the world to a distant and unfamiliar land to seek a better life. Building a new life in their adopted home, they established successful businesses and opened up a world of opportunity for their children, while



▲ Charlie Holckner OAM (seated) with his children
(l-r) Mark, Helen, Anne and David
◀ Charlie Holckner

maintaining a strong connection to their past, their values and their and culture and heritage as Australian Jews. Lily and I sought to follow in their footsteps with our own family.

My family and I are delighted to support the Jewish Holocaust Centre (JHC) through the endowment of a new program for Jewish young adults of bar and bat mitzvah age. This program will help young people to learn about the Holocaust in a meaningful way, but it will be more than an education program. We also hope it will instil in them the importance of their Jewish identity while, at the same time, honouring the memory of those who were murdered during the Holocaust.

Charlie Holckner OAM is a businessman and philanthropist.

Honouring the legacy

Ronit Fraid and Vivien Rosenfeld



▲ Isaac Gorodzinski (right) with his parents and siblings, 1922

➤ (l-r) Mark and Dina Munzer



Our mother's father Yitzhak, carried his grief heavily. When he arrived in Palestine in the early 1940s and witnessed the vibrant café culture of Tel Aviv, he found it incomprehensible that Jews could be socialising and enjoying life while their brethren were being massacred in Europe. On discovering his family's fate after the war, he swore off God and religion, although after his passing, we found a well-worn siddur in his bedside table.

His parents had been well-respected leaders in the Jewish community of Zambrow. His mother was known for her charitable nature. Every Friday she would prepare and distribute meals discreetly to needy Jewish families, always careful to protect their dignity. At the beginning of the German occupation, Grandpa Yitzhak's father was taken into the town square and shot, together with other community leaders.

His mother, disguised as a Polish peasant, was inadvertently betrayed when a neighbour, upon recognising her and shocked to see her in such reduced circumstances, exclaimed aloud, 'Pani Gorodzinski, what are you doing here?' His brothers, sisters and their children found their terrible fate in concentration camps. Our mother's mother, Zahava, a sweet and gentle lady, lost her beautiful family similarly.

Our grandparents on our father's side lived in Israel, so our knowledge of them and the fate of their families is more limited. We know that our grandmother Lusia had a surviving sister who sadly committed suicide after the war, and a brother, our great-uncle Ziga, who lost his wife and baby daughter in the Shoah. We actually met him and his second wife, Hela, who were brought together by their shared grief, but we didn't know them at all well.

We feel it is a privilege and a responsibility to continue the philanthropic work of our family. Supporting the Jewish Holocaust Centre is a way of honouring the legacy of our parents, grandparents (z"l) and Am Yisrael. We believe that the Jewish Holocaust Centre is doing vital work, educating both Jewish and non-Jewish children about our history, and in this important way, is helping to counteract the scourge of rising antisemitism in the world.

It is impossible to comprehend the depths of grief and loss in our family's Holocaust history, let alone the millions of others likewise impacted. Our parents, Marek (Mark) Munzer (z"l) and Dina Gorodzinski, were both preteens in 1939. They escaped the worst ravages of wartime Europe, with our father's nuclear family leaving Krakow in the month before the Germans invaded Poland. Our mother and her parents were transported from Poland to Siberia by the Russians, having escaped Warsaw to Zambrow after the Nazi invasion.

As our parents did not have to endure the horrors of the concentration camps, they never identified as 'Holocaust survivors'. Consequently we, their daughters, never considered them as such. Both Mum and Dad spent their teenage years and early adulthood in Palestine and experienced the traumas, as well as the halcyon days of the rebirth of Israel. They met in their hometown of Tel Aviv, married and had their first child, leaving Israel in 1956 to seek personal and economic security in Australia. We grew up, blessed with two sets of living grandparents, which was very unusual for the generation of children born in the shadow of the Holocaust.

Our mother's parents lived near us in Melbourne. Both had lost their entire families – parents, brothers, sisters, aunts and uncles – in the Shoah, but they never spoke of it to us, probably keen to protect us from the knowledge of their horrific losses.



Sue Hampel

March of the Living Australia celebrates 20 years

▲ Jerusalem, 2019

Photo: Yoav Lester

The March of the Living (MOTL) is an annual journey where thousands of Jewish teens and adults from around the world visit Poland and Israel to mark Holocaust Remembrance Day and Israel Independence Day. Its purpose is to give participants an educational journey through these important historical places and to learn from the past in order to change the future.

It is hard to believe that it has been 20 years since I first brought MOTL to Australia. As the Hebrew saying goes, 'Kol hahatchalot kashot (all beginnings are hard).' In 1988, Australia was invited to participate in the first international student MOTL program, but over 1,000 Holocaust survivors signed a petition against official communal journeys to Poland. Sam Lipski wrote in the *Australian Jewish News*, 'For many ... Poland is a painful memory ... a graveyard for millions of European Jews during the Holocaust.' Fast forward to the year 2000, when Hilton Rubin, then principal of Mount Scopus Memorial College, approached me to discuss organising a student trip to Poland – leading to the birth of MOTL in Australia. With the support of the Jewish Holocaust Centre (JHC) and the Descendants of the Shoah, led by Pauline Rockman and the late Shmuel Rosenkranz, the fears of the survivors were allayed and MOTL went from strength to strength, now recognised as one of the foremost programs for Year 11 Jewish students.

I led the first Australian MOTL along with outstanding Jewish educators Marion Seftel and Sandy Hollis from Sydney and Frances Prince from Melbourne. As Jackie Cohen said in 2001, 'This incredible experience has helped me to understand that we have a responsibility to educate people about what we have learnt.' As teachers, we were determined to challenge our students to confront a dark period in Jewish history with understanding and empathy, and the experiential nature of the trip impacted in a way that no classroom or museum ever could. By visiting the places where dynamic Jewish communities once flourished, we hoped to convey the richness of pre-war Jewish life and make this history more accessible. By seeing first-hand the physical remnants of the Nazi machinery of destruction, our goal was to ensure that Australian students will be never be passive bystanders in the face of evil.

The role of survivors accompanying students throughout the journey is central. Listening to survivors in the classroom is one thing, but listening to their stories outside their former homes, schools and synagogues is quite another. Hearing survivors give their testimony at the camps where they suffered unspeakable horrors is a powerful means for the transference of memory. Over 30 Melbourne survivors



have participated in the program, including Eva Slonim, Rita Ross, David Prince, Judy Kolt, Abram Goldberg, Joe Szwarcberg, the late Saba Feniger and the late Tuvia Lipson. Their eyewitness accounts have given students insight into both the depths to which humanity can sink and the heights to which humanity can rise, and their presence is a reminder of the resilience of the human spirit.

Travelling to Israel is powerfully uplifting after an emotional week in Poland and words cannot describe the excitement on the flight to Tel Aviv as we leave a place of destruction and silence for a land of rebirth and vibrancy.

The Israeli component of the program enables participants to experience Israel in a way that cannot be experienced in the classroom or on traditional tours. The two indelible highlights are Yom Hazikaron, when a piercing and powerful siren reverberates as Israel remembers those who have given their lives in protecting the Jewish homeland and Yom Ha'atzmaut, a wonderful day of celebration.

Since 2001, over 1,500 students have participated in this life-changing program. In 2004 adults participated for the first time, thanks to the incredible efforts of Pauline Rockman. When I reflect on my 11 trips, so many memories come flooding back – the tears cried in the bleakness of Belzec; the unbearable sadness on Yom Hashoah in Auschwitz-Birkenau, the ultimate factory of death; the coldness of Majdanek; reciting Kaddish in so many

forlorn places including Treblinka, Tykocin, Lopuchowo, Warsaw and Lodz. My strongest memories, however, are of the indomitable spirit of our remarkable survivors.

The program has a lasting impact, as a majority of students return with a greater commitment to Israel, remembering the Holocaust and strengthening their Jewish identity. So many have made important contributions to the community, such as volunteering in humanitarian pursuits and working to combat prejudice and hatred. I am so proud of the participants, many who have become agents of change in the Australian community.

Thank you to the survivors, educators, rabbis, psychologists, doctors, support staff and the madrichim who have been part of the MOTL family. It is an honour and a privilege to serve as the founder and first President of MOTL Australia and I am pleased that Cedric Geffen has continued to ensure that the program is still as relevant today as it was 20 years ago.

Sue Hampel OAM is JHC Co-President and the founder and first President of MOTL Australia and Cedric Geffen is the current President.



▲ Auschwitz-Birkenau, 2007

Photo: Emmanuel Santos

Cedric Geffen

My March of the Living journey began when my dear friend Sandy Hollis, one of the four founding educators of MOTL Australia, first exposed me to the magic of this program. After learning more about the program, I knew that it could change lives and decided to establish MOTL New Zealand, under the wing of MOTL Australia.

The first New Zealand delegation joined the Australian program in 2006 and I have been involved ever since. My involvement over 15 years – 10 as president – has enriched me immeasurably. The privilege of sharing this unique experience with survivors, their descendants and thousands of Australian student and adult participants is something I cherish. It acts as the beacon that continues to drive my commitment to Holocaust memorialisation, education and Tikkun Olam.

Two memories stand out for me: In 2011, Abram Goldberg, accompanied by his son Charlie, his grandson Daniel, and the entire group, linked arms and proudly sang the Partisan Song outside the museum at Belzec. Then, during the 2014 student program, I recall the utter joy and pride we felt when we conducted a 'mini'-bar mitzvah ceremony for Daniel Szwarcburg in Warsaw's Nozyk Synagogue. Daniel, aged 83, had attended the shul with his father as a boy before the war, but had been denied a bar mitzvah when at 13 when he was forced to go into hiding.

As MOTL has grown, many changes have occurred: the student and adult delegations have been unified under one MOTL Australia banner; a Young Adult program has been established; the adult program has grown so much that in 2019 we sent our first independent all-Australian delegation rather than combining with other international adult groups; and in 2020, despite the march being cancelled, we transitioned to on-line programming, developed a new website and brand identity, enrolled the first ever-group of Victorian members of Parliament to join the march, and expanded our social media presence. None of these could have been achieved without the formidable input of Sue Hampel, the other founding members of MOTL Australia, our educators and the many volunteers who have served on the Board over the last 20 years.

An act of kindness

Guta Goldstein



▲ Guta Goldstein and her granddaughter Tali Prawer

Guta Goldstein was born in Lodz, Poland in 1930. She was the first child of Fela and Judah Kopel. Her mostly carefree childhood was abruptly cut short on 1 September 1939, when the Germans invaded Poland. Forced to move into the Lodz Ghetto with her family and the rest of Lodz's Jewish community, Guta witnessed her father's death from pneumonia in 1941. Guta and her younger sister, Munia, were placed in the Marysin orphanage where, following an outbreak of measles, Munia died from meningitis. Guta's Aunt Golda rescued her from the orphanage before its liquidation in September 1942 and,

despite being small and undernourished, she survived numerous selections and subsequent deportations.

When the Lodz Ghetto was liquidated in August 1944, Guta, together with her aunt and cousin, were deported to Auschwitz. From there Guta was transferred to Bergen-Belsen and finally to Meltheuer, a slave labour camp from which she was liberated in April 1945. She was fifteen years of age and all alone. After four and a half years as a displaced person in Italy, Guta, together with her cousin Inka and her family, were migrated to Australia. Settling

in Melbourne, Guta met Ludek Goldstein, also a Holocaust survivor, and together they built a new life.



▲ Guta Goldstein's liberation document.

In 1944, Guta was one of 350 slave labourers at a factory manufacturing components for warplanes. They were guarded around the clock by SS women, who could be cruel and sadistic. This extract from her memoir, There will be tomorrow, takes place at that factory.

We were young, Jewish women of varied backgrounds ranging in age from 14 to 40. Among us were some gifted, well-read and well-educated people. All of us, regardless of age or degree of education, were forced to work 12-hour shifts in 24-hour rotation, on starvation rations. These rations consisted of a single, one-inch slice of dark bread and a cup of dark, bitter, ersatz brew at dawn and at sunset, a bowl of watery vegetable soup, in which floated some shredded cabbage leaves and a few cubes of potatoes. Our hunger was unbearable.

Most of us were made to slave in the factory, working the steel into various components, on machines of which we had no experience and without any safety precautions. We wore white kerchiefs over our shorn heads and overalls over our dresses. In these we worked and slept. German civilian foremen supervised our work but the SS guarded us at all times.

To keep our spirits up, we told each other about our homes and families reminiscing about our lives before the war. We also spoke of what we ate before the war the meals that our mothers cooked and how we wished for some of that food now. Food was the main preoccupation. It was on everyone's mind at all times because the pain of starvation was so acutely felt, physically and mentally. Yet, our will to survive was strong and the smallest rumour or unguarded remark by our captors regarding news of the war served to keep our hopes up. Some of the girls did their share to boost morale by holding 'sotto voce' literary sessions, which made us feel human for a few precious moments.

Cesia and I worked hard on our hands and knees, scrubbing and polishing. We worked well together and became good friends. We made an outlandish pair, one tall and fair, the other, dark and short, falling out of her oversized overalls.

Herr Lehman, an elderly German civilian, a veteran of the First World War, was the watchman at this establishment. He was a short and friendly man. He always greeted us politely when we arrived to clean his cubbyhole. He always left so that we had enough room to move about in that small space.

Every unit was accompanied and guarded by one of the SS women whenever they worked outside the barracks. One day we were accompanied by the guard whose boyfriend was one of the civilian foremen in the factory. While we were cleaning Herr Lehman's cubbyhole, she left to visit her boyfriend. As soon as she was out of earshot, Herr Lehman whispered: 'I have left a sandwich for each of you in the waste basket. Hide it in your pocket.' How lucky we were to have a pocket in our overalls and to be able to hide this unbelievable treasure. A sandwich!

We barely managed to get through the day. All that we could think of was the treasure in our pocket. How we longed to get to our bunks. We still had to wait till lights out before we dared to eat our sandwich. We ate it under the blanket so no one could see,

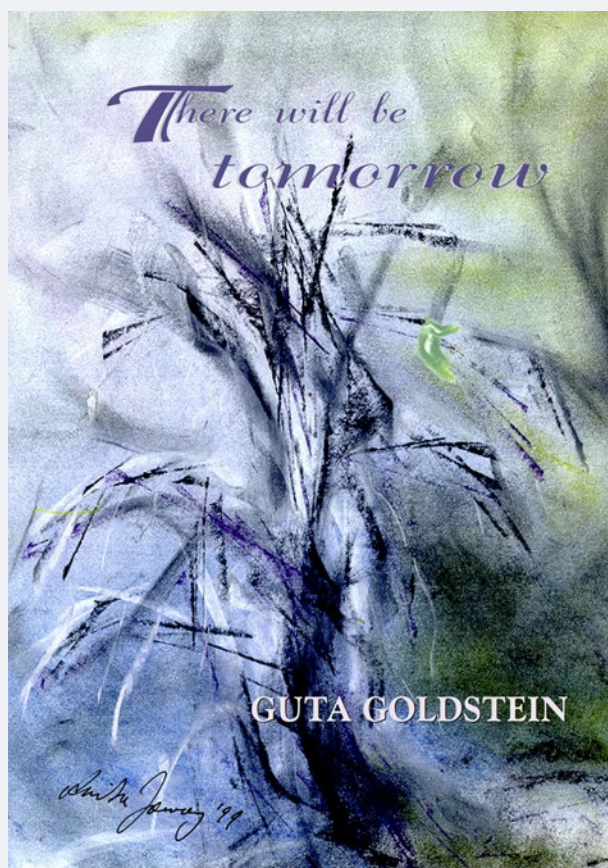
hear, or worse, smell the food. It would mean terrible trouble for all three of us if we were found out, for civilians were forbidden to even speak with the inmates. Every day until liberation, Herr Lehman left us some of his lunch in the wastebasket. We always shared this food with Inka and Carmela. Once there was even a hard-boiled egg and another time an apple, items of food that we had not tasted in five years and had just about forgotten how delicious they could be.

On one occasion, when the guard left us in the cubbyhole again to visit her foreman, Herr Lehman said: 'Quick children, get into the shed. It is my birthday today and my wife made this soup especially for me.' It was grated potato soup with dumplings. 'I want you to eat it while it is hot.'

He gave us his soup container with the hot contents and a spoon, pushed us gently into the shed and locked us inside, keeping watch outside while we ate. 'Knock when you have finished,' he said. With our hearts pounding in fright and with the pleasure of our good fortune, we gobbled up Herr Lehman's delicious soup, his birthday gift. Then he unlocked the shed, let us out, and beamed his pleasure that we had eaten it all.

Kind, gentle Herr Lehman was a rare phenomenon in those evil days. His was much more than an act of kindness. It was compassion of the highest order.

Guta Goldstein is a Holocaust survivor and volunteer guide at the Jewish Holocaust Centre. Her memoir, *There will be tomorrow*, was published by Makor Community Library in 1999.



Teaching the Holocaust in schools

Lisa Phillips

Seventy-six years since the Holocaust ended our world is facing enormous challenges of racism and antisemitism. Although education is not a panacea in solving all problems, it is a powerful tool in changing attitudes against hatred and intolerance.

In February 2020, the Victorian Minister for Education, the Hon James Merlino, announced that all government secondary school students in Years 9 and 10 will be taught about the Holocaust from this year, to tackle rising antisemitism, racism and prejudice in our schools and in the broader society. The State Government planned to work with Gandel Philanthropy and the Jewish Holocaust Centre (JHC) to develop resources for the Victorian curriculum.

In May 2020, the Department of Education and Training, with the support of Gandel Philanthropy, established a Steering Group to provide direction and guidance to an Expert Working Group, whose role was to develop, recommend and advise the Steering Group on Holocaust resources, guidance on best practice and lesson plans.

The Steering Group was comprised of representatives of the Department of Education and Training (DET), Gandel Philanthropy, the JHC, Jewish Museum Australia, Courage to Care, Jewish Community Council of Victoria, United Jewish Education Board and Anti-Defamation League. The Working Group was comprised of representatives from DET, the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, the JHC, Jewish Museum Australia, Courage to Care, the Jewish Community Council of Victoria, Yad Vashem, Monash University's Australian Centre for Jewish Civilisation and five graduates from the Gandel Holocaust Studies Program.

I was given the privilege to co-chair the Expert Working Group with DET. Over three months of intensive meetings, 13 amazing individuals representing diverse organisations, working under COVID-19 conditions, came together on Zoom and WebEx to produce these valuable resources for teachers. All participants were united in their commitment to the project and their passion for excellent Holocaust education.

We created a comprehensive Holocaust education website on the DET website, FUSE. fuse.education.vic.gov.au/pages/holocaust We aimed to make teaching the Holocaust as easy and accessible to teachers, understanding that many barriers exist, such as limited time, lack of knowledge and confidence in teaching such difficult material. The advice includes:

- *Guidance on teaching the Holocaust*, within the context of DET policy and requirements for Department of Education Schools.
- *Overcoming barriers to quality provision* with advice for teachers, school leaders and parents on how to overcome these barriers.



▲ Lisa Phillips with students at the JHC museum.

Photo: Joe Lewit

- *A rationale for teaching the Holocaust* including an explanation of why teaching the Holocaust benefits students.
- *Pedagogy and assessment advice*: guidance, tips and what to avoid when teaching the Holocaust, including planning, teaching and assessment considerations for a quality Holocaust Education program.
- *Teacher professional learning opportunities and readings*
- *280 curated resources* including poems, newspaper articles, diary extracts, interactive online exhibitions, videos and photographs that promote Victorian sources and the survivors' voice.

In addition, there is both an English and History sequence of lessons for teachers on the Holocaust, with all the essential elements that the Expert Working Group identified were important. These lessons have been designed so that teachers can just pick up the lesson sequence and have everything at their fingertips, ready to use with their students.

To support teachers and schools in using these resources created by the expert working group, the JHC has worked closely with the DET to develop a 10-step professional development plan. Our goal is to give schools and teachers confidence in using the materials available and assisting them to teach this difficult topic in a meaningful and engaging way that suits their particular school environment. Our pilot program will begin this year.

Lisa Phillips is JHC Head of Education. For further information, please email Lisa at lisap@jhc.org.au

Celebrating 80 years later

Ian and Henry Sharp



▲ Miriam and Zvi Sharp

Zvi Sharp has fond memories of a simple, happy childhood, shared with his four brothers, Mayer, Mendel, Leibel and Gershon, friends and neighbours in the close-knit town of Ryki in 1930s Poland. He grew up in an Orthodox Jewish home, went to cheder, and has precious memories of Shabbat meals with his family.

Everything changed in September 1939, when Ryki was captured by German troops and the Jews were forced to build their own ghetto. Around 10 members of his extended family, including Zvi, Gershon and their parents, were crammed into his uncle David's small house. Then, in May 1942, all the Jews were ordered to the town square, told to leave their clothing and belongings, and were forced to walk 12 kilometres to Deblin Station, and then to the Deblin Concentration Camp.

Families were separated and people were hysterical. Zvi lost sight of his parents and younger brother. He never saw them or his older brothers again. He was 15 years old. Between May 1942 and early 1944, he was at Deblin, Colditz, and Buchenwald Concentration Camps. He stayed strong, surviving hard labour and shocking conditions. In early 1945, in the depths of winter, he and his fellow inmates were forced on a death march to Theresienstadt, where they were liberated by the Russians.

His nightmare was finally over, but he was all alone and adrift. Returning to Lublin, he met others going to a makeshift kibbutz in preparation for going to Palestine (now Israel) and decided to join them. They made their way across Europe to Marseille to make the illegal voyage to Israel, only to be interned in Cyprus by the British when they arrived. A year later, he was able to reach Eretz Yisrael, finding work as a carpenter in Haifa. Soon after the declaration of the State of Israel in 1948, he joined the army where he remained for two years.



▲ Zvi Sharp with his great-grandchildren (l-r) Zahara, Ariella and Mayah Sharp

In 1950, Zvi met Miriam Bercovici and they married soon after. They were blessed with two sons, Ian and Henry, but Zvi constantly searched for any surviving members of his family. Although everyone in his immediate family had been murdered, he had an uncle and cousins in Australia who urged the family to come. The yearning for family and the possibility for better opportunities made them decide to migrate, and they arrived in Melbourne in 1961.

Zvi and Miriam had to work hard to provide for their family, but they built a new life. Zvi was grateful for their healthy, comfortable, and safe life and, more than anything else, the joy of their children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren – something that in 1945 he could only dream of.

At the age of 93, at the suggestion of his daughter-in-law Ruth, Zvi agreed to have the bar mitzvah he was unable to have at the age of 13. He saw it as a chance not only to celebrate his lost opportunity, but also to honour the multitudes of young Jewish boys whose lives were brutally extinguished.

Zvi decided to make a donation to the Jewish Holocaust Centre (JHC) in lieu of gifts. We thank him for his generous donation and wish him Mazal tov.

Virtual workshops: pivoting towards a future beyond borders

Tracey Collie

The Jewish Holocaust Centre (JHC) mission to keep the voices of the Holocaust alive through education continued in 2020, despite the constraints COVID-19 threw at us. From August to December, our virtual workshops reached approximately 3,000 students from some 45 different schools across three different Australian states.

In each workshop, students gained an understanding of concepts such as race and propaganda, and how these contributed to the Holocaust. They then journeyed through each phase of the Holocaust before hearing the moving stories of a Holocaust survivor. All workshops concluded with a powerful reflection, asking students to carry the lessons of the Holocaust into their lives today and to become the voice of survivors by continuing to tell their story.

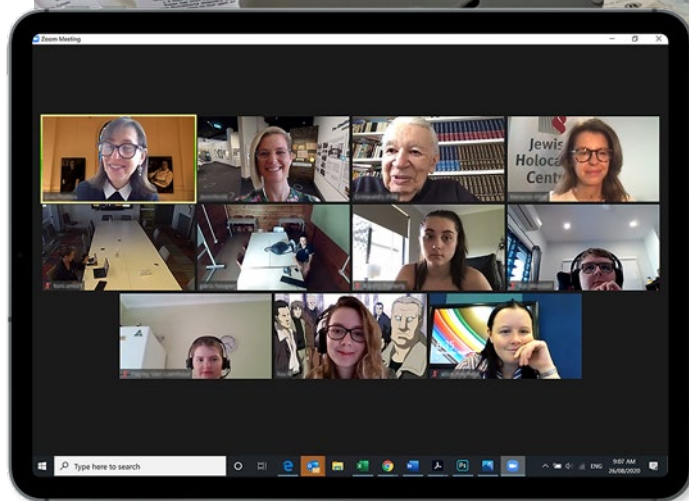
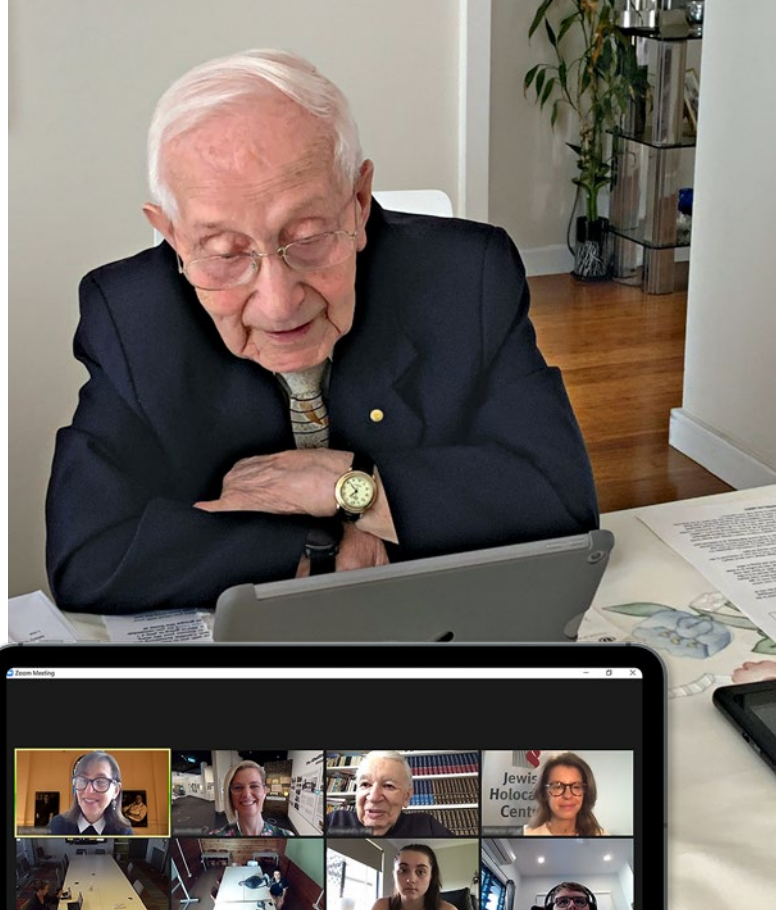
Student feedback

- 4.6 out of 5 rating overall
- 98% of students said the workshop enriched their understanding of the Holocaust
- 93% of students agreed they were inspired to learn more about the Holocaust.

Importantly, each workshop considered the way students were learning about the Holocaust within their classroom, allowing for a more focused and individualised approach for each school. Combined with our other virtual offerings, *Ask a Survivor*, *Understanding through Testimony* and updated film and literature recommendations delivered via our Teacher eNews, teachers were well supported to continue to deliver a comprehensive Holocaust unit in their virtual classrooms.

This year presented early challenges and we found ourselves drawing on the important lessons of 2020 – to be flexible and keep adapting.

With the museum put away in storage for the time being, facsimiles of approximately 32 artefacts from our collection have been created for students to handle and explore when they attend the new *In Touch with Memory* program. Following professional development sessions with Paul Salmons, independent curator and educational



▲ Abram Goldberg OAM

▲ Paul Grinwald (top row centre) with students and JHC educators

consultant in the UK, the JHC education team thoughtfully curated an updated virtual workshop combining the best parts of the last year's workshop and the handling collection from *In Touch with Memory*. The team plans to continue to evaluate and improve the workshop to ensure that it remains a staple in our suite of programs.

We excitedly began welcoming students back on-site in February 2021, albeit in smaller groups due to Covid-safe restrictions. The feedback to the new program has been excellent and we hope restrictions ease soon to allow more students through our doors.

With the government mandate of compulsory Holocaust education for all Victorian Year 9 and 10 students beginning this year, the virtual workshops will also provide a unique opportunity to achieve our strategic priority to develop our reach to every Victorian school student. Our reach, beyond the invisible border of metropolitan Victoria, will grow further and allow students in regional Victoria, unable to attend in person in the past, finally experience and learn our powerful message. The opportunities our virtual workshop has opened up are endless and we will continue to explore these this year.

So, what did 2020 teach us? Be flexible, embrace the opportunities and the voices of our survivors will continue to educate students on the powerful lessons of the Holocaust.

Tracey Collie is JHC Education Programs Officer.

IHRA meets in Leipzig (virtually)

Pauline Rockman and Sue Hampel



▲ Cover of the Anne Frank video diary developed by Anne Frank House, Amsterdam

'The future we are shaping now, is the past that we will share tomorrow.'

Former Swedish Prime Minister Göran Persson

Twenty years ago, the Stockholm International Forum on the Holocaust was held, bringing together high-ranking political leaders and officials from more than 40 countries to meet with civic and religious leaders, Holocaust survivors, educators, historians and others who dedicate their work to promoting Holocaust education, commemoration and research. The Stockholm Declaration was signed by participating countries at the closing session of this conference and became the founding document of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA). Since then, IHRA has grown to include 34 member countries, eight observer countries and seven permanent International Partners. IHRA remains a unique organisation, bringing together politicians as well as experts from the fields of academia, education, memorials and museums.

This year, instead of travelling to Berlin and Leipzig for the 20th anniversary of the Stockholm Declaration, all sessions were held virtually. The transition to the online digital platform provided member countries with the opportunity to focus on the theme of 'remembering and working in a digital context'.

As we know, the coronavirus has been accompanied by antisemitism, discrimination against minority groups, conspiracy myths, Holocaust denial and distortion. As a result, the focus at the Leipzig plenary was to address how to best navigate these worrying trends. The Museums and Memorials Working Group reported on the challenges faced by cultural institutions during the pandemic, many of which

are suffering great financial loss and are even facing the possibility of permanent closures. The Education Working Group (EWG) discussed the educational implications of new Holocaust distortion and how to counter this phenomenon; how the newly published IHRA recommendations for teaching and learning about the Holocaust can be used in schools and institutions around the world; the advantages and disadvantages of using online education during the pandemic; and the impact for future Holocaust education. Some of the highlights included Dr Eyal Kaminka's excellent overview regarding Yad Vashem's approach to harnessing online education in the age of COVID; Ruth-Anne Lenga from the Centre for Holocaust Education in the UK who discussed the findings of new research undertaken in relation to Holocaust education in English schools; and Jurmet Huitema-de Waal from the Anne Frank House who helped to transform Anne Frank's memoir into an extraordinary video diary for younger high school students annefrank.org/en/about-us/news-and-press/news/2020/3/30/new-anne-frank-video-diary/

The 2021 IHRA plenary year promises to be an exciting one as Sue Hampel has been appointed the incoming International Chair for the Education Working Group, the first Australian to hold this leadership role. We are hoping to attend the planned meetings in Greece in person rather than online

Pauline Rockman OAM and Sue Hampel OAM are Co-Presidents of the Jewish Holocaust Centre and members of the IHRA Australian delegation.

Searching for stories of resistance

Bianca Saltzman

I look up toward the arched ceiling. Names fill the room. First names, middle names, surnames, Hebrew names. Lost names. But what do they mean to me?

It was possibly my tenth visit to the Centre, but this time, as part of the 'new normal' during the global pandemic, my visit was virtual as I navigated the halls of the exhibitions via a mouse and screen. Looking up from my desk, I was greeted by a painting my great-grandmother had recently completed, hanging on my living room wall. As a Holocaust survivor, painting was her therapy and an expression of the trauma she experienced. It was also a way she passed her memories to her 21 great-grandchildren, a collective to which I am lucky to belong. From that moment, it was impossible to tour the museum objectively.

The tour began through a hallway filled with the harrowing faces of families: mothers, fathers, children and the unfathomable number of 1.5 million children murdered. Staring into the gleaming eyes of these children, I felt as though they were my family members – the lost siblings of my great-grandmother.

The JHC museum is a fundamental tool in educating a multifaceted society about the horrors experienced by European Jewry in the 1930s and 1940s. It incorporates survivor testimonies into an interactive experience to engage the visitor. The museum aims to 'package' the collective memory of the Holocaust for a wide audience consisting of different faiths, nationalities, ages and knowledge. But how can a tragedy be packaged and sold with meaning? How does the individual who already places personal meaning on this historic event interact with the collective memory presented?

This complexity is one I grappled with as I continued to explore the permanent exhibition. The different displays illustrate significant events and places, including Kristallnacht, the infamous Lodz and Warsaw Ghettos and the horrors of concentration camps, importantly circled around a large model of Treblinka.

Faced with what I saw, I could not help but feel disconnected and conflicted by the difference between the collective memory on display and my personal inherited memories. I could not help but long for images of Partisans – images depicting them hiding in the forests of Poland, without shoes, trudging through icy fields; of confrontations with Nazi officers; and Partisans with guns. Although not a typical or public memory of the Holocaust, it is the



◀ Luba Goldberg's Partisan identity card.
Source: Organization of Partisans, Underground and Ghetto Fighters website
▼ Collage of Luba Goldberg's paintings and photos



private and collective memory of a group of survivors that includes both my great-grandparents, Luba and Chaim Goldberg.

Where are the testimonies of rebellion showing the strength and perseverance of survivors? Where is the video of my great-grandfather explaining how he and his brothers blew up train tracks that were transporting ammunition to Nazi soldiers. These individual stories were hard to find in the collective narrative.

How can a museum aimed at educating such a wide audience adequately detail all the different experiences, many of which confuse and challenge the collective memory and victim narrative that has become synonymous with Holocaust memory?

As a third-generation descendant of survivors harbouring the weight of inherited trauma, I was able to see both the flaws and strengths of a tour through the museum. Not all stories – including my great-grandparents' more atypical experiences – can be found in a museum. Although I was unable to find my own personal story during my virtual tour, I appreciate the incredible and difficult responsibility the museum bears in acting as the pillar of Holocaust education for both the Jewish and broader Melbourne community.

Bianca Saltzman completed this reflection as part of her course in History at Monash University.

Adelaide Holocaust Museum opens its doors



Photos: Pauline Cockrill

The new Adelaide Holocaust Museum and Andrew Steiner Education Centre (AHMSEC) was officially launched in November 2020 in the heart of the city. With the generous support of the Catholic Archdiocese the museum is housed in the historic Fennessey House.

IAHMSEC honours the six million Jewish victims of the Holocaust and millions of other victims of Nazism. Its program reflects the necessity to nurture human rights to prevent such atrocities in the future. By telling the stories of the Holocaust, AHMSEC aims to educate and inspire South Australians to stand up against antisemitism and racism, and actively contribute to a fairer, more just and compassionate world.

AHMSEC is inspired by the vision and work of Andrew Steiner, an Adelaide-based sculptor and Holocaust survivor, who has offered Holocaust commemoration and reflection to South Australian secondary schools for the past 30 years. With his late wife Helen, Andrew founded the Remember the Holocaust Compassion for All Foundation to establish a capital fund for the development of the museum.

The permanent, self-guided Holocaust exhibition is posed as a series of questions to stimulate critical thinking and help visitors, especially young people, to understand how and why the Holocaust happened. Throughout the exhibition visitors encounter

historical artefacts, personal objects and photographs which intersect with the stories of six Adelaide survivors.

The museum features four galleries: the Anne Frank Gallery, endowed by John and Pauline Gandel, which houses the permanent collection; the Lefmann Gallery which features the stories of the six survivors; the Jack and Robert Smorgon Families Foundation Gallery which currently houses the museum's education centre; and the Franz Kempf Memorial Gallery, a smaller gallery dedicated to the memory of Franz Kempf and featuring his Holocaust Series.

AHMSEC's permanent exhibition traces the history of the Holocaust and encourages critical thinking around themes from the Holocaust that remain relevant to issues in contemporary society, such as hate-speak, antisemitism, racism and acts of terror right. Its education program, with financial assistance from the South Australian Department for Education, is now being rolled out, offering school curriculum-tailored Holocaust education programs.

AHMSEC Chair Nicola Zuckerman said: 'The aim of our programs is to demonstrate that antisemitism existed before the Holocaust, still exists today and is in fact, increasing in prevalence around the world. Combating antisemitism and racism in all its forms is a virtue AHMSEC hopes to instil in all who visit the museum.'

School visits and virtual workshops 2020



In 2019, over 23,000 students from schools and universities across Victoria, as well as some from interstate and overseas, visited the Jewish Holocaust Centre (JHC). Although an increase in numbers was anticipated at the beginning of 2020, the JHC had no choice but to close its doors with the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic in March. These are the schools that visited the JHC from January to March.

Alamanda College	Harvester Technical College	Rainbow P-12 College
Albury High School	Highvale Secondary College	Salesian College
Alphington Grammar School	Ivanhoe Grammar	Scotch College
Balwyn High School	John Monash Science School	South Oakleigh College
Beaconhills College	Lalor North College	St Bede's College
Billanook College	Lilydale High School	St Joseph's College
Box Hill High School	Marist College Bendigo	St Kevin's College
Braybrook College	McClelland College	St Mary of the Angels Nathalia
Brighton Secondary College	Melton Christian College	Staughton College
Carwatha Collage	Mentone Grammar	Sunshine College
Catholic Regional College	Mercy Regional College	The Knox School
Caulfield Grammar	Mountain District Christian School	Toorak College
Cranbourne Secondary College	Narre Warren South P-12 College	Warragul Regional College
Donvale Christian College	Northside Christian College	Waverley Christian College
Elisabeth Murdoch College	Parade College	Yeshiva - Beth Rivkah
Footscray High School	Parkdale Secondary	
Geelong High School	Princes Hill Secondary College	

In March, the JHC began making the transition from bringing school groups into the Centre to running virtual learning workshops on line. This enabled the education program to reach beyond the state of Victoria to become an Australia-wide program. These are the schools that participated in virtual workshops in 2020.

Avila College	Hillcrest Christian College	Our Lady of Mercy College
Ballarat Grammar	Hopetoun College	Our Lady of Sion College
Beaconhills College (Berwick)	Hume Anglican Grammar	Point Cook Senior Secondary College
Brunswick Secondary College	Lakeview Senior College	Rosehill Secondary College
Camberwell Girls' Grammar School	Lavalla Catholic College	Ruyton Girls' School
Carey Grammar	Lily Schwarz (Home School)	Springside West Secondary College
Caroline Chisholm Catholic College	MacKillop Catholic Regional College	St Mary MacKillop
Cheltenham Secondary College	Masada College (NSW)	St Phillip's Christian College
Collingwood College	McKinnon Primary School	Sunbury College
Danebank Anglican School for Girls	Melbourne Girls' College	The Academy
Dimboola Secondary College	Melbourne Rudolf Steiner School	Tintern Grammar
Donvale Christian College	Mount St Joseph Girls College	Trinity Grammar
Emmanuel College	Mount St Josephs Catholic College (NSW)	University High School
FCJ Benalla	Mount Ridley College	Upper Yarra Secondary College
Fintona Girls School	Northern Territory School of	Wangaratta High School
Glasshouse Christian College	Distance Education	
Good News Lutheran College	Oberon High School	



▲ Irma Hanner OAM

Mazal tov to Irma Hanner

The Jewish Holocaust Centre (JHC) is delighted that Irma Hanner was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) in the Queen's Birthday Honours.

Stripped of her rights and citizenship in Nazi Germany, Irma is now honoured for her voluntary work at the Jewish Holocaust Centre (JHC). She chose to give back to Australia, the country which welcomed her, by teaching students to cherish and value democracy, freedom and the importance of human rights.

Born in Dresden, Germany, Irma has shared her eyewitness experiences with more than 100,000 students during the 25+ years she has been volunteering at the JHC. She has spoken at countless events, always emphasising the importance of treating all people with equality and humanity. All of her work has been unpaid, and is especially remarkable due to the fact that she was in her mid-60s when she commenced. Irma is uncompromising in her protection of human rights through her unwavering commitment to Holocaust education.

We wholeheartedly endorse this achievement and thank Irma for her contribution to Holocaust education.

Keeping survivors' stories alive

Max Wald celebrated his 80th birthday in December 2020 and, in lieu of gifts, he asked his family and friends to donate to the Jewish Holocaust Centre (JHC).

Max first heard about the JHC in the 1980s when his father became involved. After seeing Claude Lanzmann's film *Shoah*, Max's interest was sharpened and he began interviewing Holocaust survivors for the Spielberg Shoah Foundation project in Melbourne. He later volunteered at the JHC, driving the bus for the JHC Social Club. He also assisted in the office, making bookings for school visits and doing general administrative work, before moving into Archives.

More recently, he has been working with Phillip Maisel in Testimonies to interview survivors and second generation survivors. He said: 'I think the Centre is important for public and school education and the housing of Holocaust documents. Also for the memory of the victims and our survivors

Mazal tov Max and thank you for your wonderful contribution as a volunteer and for your generous donation.

▼ Max Wald and his grandchildren



Mazal tov

Engagements

To Lynette and Peter Cherny on the engagement of their son Ashley Cherny to Ange Segal

To Susan Glass on the engagement of her son Asher to Katya Bu

To Miriam and Leon Zimmet on the engagement of their son Jonathon and Leah Mand

Marriages

To Szaja Chaskiel on the marriage of his grandson Micky Chaskiel to Laurie Duhamel

To Eve Graham on the marriage of her granddaughter Marnie Fookes to Anthony Ball

Bar/Bat Mitzvah

To Gita and Jack Ginger on the bar mitzvah of their grandson Aidan Sheffield

To Rosa Krakowski on the bar mitzvah of her great-grandsons Ashley and Jordan

To Rhonda Lipshutz on the bar mitzvah of her grandsons Ashley and Jordan

To Tosca Mooseek on the bar mitzvah of her grandson Toby

To Malka and Sam Silver on the bar mitzvah of their grandson Brodie Silver

To Mary and Graeme Slade on the bar mitzvah of their grandsons Jesse and Joshua

Births

To Andy Factor on the birth of his great-granddaughter Amalia Bella Braver

To Annette Leski on the birth of her granddaughter Rosie

To Michael and Toni Sput on the birth of their grandchildren Manaia Rose and Gabriel Shlomo

To Mary and Peter Stawski on the birth of their grandson Tommy Beaumont Frost

Birthdays

To Mish Blacher on her 70th birthday

To Joe Szwarcberg on his 90th birthday

To Henri Korn on his 91st birthday

To Jack Fogel on his 96th birthday

To Abram Goldberg OAM on his 96th birthday

To Joe De Haan on his 98th birthday

To Andy Factor on his 97th birthday

Condolences

To Fanny and Keith Hoffman on the death of their mother and mother-in-law Margaret Rozen

To the family of Floris Kalman on her death

To Joe and Michael Lewit and their families on the death of their mother Maria Lewit OAM

To the family of Tuvia Lipson on his death

To Leo and Rhonda Norich on the death of their mother and mother-in-law Fela Norich

To Gillian Strauch on the death of her mother Claire Weis



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, as well as 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, contact Phillip Maisel at testimonies@jhc.org.au

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

Jewish Holocaust Centre Foundation
Judy & Leon Goldman Centre for Holocaust Education



IN MEMORY OF **Floris Kalman**

(1934 — 2020)

Naomi Dessauer, Jonathan Kalman and Julie Kalman

Floris Kalman was born in Brussels in 1934. She was the older daughter of Nachman and Rywka Gryfenberg, who had migrated from Poland five years earlier. At the age of eight, when the Nazis invaded Belgium, she was separated from her parents and younger sister, Danielle, and hidden with strangers. At first she was at a children's camp. She wrote: 'I am eight years old, I am standing in the middle of a playground, children all around me shriek, climb and laugh. It is a beautiful summers day. I don't play. I don't laugh I just watch. I have been left here in this children's holiday home. I feel homesick. I miss my home, my mother and father terribly. I don't understand what is happening. I try to forget the ache in my stomach.' For the next two years, she was hidden in a total of six different homes. She remembers just two of those with fondness. During those years of displacement and adjustment, she learned to blend in and suppress her feelings. In her adult life she wrote that these behaviours stayed with her for most of her life

After the war, Floris was reunited with her parents and Danielle and the family migrated to Australia to begin a new life. Soon after, she met Arie Kalman at a Tsukunft camp in Phillip Island. Theirs was a deeply loyal and loving marriage.

Floris and Arie had three children, Naomi, Jonathan and Julie. Becoming a mother in a new culture with a different language, Floris taught herself to cook, listened to the children's hour on the radio and taught herself nursery rhymes and lullabies. Both she and Arie taught themselves to parent and gave their children a sense of security and warmth which was very different from their experience as children during the Holocaust.

Floris loved reading and later writing. She recalled the first book she read when she was in hiding at the Van den Borrens (later honoured as Righteous Among the Nations) and the pleasure it gave her. She wrote: 'No one can intrude and I can be safe and happy.' She was a lifelong reader and student, graduating in languages, teaching French and Latin, and later becoming a lay marriage counsellor. She read in both Yiddish and English, helped out with translation both for private people and many Kadimah performances, and attended short courses and shiurim.

Floris had wide interests and connections. She chaired the Child Survivors of the Holocaust group for many years and her writing appeared in several anthologies. She was a volunteer guide at the Jewish Holocaust Centre, sharing her story with students and members of the public and also spoke to bar and bat mitzvah children at Gen2Gen. She belonged to a Yiddish reading group, Kedem, B'nai Brith, a walking group and a book group, and made



▲ Floris Kalman (middle) with her mother and sister, Danielle

significant and meaningful contributions to each of these groups over many years.

Despite her gentle demeanour, her children grew up with a clear understanding of her opinions – her strong sense of social justice and her intolerance of bigotry.

Family was everything to Floris. She welcomed her children's partners, adored her eight grandchildren and had a profound bond with her little sister, Danielle. Together, Floris and Danielle created an extended family of deep and loving connections which continue now into the third generation.

Naomi Dessauer, Jonathan Kalman and Julie Kalman are Floris Kalman's children.

IN MEMORY OF Maria Lewit

(1924 — 2020)

Joe, Michael and Karin Lewit

Maria was born in Lodz, Poland in 1924. She attended high school until 1939, underground schools during the war, and night schools afterwards. In 1948 she left Poland with her husband Julian and young son Joe and lived in Paris for a year with the intention to settle, but with the threat of a major conflict between the USA and USSR, those plans quickly changed to getting as far from war-torn Europe as possible.

In January 1949 the family arrived in Australia. Her younger son Michael was born in 1953, and she was thrilled that the family now included a 'dinkum Aussie'. She worked as a home-based machinist for a Polish Jewish clothing manufacturer, behind the counter of the family's Malvern milk bar, then at their cake and sandwich shop in Melbourne's Block Arcade.



▲ Maria and Julian Lewit, Poland 1945

From a young age she had always had a great love of literature, especially for the richness of her mother tongue, Polish. Maria was at first frustrated that she had difficulty expressing herself adequately in English, but in the late 1950s she took writing classes at the Council of Adult Education and began writing in English. Her first short story was published in 1972 and her writing career blossomed. She was awarded the Alan Marshall Award in 1978 for her acclaimed autobiographical novel *Come Spring*. Its sequel *No Snow in December* was published in 1985 and received a NSW Premier's Literary Award. Maria's writings are also represented in a number of significant anthologies and her acclaimed poem 'Smugglers', on many educational curricula, is also included in the international edition of the Progressive Jewish prayer book *Mishkan T'filah*.

Maria began working at the Jewish Holocaust Centre (JHC) museum as a volunteer guide in 1996, and served in that role for 22 years. She was also invited to address schools, services clubs, interfaith and Jewish organisations, conferences, community



▲ Maria Lewit OAM

Photo: Joe Lewit

and academic gatherings where she was much appreciated for her clear, direct and engaging communication. She was a great humanist and did whatever she could to counter prejudice wherever it appeared.

The JHC held a special place in Maria's heart. She always returned from a day's work there full of stories and impressions. She would tell her family about the inspiring and committed people she worked with and the wonderful teachers and students she met. Maria loved meeting people and always looked for the positive in strangers, many of whom became friends.

In an associated role, she accompanied 'The Courage to Care' exhibitions to various locations around Victoria for many years.

Maria and Julian were married when they were in hiding in Poland during the Shoah. They were happily married for 63 years until he peacefully passed away in 2005.

Arriving in Australia with the smallest of nuclear families, Maria became the matriarch of a family of 18, including her two sons and daughters-in-law, four grandchildren and their partners, and five great-grandchildren. Before she passed away she was overjoyed to learn that two more great-grandchildren were on the way.

Maria was awarded the Order of Australia Medal in 2011 for services to the JHC as a volunteer, and to literature as a writer and educator. She was widely respected for all she achieved and all she contributed, truly loved by all who knew her, and her words will live on brightly in the beautiful body of writing she left to the world.

Joe and Michael Lewit are Maria Lewit's sons and Karin Lewit is her daughter-in-law.



IN MEMORY OF Tuvia Lipson

(1925 — 2020)

Jack and Garry Lipson



▲ Tuvia Lipson

Photo: Simon Shiff

by the Americans on 6 May 1945. Six weeks later, a truck with Jewish Palestine Brigade soldiers took a group of young survivors to Italy where they trained with the Palmach (the elite fighting force of the Haganah, the underground army of the Jewish community during the period of the British Mandate for Palestine).

Arriving illegally in Palestine (now Israel) in early 1947, Tuvia then fought in the War of Independence and witnessed the birth of Israel. After the war, he joined the newly established Israel Defence Force where he received his second number, 131825, where he rose through the ranks and fought in the 1956 Sinai Campaign. He retired with the rank of captain in 1957.

Tuvia was born in Lodz in 1925 to Yaacov and Malka Lipszyc. He grew up in a traditional Jewish household with his parents, two brothers and two sisters. He attended cheder, went to public school, played soccer, belonged to a Zionist organisation and played with his friends.

He celebrated his bar mitzvah in 1938, then, in the blink of an eye, his life was turned upside down. The evil years descended on Europe and Tuvia and his family spent four and a half years in the Lodz ghetto living in inhumane conditions. They were then transported to Auschwitz-Birkenau. Of the 70,000 who arrived there from Lodz, only 10% survived.

Tuvia attributed his survival to several miracles. He said:

I was standing in Auschwitz-Birkenau waiting to be selected. There were about 800-900 people standing on the platform. Out of all these people, an inmate in a striped pyjama comes up to me. He says: 'Young man, do not hold your father's hand, your father seems old and sick; he will not survive the selection. You may.' He pushed me away from my father. I didn't even have time to say goodbye. Thanks to that, I survived.

At Auschwitz, Tuvia received his first number, 10378. Shortly after, another prisoner advised him to register for a work detail. Knowing how to operate machinery, he was sent to a coal mine at Ribnik – his second miracle. Then, after washing the commandant's floor, he was rewarded with a half a loaf of bread and a big piece of sausage – his third miracle.

In December 1944 Tuvia was transported to Mauthausen Concentration Camp and then to Ebensee, where he was liberated

In 1950 Tuvia met the beautiful Bronia. They married in 1951 and had two sons, Jack and Garry. In 1960 the family moved to Australia, where life was difficult at first. Tuvia worked very hard to make ends meet and later established a business with Marian. It was a friendship and partnership that lasted for over 50 years.

Tuvia was blessed with six grandchildren and ten great-grandchildren. He said: 'Standing in Auschwitz-Birkenau I never thought that I would be lucky enough to marry, let alone have children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. I have been eternally blessed.' Sadly, Bronia passed away in 1997.

Tuvia believed that one of the reasons he survived was to educate future generations, 'to tell a story of tragedy, misery, miracles and hope; to educate future generations about what occurred so that the story is not forgotten and for the memories of those that didn't survive to be told.'

He was blessed with a remarkable memory and was a volunteer guide at the Jewish Holocaust Centre for over 20 years, as well as speaking at 'Courage to Care' events around Victoria. Every week he told students: 'You have to believe in a better tomorrow. If you do not believe in a better tomorrow it will never come.'

Tuvia was a Shoah survivor, soldier, husband, father, father-in-law, grandfather, great-grandfather and good friend. He will be remembered as a truly remarkable man.

Jack and Garry Lipson are Tuvia Lipson's sons.

Many thanks

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We would like to express our sincere gratitude and appreciation to all our donors – your support has made a significant impact and continues to allow us to preserve Holocaust memory and teach the important lessons of the Holocaust. The listing includes donations to the Foundation or the Jewish Holocaust Centre of \$500.00 and above from 1 January 2020 to 1 January 2021.

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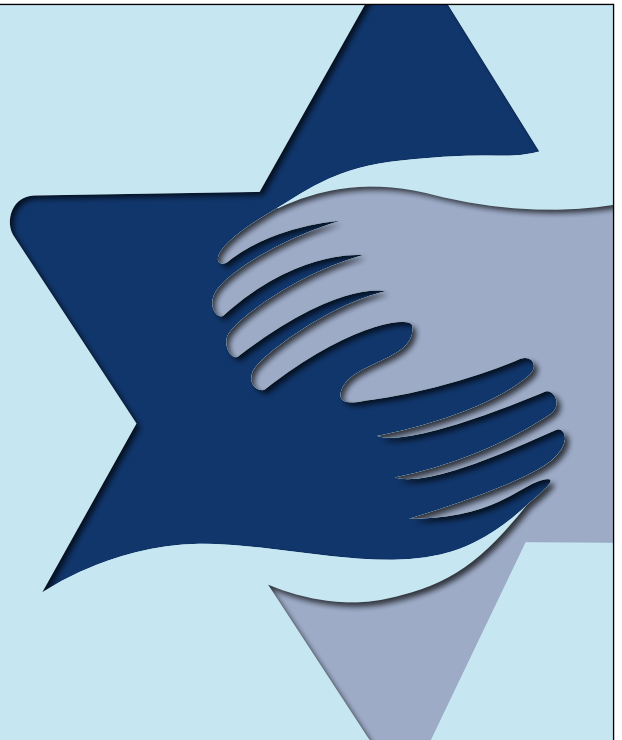
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בארימט געווארן א דאנק ה. לייזויקס פיעסע, „א חתונה אין פֿערנוואלד“; „אונדזער מוט“ (ציילסעהיים); „אויף דער פֿריי“ (שטוטגארט) אאז"וו. אזוי קען מען ריידן נישט נאך וועגן דעם „בייביבום“ אין די דייפֿילאגערן, נאך אויך וועגן „ווערטער-בום“. טאקע דערפאר איז אין יאנואר 1947 דערשינען אין „אונדזער האפֿענונג“ א קאריקאטור פון אַנצאליקע שוואמען מיט יידישע נעמען פון צייטונגען, אונטער דעם טיטל: „זיי וואקסן ווי שוואמען נאך א רעגן“. ארויסגעבן א צייטונג אין דעם תהו־ו־בוהו איז געווען ווי בויען שלעסער אין דער לופטן — שוין אפגערעדט פון די פינאנציעלע שוועריקייטן; אפילו קריגן די יידישע בלייזענע אותיות איז געווען כמעט אוממעגלעך, און פלארעסטיין דערציילט וועגן די באַמֿונגען פון איינעם א רעדאקטאר, וואס האט געפונען אין א האלב חרובֿער דרוקערני אין פראנקפורט די זעלטענע העברעישע אותיות; זיי זינען געווען אלטע און צעקאליעטשעטע, אבער א גרופע יידישע זעצערס האט זיי רעמאנירט. „נאך פלוצלינג לאזט זיך הערן דאס קול פון מיין חבֿר: אברהם! זאג מיר נאך, ס'איז מער ניטא קיין, ע". ס'פֿעלט מיר אויס אן „ע“, און „י“, האב איך אויך גאנץ ווייניק“. אנדערע צייטונגען, ווי „לאנדסבערגער לאגער צייטונג“ זינען לכתחילה געדרוקט געווארן מיט לאטיינישע אותיות, כאטש די רעדאקציע האט זיך אנטשולדיקט פאר דער „אומפֿרוייליקער בגידה אן די ליבע שווארצע פינטעלעך“, ווייל זיי האבן געהאלטן אז „יידיש קען נאך האבן א יידישן לבוש“. א סך לייענערס, און בפרט יונגע, האבן דווקא הנאה געהאט פון די לאטיינישע אותיות, נאך די לאנגע מלחמה-יארן וואס האבן זיי דערווייטערט פון דער יידישער קולטור. נאך דעם ווי די „לאנדסבערגער לאגער צייטונג“ איז סוף-פֿלֿיסוף דערשינען מיט העברעישע אותיות, האט איין לייענערין געשריבן אז איר אנטוישונג איז געווען זייער א גרויסע: זי קומט פון אן אסימילירטער משפחה, און לייענען די יידישע אותיות קומט איר אן מיט שוועריקייטן. יידיש איז נישט געווען נאך דאס בשותפותדיקע לשון פון די יידן אין די לאגערן; שרייבן און דרוקן אין יידיש האט אויך געהאט א מאַראלישן באַטייט: באַזיגן די נאציס, וואס האבן געוואלט פארניכטן ניט בלויז די יידן, נאך די יידישע קולטור. „יידן, קאקעטירט ניט מיט פרעמדע שפראכן! די פרעמדשפראכיקע קאקעטירן אויך ווייניק מיט אייך!“ האט מען געשריבן אין „אונדזער וועג“. פון דעסטוועגן האט מען אפֿטנס געהערט אין די לאגערן דעם לאַזונג: „רעד יידיש — לערן זיך העברעיש“, און דער רעדאקטאר פון „אונדזער וועג“ האט בפֿירוש געשריבן וועגן די קינדער: „מען לערנט מיט זיי און מען זינגט מיט זיי אויף יידיש. אבער מיר זינען זיי מכשיר פֿאַר ארץ-ישראל. ניטא קיין בעסערער, זיכערער אָרט פֿאַר די געראטעוועטע פון נאצי־גיהנום און דאָה־ה־געבוירענע יידישע קינדערלעך ווי ארץ-ישראל. און די שפראך פון ארץ-ישראל איז שפֿת־ישראל — העברעיש“. דאס וואס מיין טאטע דערציילט, אז ער און די אנדערע קינדער האבן זיך געלערנט העברעיש מיט חשק, האט אייגנטלעך געשאפֿט גרויסע וויכוחים צווישן די טוערס פון די דייפֿילאגערן.

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נייע חורבן מוזייען אין אויסטראליע

יזכור נאך דער שחיטה אין באבי-יאר

אין אקטאבער 2020 האָט די אויסטראלישער פֿעדעראלע רעגירונג אָנאַנסירט אַז זיי וועלן שענקען דריי און אַ האַלב מיליאָן דאָלאַר מכוּח דעם פּראָיעקט צו אויפבויען אַ חורבן מוזיי אין Brisbane די הויפטשטאָט פֿון שטאַט פֿון קווינסלאַנד און צוויי און אַ האַלב מיליאָן דאָלאַר צו אויסברייטערן און אַנטוויקלען דעם חורבן מוזיי און Steiner בילדונגס צענטער אין Adelaide די הויפטשטאָט פֿונעם שטאַט פֿון דרום אויסטראַליע. דער פֿעדעראלער בילדונגס מיניסטער Dan Tehan האָט אָנאַנסירט די פֿאָנדן פֿאַרן חורבן מוזיי אין Brisbane טענהענדיק אַז עס וועט דערלויבן סטודענטן, לערערס און דערוואַקסענע בעסער צו פֿאַרשטיין און לערנען זיך וועגן דעם חורבן און הערן דירעקט פֿון לעבנס געבליבענע עדות. ער האָט געזאָגט: "עס איז קריטיש אַז מענטשן פֿון יעדן עלטער און פֿאַרט אונדזערע יינגע מענטשן, זאָלן לערנען וועגן דער פֿינצטערער תקופה אין דער מענטשלעכער געשיכטע. עס וועט באַהויפטן דעם שרעקלעכן פֿראַל פֿון ראַסיזם אין אַ היסטאָרישן און היינטיגן אינהאַלט. דער חורבן מוזיי וועט פֿאַרזיכערן אַז דורות פֿון קווינסלאַנדער קענען זיך לערנען וועגן דער פֿאַרגאַנגענהייט צו בעסער פֿאַרהיטן קעגן דיסקרימינאַציע און פֿאַרפֿאַלגונג אין דער צוקונפֿט", סוף ציטאַט. זיינע ווערטער האָבן געהאַט אַן אַפּקלאַנג במשך פֿון דער זעלבער וואָך ווען מע האָט געפֿונען אַ האַנקרייץ אויפֿגעשמירט אויף אַ פּלאַקאַט פֿון אַ קאַנדידאַטין פֿון אַ לבנעזער אַפּשטאַם, וועלכע האָט זיך געהאַט פֿאַרמאָסטן אין די קווינסלאַנדער וואָלן. מעלבאָרן, סידני און פּערט האָבן שוין זייערע אייגענע חורבן מוזייען במשך פֿון צענדליקע יאָרן, און Brisbane וואָרט שוין צו באַקומען די פֿאָנדן אַ לאַנגע צייט. פֿירער פֿון יידישע און נישט יידישע אָרגאַניזאַציעס אין קווינסלאַנד האָבן באַגריסט די איניציאַטיוו און דער וויצע פרעזידענט פֿונעם יידישן באָרד פֿון דעפּוטס פֿון דעם שטאַט, Jason Steinberg האָט אָנגערופֿן דעם אָנאַנס פֿון די פֿאָנדן: "אַ היסטאָרישער טאַג פֿאַרן שטאַט." ער האָט געזאָגט: "אַנטיסעמיטישע אינצידענטן און ראַסיסטישע באַליידיקונגען שטייגן אין קווינסלאַנד און רעכטע עקסטרעמיסטישע גרופּעס גריפֿן אויף אונדזערע קהילות.", סוף ציטאַט. Steinberg האָט אויך באַצייכנט ביישפּילן פֿון אויפֿשריפֿטן און שאַבלאָנען ווי די אויפֿן פּלאַקאַט פֿון אַ ליבאַך קאַנדידאַט. איין לעבנס געבליבענער פֿון חורבן, קווינסלאַנדער תושבֿ איז George Stein, 93 יאָר אַלט, וועלכער האָט אָרגאַניזירט די ערשטע אויסשטעלונג וועגן חורבן אין קווינסלאַנד אין יאָר 1982, און וועלכע האָט צוגעצויגן מער ווי 10 טויזנט באַזוכערס אַריינגערעכנט דעם דעמלטיקן פרעמיער פֿונעם שטאַט. הערנדיק וועגן די פֿאָנדן פֿאַר אַ חורבן מוזיי אין Brisbane האָט Stein באַטאָנט: "דאָס זענען וואונדערבאַרע נייעס. ווען די צאָל לעבנס געבליבענע פֿון חורבן פֿאַרקלענערט זיך יעדן יאָר, איז אַ דענקמאַל צו די קרבנות פֿון חורבן זייער וויכטיק פֿאַר אַלע קווינסלאַנדער און באַזוכערס, זיי זאָלן האָבן די געלעגנהייט צו הערן און לערנען וועגן דעם חורבן איז נייטווענדיק פֿאַר די קומענדיקע דורות. מיר מוזן קיינמאַל נישט פֿאַרגעסן וואָס איז געשען." סוף ציטאַט.

דער עקזעקוטיוו ראַט פֿונעם אויסטראַלישן יידנטום די ECAJ האָט אָפּגעמערקט דעם 79טן יזכור נאָך דער שחיטה דורך די דייטשן און זייערע קאָלאָבאָראַטאָרן, פֿון קנאַפע 34 טויזנט אוקראַינישע יידן אין באַבי-יאר, צפֿון זייט פֿון Kiev אין די טעג פֿון 29טן ביזן 30טן סעפטעמבער 1941. דער קאָ-שעף פֿאַרוואַלטער פֿונעם ECAJ ראַט Alex Ryvchin האָט באַטאָנט אַז אויסטראַלישע יידן מוזן דערמאָנען דעם חורבן אין באַבי-יאר ביז די וועלט פֿאַרגעדענקט צוזאַמען מיט אונדז די אומשולדיקע בלי-רחמנותדיק דערמאָרדערטע טויזנטער מענער, פֿרויען און קינדער. Ryvchin וועמענס פֿאַמיליעס היים האָט זיך געפֿונען בלויז איין גאַס פֿונעם רייזיקן יאר האָט באַטאָנט: "פֿיל יאָרן האָט קיינער נישט דערמאָנט באַבי-יאר. דער חורבן ווערט מערסטנס פֿאַרגעדענקט דורך די שוידערלעכע געשעענישן און אַכזריות פֿונעם אָנפֿאַנג, מיט דער קריסטאָלאַכט, אונעם סוף, די באַפֿרייונג פֿון אוישוויץ קאַנצענטראַציע און טויטן לאַגער. אָבער דאָס וואָס איז געשען אין דעם באַבי-יאר טאָל ביים צפֿון ראַנד פֿון קיעוו, במשך פֿון די צוויי טעג אין סעפטעמבער 1941 איז געוואָרן כמעט נישט דערמאָנט, נישט פֿאַרגעדענקט.", סוף ציטאַט. Ryvchin האָט אויך באַטאָנט אַז: "באַבי-יאר שטעלט מיט זיך אויך פֿאַר די מיליאָנען יידן פּלוצעם אַריינגעטריבן אינעם שוידער, אין שטאַלן און שילן און פֿאַרברענט, אָדער פֿאַריאָגט און דערמאָרדערט פֿון זייערע שכנים אין וועלדער, אָדער באַגראָבן לעבעדיקערהייט אין מאַסן גריבן. כאָטש כמעט קיינער האָט נישט דערמאָנט באַבי-יאר, האָבן די תושבֿים פֿון קיעוו גוט געוואוסט. און אין יעדע שטאַט און שטעטל איבערן סאָוועטן פֿאַרבאַנד, האָבן די אַרטיקע איינוואוינערס געוואוסט וועגן זייערע אייגענע באַבי-יארס.", סוף ציטאַט. Ryvchin וועלכער האָט אַנטהילט אַ טאָוול צום אָנדענק פֿון די יידישע קדושים פֿונעם געוועזענעם סאָוועטן פֿאַרבאַנד אין סידני אין יאָר 2014, האָט געמאָנט די יידישע קהילה זיי זאָלן ווייטער דערציילן און דערמאָנען די געפֿערלעכע צייטן און די קרבנות.

צעבליונג פֿון יידישער קוטור אין די די-פי לאַגערן

פֿון בני מער - אויסצוג פֿאַרווערטס יאנואר 2021

צווישן די 250 טויזנט פליטים אין די יידישע די-פי-לאַגערן, וואָס האָבן זיך פֿאַרשפּרייט אין דייטשלאַנד און עסטרייך נאָך דער צווייטער וועלטקריג, איז אויך געווען מין טאַטע. ער און זיין משפּחה זיינען אַרויסגעטריבן געוואָרן פֿון זייער שטעטל אין פּוילן אין 1939, און זעקס יאָר האָבן זיי זיך געוואַלגערט אין ראַטן-פֿאַרבאַנד, ביז זיי זיינען צוריקגעקומען קיין פּוילן אין פֿרילינג 1946. באַלד נאָך דעם קעלצער פּאַגראָם האָבן זיי ווידער גענומען דעם שטעקן אין האַנט; דאָס מאָל זיינען מין טאַטע צאַלע (בצלאל) און זיין שוועסטער זלאַטקע דערגאַנגען ביז די די-פי-לאַגערן פֿון סאַנקט מאַריין אין עסטרייך, און דערנאָך, אין אַ די-פי-לאַגער לעבן מינכען. דאָרטן זיינען זיי געבליבן ביז אָנהייב 1949, ווען זיי האָבן עולה געווען קיין ישראל.

צענטער נייעס

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