

VOICES

Remembering
the past, inspiring
the future.



Autumn 2026

The magazine of
Melbourne Holocaust Museum

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MUSEUM

Judy & Leon Goldman Learning Centre

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VOICES

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Cover: Messages of hope and solidarity shared on the Wall of Hope during the National Day of Mourning following the Bondi tragedy. Photographed by Simon Shiff.

The Melbourne Holocaust Museum (MHM) exists to amplify the voices of Holocaust survivors as a catalyst for greater understanding and acceptance of difference, to inspire a better future.

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From The Presidents



You don't have to love everyone. But you must learn to respect everyone - regardless of their background.

Holocaust Survivor, Sara Saaroni OAM

Our first event for 2026 was held on 27 January, when we marked International Holocaust Remembrance Day (IHRD). As hateful rhetoric continues to reverberate across Australia, IHRD serves as a timely wake-up call to the dangers of indifference and complacency and as a reminder of our duty to stand up to intolerance. At the MHM, we draw strength from Holocaust survivor guides like 99-year-old Sara Saaroni OAM, who reminds our students that in a multicultural society, you don't have to love everyone, but respect is essential.

In the aftermath of the devastating Bondi attack, many acts of quiet compassion from ordinary Australians offered comfort: flowers left outside our museum, messages of support sent to Jewish organisations, and simple gestures of human kindness. These moments remind us of the Australian values that we all share.

At the MHM, education is our frontline. In 2025, almost 30,000 students passed through our doors. By connecting survivors with students, we are bridging generations - turning memory into responsibility. Through our programs, we empower young people to think critically, to challenge prejudice and propaganda, and to understand why these stories still matter.



We stand ready to work alongside Jillian Segal, Australia's Special Envoy to Combat Antisemitism, to help equip the next generation to secure a future that honours the past with truth, integrity and action.

We congratulate Dr Breann Fallon on her appointment as our new CEO.

The MHM welcomes the recently announced Royal Commission into Antisemitism and Social Cohesion, viewing it as an essential and proactive step in confronting rising hatred. As our CEO, Dr Breann Fallon, has stated, this is a collective opportunity to examine, address, and respond to the alarming increase in antisemitism in Victoria.

It is with heavy hearts that we acknowledge the passing of our long-serving volunteers Abram Goldberg OAM, Andy Factor OAM and Halina Zylberman.

During these challenging times, we draw hope and inspiration from the resilience of our remarkable Holocaust survivors and the many individuals who stand alongside us in calling out antisemitism. The MHM remains steadfast in our mission to place the voices of the Holocaust at the heart of everything we do. We are committed to ensuring that our museum continues to be a centre of excellence in Holocaust education, memorialisation and research.

With lots of exciting plans for 2026, we look forward to welcoming you to our museum.

Sue Hampel OAM & Michael Debinski OAM
MHM Co-Presidents



From the Editor

Lina Leibovich

We are entering a defining moment in Holocaust remembrance. For the first time, we face a future in which there will be no living survivors to bear witness in person to the atrocities they endured.

This profound transition requires us not only to preserve survivors' voices, but to interpret, contextualise, and meaningfully re-engage their voices for new generations growing up further removed from history.

In this edition of Voices, we examine how the MHM advances its mission in a world without living eye witnesses. We speak with our new CEO, Dr Breann Fallon, about her personal family connection to the Holocaust and the perspective she brings to this responsibility. Dr Simon Holloway offers a thoughtful reflection on the approaching era when survivor testimony will no longer be shared in person.

Our mission endures through rigorous education, powerful exhibitions, and an unwavering commitment to confronting antisemitism, hatred and indifference. As custodians of memory, we are called to become responsible witnesses ourselves – ensuring that the lessons of the Holocaust remain urgent, relevant, and transformative for generations to come.



I feel as though I carry my grandparents with me every day. As I walk through the museum, they walk with me.

Meet our new CEO, Dr Breann Fallon

Can you please share your family's historical connection to the Holocaust? How has this influenced your own sense of responsibility?

There was always a quiet understanding in my family as a child that my grandparents had experienced something during the Second World War. I recall my Nanna and father speaking Polish in the kitchen into the night, but as a child it was never discussed in the open. It was only during my time at the Sydney Jewish Museum that my family's connection was uncovered.

My grandparents were targeted as "Slavs", *untermenschen* in the Nazi ideology. My grandfather was incarcerated in Mauthausen and Nanna was taken in forced labour as a Polish *arbeiter*, under the Nazi regime.

As I came to understand the weight of that silence over my childhood and what it represented, it brought a very personal tether to this history and memory we protect at the MHM. In truth, I feel as though I carry my grandparents with me every day. As I walk through the museum, they walk with me.

What do you believe is the museum's most important responsibility to younger generations?

At present we must ensure that Holocaust memory is not only preserved but activated. Memory on its own is not enough, it must be transformed into understanding, responsibility and action.



CEO, Dr Breann Fallon

Our responsibility is to help them connect with history and memory on a human level, through the voices and experiences of survivors, and through their artefacts. We as a museum must invite young people to reflect on the consequences of prejudice, silence and indifference, and to recognise the impact of individual choices. It is an ongoing commitment to empathy, courage and responsibility, and a reminder that each of us has a role to play in shaping a society that upholds human dignity and stands against antisemitism and all forms of discrimination.

What does it mean to you to be entrusted with preserving and presenting Holocaust memory?

We are living through a pivotal moment in history. This reality makes the role of the museum more urgent and more active than ever.

We have to make sure that memory is not only preserved but shared as widely as possible. It means using the museum's voice to speak clearly and confidently about the lessons of the Holocaust and their relevance today. This is about ensuring that memory is not confined to the past, but is used thoughtfully and responsibly to support education, social cohesion and positive change. We must step forward as trusted custodians of truth, ensuring that Holocaust history is accurately represented and firmly defended against denial, distortion and misuse.

Feature

by Lina Leibovich, Editor



We are living through a pivotal moment in history. This reality makes the role of the museum more urgent and more active than ever.

To be entrusted with this work means honouring survivors by ensuring their experiences continue to shape understanding, inspire empathy, and guide action, now and into the future.

Looking ahead, what do you hope visitors, especially younger generations, will carry with them after engaging with the museum under your leadership?

I hope visitors leave the museum with a deep feeling of empathy, reflection, curiosity and action. I want them to understand the human cost of hatred, but also to feel invited into the stories they encounter, encouraged to ask questions, listen carefully, and engage thoughtfully with the history before them.

For younger generations in particular, I hope the experience feels personal, meaningful and relevant to their own lives. I want them to recognise that history is not separate from the present, and that individual choices matter. Remembrance carries responsibility, and with that comes an obligation to care, to speak up, and to stand against antisemitism, racism and discrimination in all its forms.

Above all, I hope visitors leave with a sense of hope, for while history shows us the depths of human cruelty, it also reminds us of our shared humanity and our capacity to choose differently, and to build a future where compassion prevails.

The Space Between

Where Understanding Begins



Special Project

by
Ariella Markman,
Special Project Manager

Left: Participants viewing the storytelling films that form part of *The Space Between*. Photographed by Simon Shiff.

As the MHM moves toward stewardship of the stories from survivors, perhaps the answer lies in transformation and expansion.

From its inception, the MHM mission was to connect with the living memory of survivors, with story and through education.

The incredible group of survivors who started the MHM in 1984 wanted to create a place of living testimony, shared experience, and learning. Survivors shared their stories less as history, more as lived experience. Their voices carried the authority of “I was there.” They answered questions from young people and students, they educated, and together they created an institution built on the triumph of survival. These Holocaust survivors transformed empathy, education and kindness into a human encounter.

The passage of time and the inevitable passing of the last living witnesses mark a profound turning point for Holocaust museums worldwide.

We are experiencing a generational shift and the continuing conversation about how to fulfil our mission when there are fewer voices in the room who can say, *“This happened to me.”*

As custodians of memory, we are now entrusted not only with preserving history, but with ensuring it continues to matter in a world that is more polarised, and, in many ways, more vulnerable to the forces that once made the Holocaust possible.

From Witness to Steward

As the MHM continues to expand its reach and impact, our role also evolves, from a place where survivors can speak to their story to a place that stewards meaning and continues to educate. Education, exhibitions, archives and recorded survivor stories remain central, but the stories of survivors continue to need a voice that respects their humanity and incredible courage. There is an ongoing conversation about how best to do this in a way that is respectful, ethical and dignified.

As we bear witness to an alarming increase in antisemitism, the ongoing need for education becomes even more important and we look as a museum to the ways we can expand our mandate to increase our reach and to grow and diversify our learning programs.

The Holocaust began with words, with language, with exclusion, with the normalisation of prejudice and indifference, and with the quiet erosion of social trust. The increase we are witnessing in antisemitism today is one of the clearest indicators of the crucial need for continuity of learning.

We know many adults feel uncertain about how to discuss antisemitism, racism or social fracture at work or in their communities. We also know many people encounter issues like antisemitism in a digital environment saturated with misinformation, relativism and algorithm-driven outrage. In this context, remembrance and education can do more than inform - it can clarify, it can equip, and it can upskill.

Our new and ambitious antisemitism and social cohesion initiative, *Critical Thinking is Critical*, was born from this conversation. It represents a deliberate expansion of how the Museum fulfils its mission in a post-eyewitness world: by using story and lived experience as a lens through which to examine contemporary challenges.



Left:
Participants using VR technology during the workplace program. Photographed by Aaron Zajonc.



Right:
All sessions are professionally facilitated by MHM staff. Photographed by Aaron Zajonc.

The Critical Thinking initiative focuses on the lessons we can learn from each other, on personal stories that can offer a gentle reminder about the need for humanity and connection, warmth and understanding, and that hope is brighter than hate.

The Space Between ~ Where Understanding Begins

A key component of this ambitious initiative is *The Space Between ~ Where Understanding Begins*, the MHM's new workplace program. Its name reflects a practical goal: to explore the space between perspectives, between your view and mine, to create a space that moves from compliance in the workplace, towards connection and understanding. Using immersive storytelling, this program centres around beautifully constructed stories of six Australian Jews, their lives, the challenges that they face, and the hopes that they have.

In environments where people are often hesitant to speak openly, particularly about issues like antisemitism, identity or difference, *The Space Between* creates a structured, facilitated setting for meaningful conversation. Drawing on the storytelling videos, participants will participate in a workplace experience designed to promote listening, reflection and the consideration of other views.

This framework for dialogue will offer space for participants to consider how they listen, lead and make decisions in work, and in life.

The MHM received academic support from Monash University to ensure this project is backed by contemporary research. What the research tells us is that when we use narrative storytelling, when people hear personally resonant stories, they are more likely to empathise and to shift their perceptions of entire groups.

In using these stories to humanise Australian Jews, we aim to create the conditions for dialogue, for reflective listening, and the confidence to engage constructively across difference. The program extends the museum's educational reach far beyond our walls, embedding our mission into the everyday lives of leaders, teams and organisations. For our staff, our stakeholders, our volunteers and the community at large, this work represents both continuity and evolution.

It is continuity because it remains grounded in one of the museum's core goals: to use story as a catalyst for greater understanding and an acceptance of difference.

The MHM continues to educate over 25,000 students every year. We educate adults and corporate groups and our museum is open for all to learn about hope over hate, to continue to inspire people to be better humans, kinder, more understanding.

The museum remains a living institution, one that speaks not only about the past, but also holds the present. The Critical Thinking initiative seeks to use dialogue, reflection and curiosity to consider antisemitism as it appears today, to strengthen social cohesion, and to equip people to seek to understand, to learn and to listen.

In a world without living witnesses, the responsibility now rests with all of us. The question is no longer "Who will tell the story?" but "What will we do with it?"

The Critical Thinking initiative aims to answer that question with courage, creativity, and an unwavering commitment to relevance, to ensure that the lessons of the Holocaust continue to illuminate the path forward for generations to come.

In 1985 Chaim Sztajer z"l completed and installed a model of the Treblinka death camp at the Melbourne Holocaust Museum. Photo: Wolfgang Sievers, 1997.



Aliveness Beyond the Horizon

Our institution was founded by individuals who have steadfastly testified to their direct experience of the Holocaust. Without recourse, we are approaching a horizon beyond which the generation that has been unwaveringly grounding us in these experiences will fall silent.

In my role on the Exhibitions and Storytelling team, I am asked to engage with the questions that emerge from this moment: how do we proceed when all testimony becomes archival; how does a museum forged by eyewitnesses continue its work after they have passed on; how do we tell stories of the Holocaust without people who lived them directly?

While there are no easy answers to these questions, I have used them as motivation to refocus on the exhibiting practices that make a museum a special place for learning, engagement and creativity. In the end, we are and will remain an environment that can measure success based on our ability to spark curiosity.

One way to do so is to invite audiences into a process

of discovery through what I call 'triangulation', which is a shorthand way of talking about the felt dynamic relationship between three primary elements. In our museum, these are most commonly the historical record, personal accounts from survivors, and the audience member's own life.

Sitting in the presence of a living Holocaust survivor is the curatorial equivalent of a triangulation cheat code - the individual, historical, and personal connections are made almost immediately through the charisma of a speaker who has seen history unfold with their own eyes and can relate on a human level to the visitor. MHM and our visitors will gratefully revel in their presence as long as possible.

Over the horizon is the challenge that we already face most of the time in exhibit spaces where testimony is presented through recordings rather than in person: how can we

generate triangulation for the visitor in the absence of a survivor's presence?

Museums often start by connecting the historical record and the personal account, establishing one side of the triangle through a straightforward interpretation. What tends to be more curiosity-building, however, is when we juxtapose these two elements in ways that challenge the audience to fill in the gaps. This adds an aspect of discovery to the experience, which is often accompanied by surprise and even wonder. Furthermore, leaving a small gap demands engagement with the content rather than its passive receipt. At the very least a visitor is asked to find the connection between these two points on the triangle, but quite naturally they also are beginning to shape an awareness of their own relationship to these elements.

For example, in the coming year we will have to exchange items in our prewar section of *Everybody Had a Name*. As we re-imagine how to depict Jewish life before 1939, we are planning to generate vignettes of individuals by showcasing a variety of artefacts that demonstrate the well-rounded nature of a singular experience. This gives the audience

an opportunity to discover a holistic person by recognising the relationships between the objects that were part of their life. These, furthermore, attest to broader and more general historical realities about Jewish life as the threads of connectivity are discovered between one vignette and another, or between these personal stories and the historical context that surrounds them.

The magic of triangulation happens when the visitor completes the task themselves - they haven't been told everything but have been given enough information to allow the synapses to fire, both literally and figuratively. When the connection forms in the mind of the visitor, a stronger bond is generated between themselves and the historical record or testimonial account. This has the same structure as a good joke or a great book, which is made more hilarious or vivid precisely by the fact that the audience is doing the work of making it come alive in their own mind.

The more we empower our audience to do this, the more alive and resonant are the testimonies and histories we are dedicated to preserving.

Exhibitions

by
Dr Daniel Haumschild,
Head of Exhibitions
& Storytelling

Even in the absence of survivors, we can still find powerful ways to encourage a curious exploration of how every person's life is informed, impacted and implicated by the Holocaust.



Chaim Sztajer z"l photographed with his model of the Treblinka death camp. Photo: Wolfgang Sievers, 1997.



Sitting with Absence

Kathy Temin and the Language of Remembrance

In *Marking Memory*, a special exhibition at MHM, artist Kathy Temin invites visitors not only to look, but to sit, pause and listen. Her works create spaces where remembrance is not instructional or fixed, but embodied - experienced through material, sound and stillness.

For the first time, the Melbourne Holocaust Museum presents an exhibition of Kathy Temin's Remembrance works, bringing together over twenty years of artistic inquiry in the exhibition titled *Marking Memory* throughout the museum.

This exhibition features sculptural seating works that resist the hardness traditionally associated with monuments. "When you sit on one of the benches, regardless of if you listen to the sound, you are sitting in a space of remembrance," Temin explains.

The benches form part of Temin's *My Memorial Oral Histories: Budapest, The Buchenwald Boys and Poland and Migration to New Zealand, 2004-2026*, a sculptural and sound installation loosely based on "sarcophagi, ancient shapes of tombs, with hand cut wood". Embedded headphones play recorded voices of survivors, descendants and museum directors, including reflections from the adult March of the Living tour Temin undertook with her mother, Judy Szwarcberg, in 2008.

Another work, *The Memorial Project: Black Seat, 2015* made from black synthetic fur combines Chesterfield design with topiary like trees. This work engages with circular museum seating design, responding to the circular interior space at the Gus Fisher Gallery in Auckland where it was first shown.

For Temin, sitting is an act of engagement rather than passivity. "Resting and sitting allows viewers to look and engage with both oral and material histories," she says. In museum contexts, seating often fades into the background, but Temin reclaims it as a reflective and social gesture. "Seating, especially in museum contexts, provides spaces for rest, reflection and contemplation of art works," she notes.

Material choice is central to this disruption. Temin is known for her use of synthetic fur - a deliberate rejection of stone and steel as the default language of memorialisation. "Synthetic fur is associated with soft toy imagery where comfort and protection are an integral part of it," she explains. At the same time, it provokes unease. "Using synthetic fur challenges questions of taste, is associated with fashion, domesticity and challenges expectations of what form a monument or memorial can take."

"I make repeated idealised large-scale abstracted trees that have been influenced by topiary design. The trees are a way of engaging with remembrance through gardens, landscapes and forests. I combine oppositional dialogues of remembrance and play, minimalism and emotion to generate different dialogues from each source."

Rather than offering a singular narrative, Temin's work leaves interpretation open. "The work made from synthetic fur is deliberately not narrative focused," she says, instead holding references that allow remembrance to be approached broadly. This openness is deeply connected to her own experience of silence and inheritance. "The silence around my father Alan Temin's experience as a Hungarian-born

Holocaust survivor was the motivation for making the work *My Memorial: Oral Histories*," she reflects. Her father died in 1983, before Holocaust testimony was widely recorded. "I wanted to recognise my father's history and to recognise others who cannot speak for themselves."

That absence continues to shape her practice. "Having had no direct information passed onto me by my father has allowed me to reflect on the impact of absence and its influence on my work. Combining private and collective memory can help others find their relationship to memory and history," she explains.

As eyewitnesses pass away, Temin believes artists have a vital role in holding difficult histories - not by simplifying them, but by allowing complexity to remain. "Silence or uncertainty is a possible space for audiences to sit with when encountering traumatic histories that include the Holocaust," she says. "These histories are too big for many of us to understand in one viewing or translation."

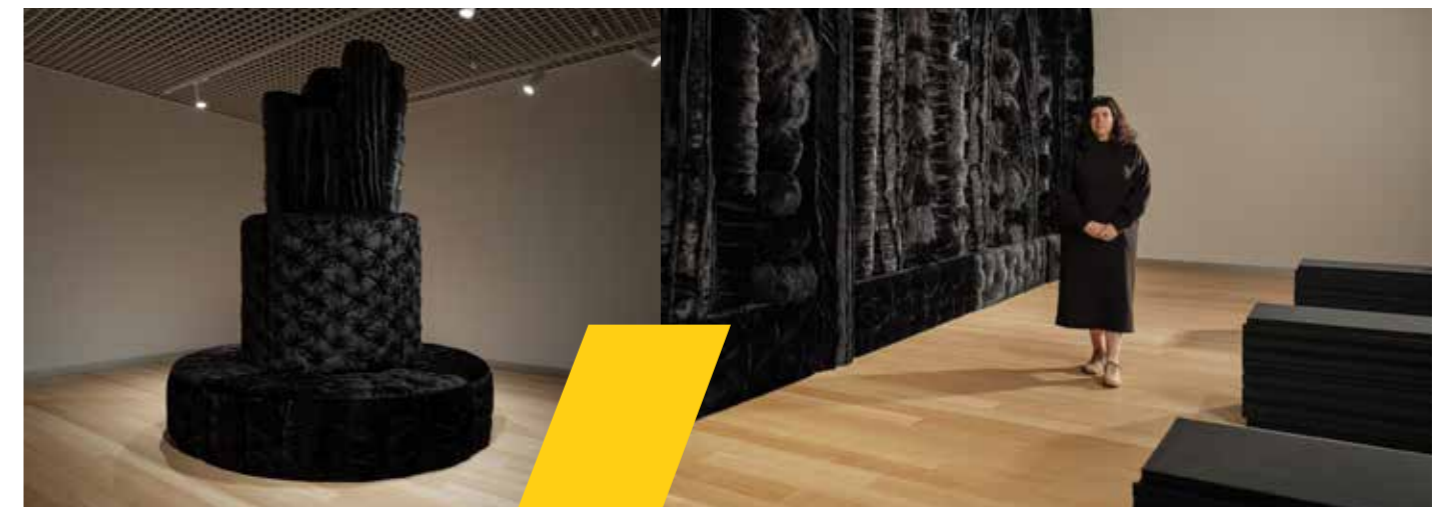
Looking ahead, Temin holds both concern and hope. "I am sad that most of the eyewitnesses to this history have passed but I have hope

from seeing that their descendants will continue to honour the memory through memorial events, recorded dialogues, creative outlets and the role of the MHM and all Holocaust and memorial museums around the world."

"We are living in a time when antisemitism has compounded Holocaust trauma and generated an ongoing dialogue about cultural displacement and remembrance. My concerns since October 7 have been that divisiveness has been pronounced and the dialogues lack nuance and understanding. With the recent Bondi massacres my distress heightened but there seem to be broader conversations evolving."

"Remembrance has many layers, stages, comes in a wide range of forms, takes you into different worlds, generates community and is both private and collective. Remembrance is a blessing and everyone deserves a space of reflection. This could be in the form of creativity, philanthropy, advocacy, volunteering or through education."

From 20 March to 12 July, the MHM presents *Marking Memory* in the Alter Family Special Exhibition Gallery.



Special Exhibition

by
Chantelle Sondhu,
Communications &
Marketing Coordinator

Opposite:
Artist Kathy Temin.
Photo: The Collective You, Los Angeles.

Below left:
The Memorial Project: Black Seat, 2015
Synthetic fur, synthetic filling, wood, steel
2400 diameter x 2900 mm
Courtesy the artist and Anna Schwartz Projects. Photo: Simon Shiff.

Below right:
My Memorial: Oral Histories: Budapest, The Buchenwald Boys, Poland and Migration to New Zealand, and Memorial Project: Black Wall (Section 2), 2015
Synthetic fur, synthetic filling, wood, steel
Three wooden benches, three headphones, three mp3 players and 2400 diameter x 2900 mm
Courtesy the artist and Anna Schwartz Projects. Photo: Simon Shiff.

From Our Loss, We Rise

On 14 December 2025, as the sun dipped over Bondi Beach and Jewish families and friends gathered to celebrate the Festival of Lights, a moment meant for warmth, community and hope was shattered by an act of incomprehensible brutality.

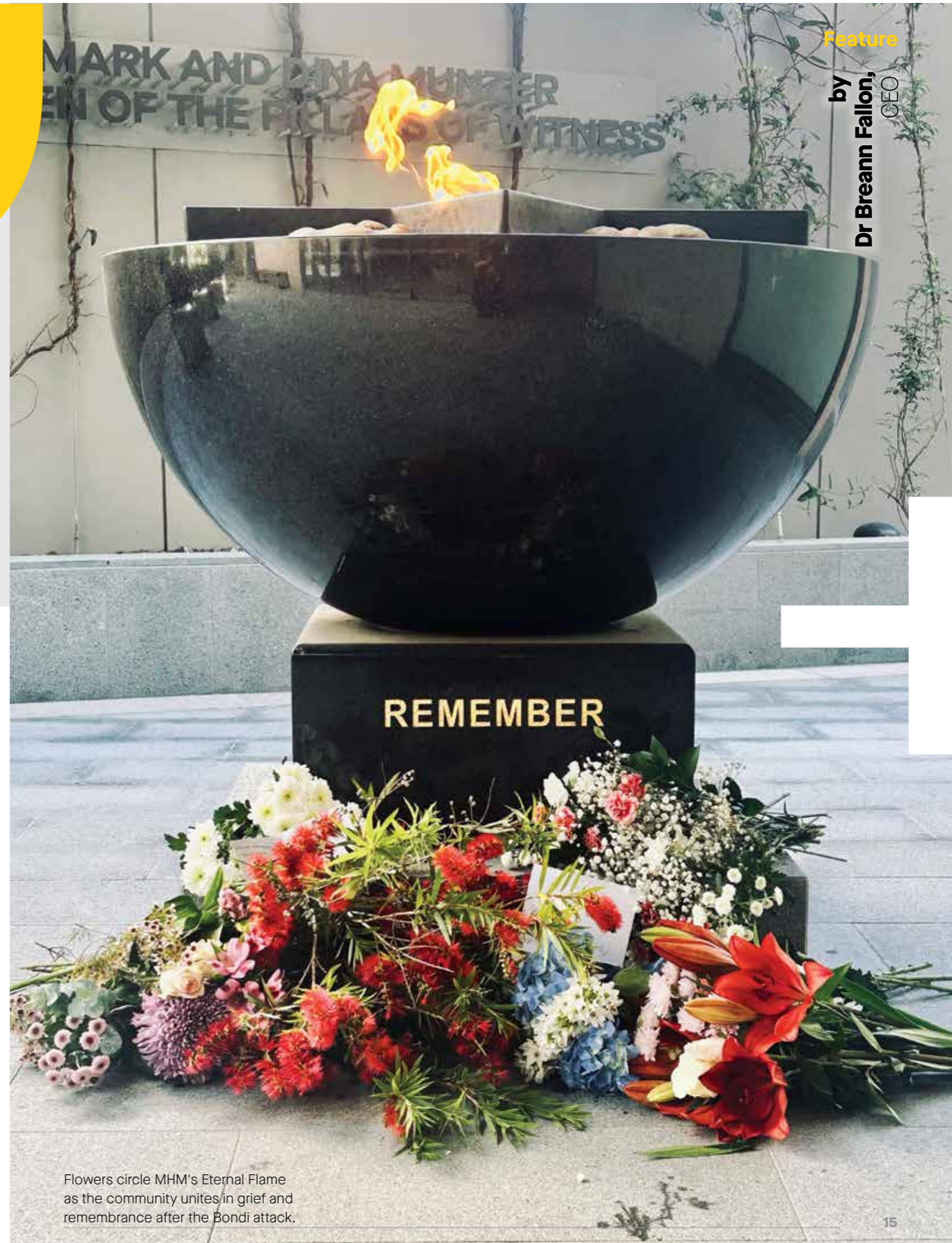
Fifteen lives were stolen in a terrorist attack, deliberately targeting Jewish Australians during a joyful religious festival.

In the days that followed Bondi, the MHM released a statement that simply began: "Today, we are grieving." We are still grieving with the families of those lost, with survivors of the attack, with those wounded both in body and spirit, and with Jewish communities here and across this nation as we have watched and warned against a rising tide of antisemitism that has too often been ignored until it turned lethal. We grieve for the Australia we thought we knew, for our democratic values. This has been a shattering of our sense of home.

This grief is woven with recognition; a recognition that antisemitic hatred, though ancient, is alive in modern forms. It has real victims and its consequences are not abstract. This pain is not just a distant ring but a deep echo throughout history - one that continues to reverberate in the present.

Our work at the museum is rooted in remembrance, with our heartbeat being the translation of this memory into action. The Holocaust did not begin with mass murder; it began with words, prejudice and the silent tolerance of hatred. History teaches this repeatedly and we have not learned the lessons from the past. Antisemitism, left unchecked, grows into violence. It was true then and remains true today, as we were tragically reminded at Bondi.

In the days following Bondi, alongside the grief and anguish, we witnessed something else: an extraordinary outpouring of support for the MHM and our community from the broader public. Messages flooded our inboxes, our social media channels, and our phones. Many simply wrote, "We stand with you." Others shared more personal reflections: "Your work matters now more than ever" and "Please keep educating - we need you." These were not abstract gestures. They were deeply felt expressions of solidarity from people across faiths, backgrounds and communities who understood that an attack on Jewish Australians reverberates far beyond a single night or a single place.



Flowers circle MHM's Eternal Flame as the community unites in grief and remembrance after the Bondi attack.

On our Instagram page, members of the public responded to our statement of grief with words of compassion and resolve. "Light will win," one person wrote, echoing the spirit of Chanukah. Another shared, "Thank you for being a beacon of truth and remembrance in such dark times." Many expressed heartbreak, but also determination: "We refuse to let hate define who we are as a country."

The consistency of these messages carried weight. They affirmed that while antisemitism is real and rising, so too is the willingness of ordinary Australians to stand visibly against it.

For our survivors, staff and volunteers, this support has not gone unnoticed. In moments when fear could have isolated us, the public chose connection. In moments when silence would have been easier, people chose to speak.

That solidarity does not erase the pain of Bondi, nor does it undo the harm inflicted. But it strengthens our resolve. It reminds us that education, remembrance and moral courage resonate beyond our walls - and that, in confronting hatred, we are not alone.

As an organisation committed to remembering the Holocaust, standing against hate, and translating this into action, we must ask what this moment demands of us.

Our response is to expand our work in education, speaking openly about antisemitism and hate within our own communities, and ensuring that these conversations reach every classroom, workplace and community, focused on dismantling the mechanics of hate. We must ensure that learning is neither abstract nor distant, but directly connected to the realities of today, showing how prejudice can escalate into violence if left unchecked.

Our advocacy must be visible, strong and sustained, particularly in our engagement with the Royal Commission into Antisemitism and Social Cohesion, so that our voice – focused on translating the memory of the Holocaust – drives meaningful policy and societal change.

Equally, we must be ready to be a place for deep and brave conversations. The museum must provide space where difficult truths are confronted, where reflection leads to understanding, and where dialogue becomes a catalyst for real change. By fostering empathy, encouraging honest questioning and listening to diverse perspectives, we practise what we imagine for society at large: a community in which hatred is neither tolerated nor ignored.

In doing so, we transform grief and fear into purpose, ensuring that the lessons of the past guide meaningful action in the present.

This work is pivotal, but it demands courage. Thank you to our volunteers, survivors, staff, donors and supporters who work tirelessly towards our purpose every day. Together we will educate, we will advocate, we will refuse to accept that hatred is inevitable. From our loss, we rise, and together we will be the light in the darkness.

Top fan
Sending love and support to Melbourne Holocaust Museum and all the Jewish community.
There is so much love and support for you.

Love, peace and light. We stand with you.

Standing in solidarity with our Jewish community in Melbourne and beyond. Hate has no home here.

With love and much appreciation for the Jewish community and all you have achieved and given to our great Australian melting pot. I have just joined as a museum member. I pledge to stand with you always against ignorance and hate.

My heart aches with the sadness I feel for you at this terrible time. May your candles shine.

Top fan
We stand with you. Always. We speak up and show solidarity, not remain silent. We honour those lost, may their memories be a blessing

We support you with your light.

I will never forget 14/12. I am broken hearted that this has happened to my Australia. I stand with the Jewish community, Israel and its people. God Bless you all. So sorry for this pain and loss. 🥺❤️

My heart aches with the sadness I feel for you at this terrible time. May your candles shine.

To all Jewish people, I am so sorry you have to face this monstrous and violent hatred again and again when all you are doing is living your truth. Living your faith. Living peace and love. I'm so sorry. My heart breaks for you. I just cannot fathom how this type of violence ever makes sense to anyone. Love and peace to you all. ❤️❤️❤️❤️❤️❤️❤️

We stand alongside you and send all our love to the Jewish community and thank you for all you do on educating the public

I am so sad and horrified that this shooting tragedy has happened 🥺. My thoughts are with you in this terrible time for our Jewish community; you have my condolences and best wishes 🙏

As always, I will always stand by your side. I don't have to be Jewish to stand with you, & I will stand with you, always. We can not allow 1940's Europe to ever happen again, not in any form. Whilst I have already been abused, & called racist for standing up for the Jewish community after yesterday, in my mind that reflects badly on those who do the abusing. I will continue always to stand up for the Australian Jews. My condolences to you all.

We stand together arm in arm heart to heart

It represents light unto the world and peace for all

I wish I could take away your pain. 💜

Sending all of the Jewish community my heartfelt support and love. I stand with you all in solidarity

An abundance of love sent your way. We share your sorrow and send blessings to you all

Sending all of the Jewish community my heartfelt support and love. I stand with you all in solidarity

It was a poignant and emotional visit today. Thank you. Our small group were honoured to share the experiences and to be with you. Jane and friends xx

My thoughts and prayers are with you all. I'm devastated at this level of hate. Thinking of you all.

Standing in solidarity with our Jewish community in Melbourne and beyond. Hate has no home here.

I am so sorry that this horrific terror attack has occurred on your beautiful Sydney community. My thoughts are with you all, & my heart is breaking.

Australia has no place for hate.... we live & respect our history against hate !

Australia has no place for hate.... we live & respect our history against hate !

Below: Memorial room
photographed by Simon Shiff.

Right:
Eternal Flame. Photographed by
Jarrod Freedman.

After the Last Witness



Memorial room
photographed by
Simon Shiff.

Education

by
Dr Simon Holloway,
Manager of Community &
Corporate Programs



One of the most frequently heard questions in Holocaust museums these past 20 years has been: “What are you going to do when there are no longer survivors?” Given that survivor testimony has lain at the heart of all that we do at the MHM, this is not an unreasonable question.

While the day when no survivors is still distant, it is worth stressing that our work – when that time comes – will remain fundamentally the same: to transmit the legacy of our survivors, and to ensure that people continue to engage with their experiences.

To appreciate how this might be done, consider that we have been teaching about the Holocaust in the absence of survivors since the MHM was established in 1984.

In 2001, Raul Hilberg published his *Sources of Holocaust Research: An Analysis*. Within it, he made a profound three-part observation that concerned the nature of survivor testimony as an historical source:

1. The survivors were not a random sample of those who experienced the Holocaust.
2. Those who elected to share testimony were not a random sample of those who survived.
3. The stories that survivors shared were not a random sample of their experiences.

The last two points are perhaps obvious. Many survivors declined to share their experiences, either because it was difficult to speak about them or because they did not feel their experiences were important enough to merit recording. For those who do speak, their stories are presented as narratives, focusing on some elements and disregarding others. Some things might be painful to relate; others might feel unimportant.

It follows that neither the survivors nor their stories were “random”. But what does it mean to say that the survivors were themselves not a random sample of the prewar Jewish community?

When we consider the different ways people survived the Holocaust, we might reflect on the factors that facilitated that survival. For those who survived within the camp system, age and health were critical. Most survivors within the camps were aged (roughly) 15-35. While there were certainly exceptions – including some remarkable survivors who speak at our museum – that they were exceptions is undeniable.

Additionally, for those who hid “in plain sight”, an ability to fluently speak the local language was an imperative. Jews who could speak only Yiddish, or whose grasp of the local language might betray the fact that it was not their language of birth, had far less chance of survival than did those who were completely assimilated.

We might take a moment to consider those people whose stories – for the most part – we do not hear. For the most part, we do not hear the

stories of young children, nor of those who came from insular, religious communities. In other words, we do not hear from those who spoke only Yiddish, who had no connections outside the Jewish community, and who lacked money or items of monetary value.

Similarly, we do not hear from those who came from particular places, such as the Lublin District of Occupied Poland. This district had multiple labour camps and three different death camps (Belzec, Sobibor and Majdanek), and it was in the Lublin District that, in 1943, the Germans sought to finally eradicate the remaining working Jewish population. As a result, the survival rate for Jews in the Lublin District was roughly 1%. Those who did survive (like Sara Saaroni), survived in part because they were able to leave that district and avoid being returned to it.

We hear stories of those sent to Auschwitz, but only those whose age and physical fitness meant that Auschwitz was a labour camp. The stories of those who were not selected for labour, as with those who were sent to the death camps of Treblinka, Belzec and Sobibor, go mostly untold.

And yet, despite this, we have always told those stories. We have done so because they are integral to understanding the Holocaust. Their experiences were sometimes recorded at the time, in diaries and journals or in the pages of letters, and have been reconstructed by historians and other researchers. They are as important to us as the stories of those who survived and lie at the heart of all we do.



Losing survivors is something we feel deeply, and the lack of living witnesses to the history will rob our educational programs of their most powerful and memorable element.

There is no substitute for meeting a survivor, nor can anything replace it. But our work will never cease. After all, we have always shared this history in the absence of those who might recall it. The very essence of Holocaust education is doing so.



Left: Guta Goldstein with her grandson, Yair Prawer, at a MHM commemoration event. Photographed by Jon Moss.



by
Dr Daniel Haumschild,
Head of Exhibitions
& Storytelling

Vicarious Resilience on Yom HaShoah

Every year, Yom HaShoah commemorates both those who were murdered and the many who resisted and survived.

In 2026, we welcome you to join us as we explore intergenerational trauma with a similar bifocal lens. On 19 April, the MHM will present a full day examination of how trauma is linked to and mitigated by forms of ‘vicarious resilience’. This discussion will not dismiss the burden and challenge of living with inherited pain; on the contrary, we will explore the intimate relationship between the past and present, body and mind, and direct and indirect experience to garner a better sense of what is faced by those whose parents and grandparents survived the Holocaust. We will also begin to examine the growing edge of this field that includes a pathway of hope.

Vicarious resilience emerges physiologically in a manner that reflects the inheritance of trauma. For example, in her newest book, *The Resilience Response*, Dr. Rachel Yehuda explores facets of trauma as a strengthening opportunity, showcasing that it is not exclusively pathological nor immutable. Rather, the negative impact of trauma can be stopped between generations through coping strategies that are a natural part of the trauma response. As she explains, inherited mutations “increase the repertoire of possible responses” to stress and difficulty. So, while the body of a person with trauma ‘remembers’ the violence of the past, there is also a complementary “wisdom in our body” that is encoded by the same experience.

Beyond these biological permutations, vicarious resilience can also become part of the social and cultural fabric of communities that have been forced

to survive. Sitting with and learning from the habits and practices of those who have suffered offers both their offspring and others an opportunity to glean practical lessons about flexibility, adaptability and ingenuity.

New evidence supports the hypothesis that a conscious recognition of shared markers of strength between a survivor and oneself can positively impact the capacity of younger generations to navigate crisis.

Together with the help of scholars, researchers and healthcare professionals who have both professional and personal insights, we will shed light on the possibilities of inheritance for the present and the future.



by
Sue Hampel OAM,
MHM Co-President

As we move into a future without living Holocaust survivors, the work of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) is increasingly shaped by this pivotal generational crossroads. The responsibility to preserve memory, confront distortion, and ensure meaningful Holocaust education has never been more urgent.

Delegates from IHRA’s 35 Member Countries, along with observer countries and Permanent International Partner organisations, recently came together to reflect on the Holocaust and its contemporary consequences. Central to these discussions was a shared commitment to building a more just future - a goal inseparable from the responsibility to confront rising antisemitism and violence against Jewish communities today. It was a privilege to once again be part of the Australian delegation, and I extend my thanks to the Head of Delegation and Australia’s new Ambassador to Israel, Her Excellency Lyndall Sachs PSM, and Deputy Head Renée Arian for their leadership and guidance during what was a challenging and emotionally charged week.

Within the Education Working Group, discussions focused on the evolving realities of teaching and learning about the Holocaust. Experts explored how educators can be better supported in increasingly complex classroom

environments, including navigating digital technologies, teaching younger learners, and addressing antisemitism with confidence and care. There was strong recognition that Holocaust education must remain rigorous, age-appropriate, and grounded in both historical accuracy and ethical responsibility.

The plenary took on a particularly emotional tone when condolences were formally expressed following the terrorist attack on Jewish Australians during the Chanukah event at Bondi Beach. Delegates conveyed their shock and sorrow, extending condolences to the families of those killed and expressing solidarity with Australia’s Jewish community. As was powerfully stated, democracy rests on the principle that everyone’s rights are equal; a world in which Jewish communities are not safe is one in which no one is truly safe.

This plenary also marked the completion of significant work on

the second edition of the IHRA Recommendations on Teaching and Learning about the Holocaust. I am proud to have contributed as a member of the IHRA expert team responsible for this important update, which will help guide Holocaust education globally in the years ahead.



Above: Sue Hampel, Steve Cooke, Australia’s Ambassador to Israel and Head of the Australian IHRA delegation, Renee Arian, Deputy Head of Delegation, Suzanne Rutland and Andre Oboler.

Top: IHRA delegates in front of the Righteous Among the Nations Wall at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Jerusalem.



Heritage College students participating in the *In Touch With Memory* Program. Photographed by Simon Shiff.



Heritage College students in guided experience of the *Everybody Had a Name* exhibition. Photographed by Simon Shiff.



One of the most significant challenges currently facing Holocaust education - and one that raises profound pedagogical questions for educators - is the eventual absence of Holocaust survivors.

Survivor testimony has long been central to the study of the Holocaust. Through their personal narratives, survivors humanise history, offering students a tangible connection to the past and a powerful link between historical events and the present day.

At the MHM, survivor testimony is an essential part of our education programs. For more than 40 years, survivors have generously shared their lived experiences with students in person and, more recently, online. These encounters have provided students with an authentic and deeply moving educational experience. However, as survivors age and fewer are able to participate in programs, educators are increasingly confronted with the question: how do we teach the Holocaust responsibly and meaningfully when living witnesses are no longer present?

In recent months, the MHM Education Team has experienced a reduction in the number of survivors able to attend the museum and participate in programs. Their absence is deeply felt. As educators, we are acutely aware of the responsibility we hold to honour the authentic voices of survivors while also upholding their dignity and humanity. The absence of living witnesses is not simply a practical challenge - it is a pedagogical, ethical and emotional one. Survivor testimony does more than impart information; it conveys moral authority, personal truth and the weight of

lived experience. Without this immediacy, there is a risk that the Holocaust becomes reduced to dates, facts and figures, losing the human dimension that is essential to meaningful education. Educators must therefore find ways to preserve and centre survivor voices while also respecting their dignity and humanity.

In response to this challenge, the Education Team has thoughtfully developed and redesigned key components of our programs to ensure survivor voices remain central and meaningful, even in their physical absence.

Video Testimony

The use of recorded survivor testimony has been an integral part of the MHM education program when survivors are no longer able or do not want to deliver their entire history in a short form. Recordings provide students with an introduction to and overview of the lives of the survivors, while prioritising the time spent face to face with them at the museum for considered questions. In the absence of in-person testimony, these recorded narratives take on even greater significance. Video testimony is now deliberately enhanced through the incorporation of artefacts donated by survivors or objects directly connected to their personal experiences. This approach enriches students' engagement with the testimony and helps maintain a strong, personal connection to each survivor's story.

Artefacts

Artefacts continue to play a critical role in engaging students in meaningful and tangible ways. Within the education

program, artefacts are used to guide students through the permanent exhibition *Everybody Had a Name*, reinforcing the individuality of those affected by the Holocaust. Artefacts are also incorporated into classroom-based learning, where students handle objects and participate in inquiry-based activities that encourage discussion, observation and reflection.

This experiential learning process allows students to connect personally with the experiences of survivors and victims, fostering empathy and deeper understanding.

Yet even with thoughtful program changes, challenges remain. Educators must navigate how to present testimony respectfully, avoiding voyeurism or emotional overload while still conveying the gravity of events. There is also the ethical responsibility to resist replacing living witnesses with simulations or technologies that risk distorting or simplifying their experiences. At its core, Holocaust education in the post-survivor era demands careful balance: preserving authenticity, maintaining historical accuracy, and ensuring that remembrance remains grounded in humanity rather than abstraction.

While historical study provides the framework through which we learn about the past, it is the voices of survivors that give that past its meaning. For this reason, ensuring that their stories are prioritised and continue to be heard - authentically, respectfully, and thoughtfully in first person - remains at the heart of Holocaust education and remembrance at MHM.

After the Last Testimony:

Teaching the Holocaust in a Post-Survivor Era



Left: Robbie Simons, previous Manager Audio-visual and Digital Storytelling, reviewing and preparing testimony videos.

From a collections perspective, we can achieve this through the creation of robust records and maintaining accurate documentation to ensure our testimony collection remains accessible now and into the future; as a Collections Specialist this is what I do.

Of the many challenges museums face in caring for collections, dissociation is perhaps one of the more pervasive yet preventable ones. It is caused by changes and breakdowns in systems over time - for example, staffing or procedural changes - and leads to the loss of information about an object, or in extreme cases loss of the object itself.

Creating robust records is one way to prevent dissociation. It is an ongoing process that begins the moment we receive a new testimony enquiry. This first stage is vital, not just for establishing a mutually respectful and trusting relationship, but because it is the point at which we can obtain detailed information directly from the survivor. A pre-interview meeting is arranged between the interviewer and the survivor, a questionnaire is completed, and additional research is conducted. This information lays the foundation for detailed records later.

Following the pre-interview, the testimony is filmed, and the video files are prepared. It is at this point that our object is created and two essential pieces of information are generated. The first is the Object ID, a unique number following a consistent convention, which is assigned to all related items such as physical tapes, documentation and digital files.

Below: Student using the online platform to search through testimonies.

The Object ID keeps everything connected, easily identifiable and locatable.

The second is the Testimony Release Deed which records the survivor's consent, alongside any restrictions. This document informs how we manage access and use of the collection to meet our legal and ethical requirements.

Now comes the moment of truth. The moment when the information obtained during the enquiry and filming comes together and our robust record is created. Historical information (people, places, dates), object information (Object ID, descriptions, subjects, files, formats and locations) and administrative information (when, where, who was involved, and restrictions) are meticulously entered into our Collection Management System, Argus. Collection documentation is also scanned and attached to its record and filed, and the video files are embedded in the database before being saved in our digital archive.

Alas, the work of the Collections Specialist is not complete. For as long as something resides within a museum collection, we are responsible for its ongoing care and maintenance. This includes maintaining physical and digital objects, facilitating access and use of the collection, preventative conservation and digital preservation activities, and research and record enhancement projects. All of which are far more successful if we have a solid foundation from which to work. That is, a robust record.

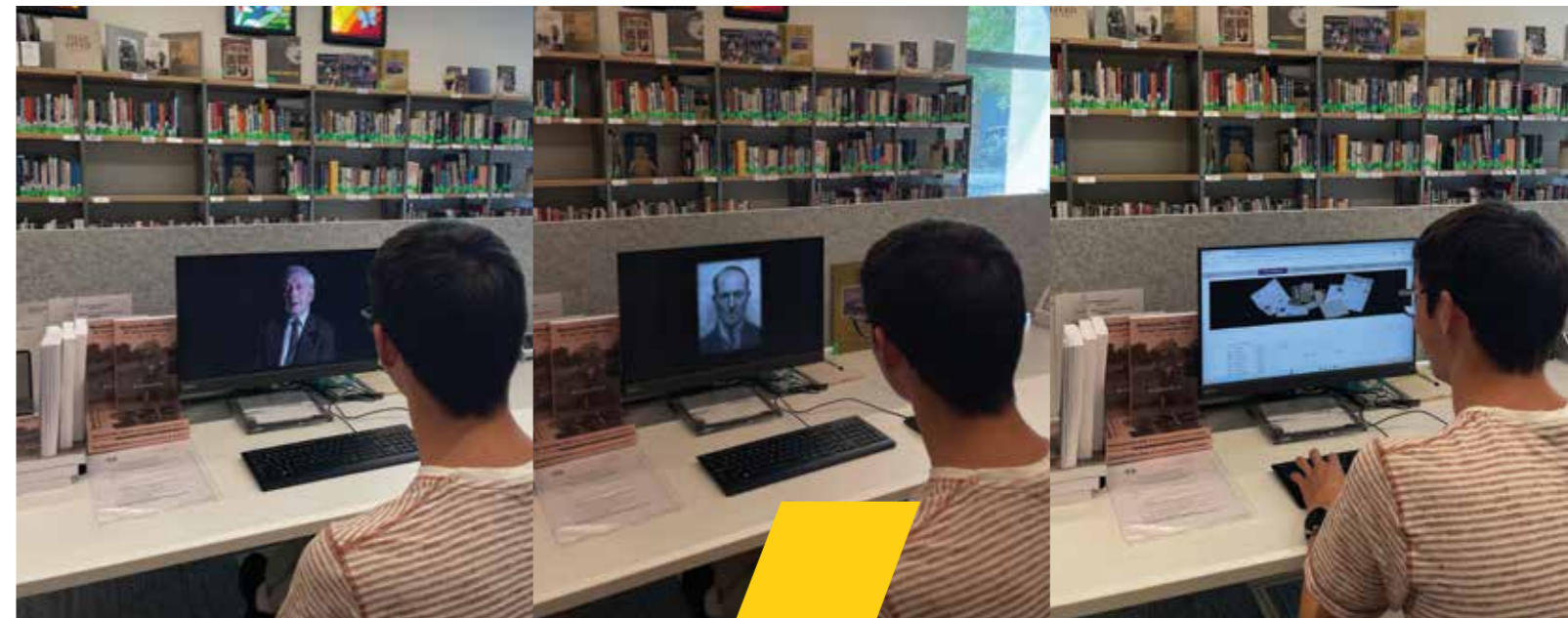
A day in the life of recording testimony

It is an honour and a privilege to bear witness to the testimony of a Holocaust survivor. As individuals, this privilege comes with the responsibility to carry their story and memory with you. As a museum, and the custodian of more than 1400 testimonies recording the first-hand experiences of Melbourne's Holocaust survivor community, we are also responsible for the long-term care of our collections to ensure the voices of Holocaust survivors will be heard for generations to come.

As one of the Collections Specialists at the MHM I am responsible for the care and administration of the audiovisual collection which encompasses the Phillip Maisel Testimony Collection. Through my work I have been fortunate to hear from survivors both in person and from recorded testimony and I am keenly aware that future generations will not have this same opportunity. So, as we move towards a future with fewer living witnesses, how do we ensure that the voices of Holocaust survivors continue to be heard?

A collection is only as good as its records, and records are only as good as the information we include. Without meticulous documentation we risk dissociation and the loss of vital information about our testimonies and the survivors who gave them. Without meticulous documentation we risk silencing our collection.

By producing robust records and accurate documentation for our testimonies we will keep our collection accessible and make sure that the courage and memory of Holocaust survivors will live on, and that their voices will never be forgotten.



THE Responsibility to Remember

The MHM has always had Holocaust survivors at its core. It was survivors who founded the museum in 1984, and it is survivors who continue to speak to tens of thousands of school students each year, providing the next generation with a personal connection to an otherwise incomprehensible horror.

But while survivors sit at the centre of everything that we do, there is another group who hold equal importance: the six million who were murdered.

As we confront the approaching reality of a world without Holocaust survivors, we can learn from survivors themselves; each one is a witness not just to their own experiences, but to those of loved ones who are not here to share their stories. Here, we look at three of these photos, and at the people they commemorate. Remembering their stories is the mantle we must take on in the coming decades.

Greta Čapek

In 1941, unable to work due to antisemitic legislation, twenty-three-year-old Greta Čapek and her husband Fred volunteered to manage a Jewish youth hostel in Prague, caring for around 70 teenagers who were unable to live at home.

In late 1941, the occupying Nazi government began deporting the Jewish residents of Prague to Theresienstadt Ghetto-Camp. As the young people in her care were taken from their home, Greta ensured that each one went with a warm blanket and a package of homemade toffees, which could be life-saving for ghetto residents deprived of food and clothing.

When Greta and Fred themselves were deported to Theresienstadt, they continued to sustain religious and community life in the ghetto, managing a home for around 500 young men, where they hosted a seder (Passover meal) in 1943.



Greta Čapek (right) and unknown friend, likely Prague, Czechoslovakia, early 1930s. MHM Collection 1551-38

On 6 October 1944, Greta was deported to Auschwitz, where she was murdered. Family lore holds that she was selected for the gas chambers on arrival because she had taken charge of a young child.

Greta's photo and story come to us through her friend Irene Čapek, who would go on to marry Greta's widower Fred. Although Irene is no longer with us, it is because of her that we can continue to share Greta's story of resilience and compassion in the face of Nazi oppression.

Rysio Hasman

Rysio Hasman was born in Łódź, Poland, in late 1936, to parents Adaś and Adela. He grew up in a loving family, and adored his older sister, Lusia. Rysio was a clever child, with a particular affinity for maths.

In 1940, Rysio and his family were imprisoned in the Warsaw Ghetto. Each day, Adaś, Adela and Lusia would smuggle Rysio into the factory where they worked, ensuring he stayed warm, and could share their food.

In August 1943, the family were deported to Majdanek Concentration Camp, where Rysio was murdered in the gas chambers. He was seven years old.

This is the only known surviving photograph of Rysio, taken on a family holiday in the summer of 1939, and given to the MHM by his sister Lusia Haberfeld. Thanks to Lusia, who volunteered at the museum, Rysio's story has been shared with thousands of school children, and he continues to be remembered.

The Unknown Victims

Not all the victims of the Holocaust can be named. As of 2025, more than five million names have been documented at Yad Vashem, but one million remain unknown. While we must face the reality that some names will never be recorded, their stories remain no less important.

We do not know the names of anyone in this photograph. It was brought to Australia by Holocaust survivor Ida Frydman. Ida grew up in Brzezinka, Poland. Following the outbreak of war, the teenage Ida fled with her family to the larger city of Sosnowiec. It is likely there that this photo was taken.

In 1939 around 28,000 Jews were living in Sosnowiec. Only around 400 returned after the Holocaust. It is possible that none of the people in this photo survived. Nonetheless, Ida saved the photo itself. She brought

it with her when she emigrated to Australia in the early 1950s, and in 1998, she donated it to the MHM.

Six million people never had the chance to speak about what happened during the Holocaust, but their memories have been kept alive by their loved ones. It is our task now to continue the work of Irene, Lusia and Ida in remembering Greta, Rysio and all those whose names we do not know, as well as those for whom not even a photograph survives.

When living eyewitnesses are no longer with us, these objects, which have always held meaning, take on even more value. They remind us that each victim had a name, a face, and a life, even if we do not know the details of it. They are a physical manifestation of the responsibility passed onto us from survivors, to continue their work, and to never forget.



Left: Rysio Hasman, Kraszew, Poland, summer 1939. MHM Collection 839

Far left: Photograph of a group of young people, likely Sosnowiec, Poland, c.1939. MHM Collection 1607-3

Esther Pinski at 100

A Century of Courage, Culture and Family

By Nathan Pinski, based on a speech delivered at Esther's 100th birthday celebration

When Esther Pinski's family gathered to celebrate her remarkable milestone, they spoke of survival, culture, humour and the everyday moments that make a life extraordinary. In sharing this tribute, her family helps preserve the kinds of personal memories that lie at the heart of the MHM, stories that honour the past while illuminating the present.

"100 Years Young": An Adapted Tribute to Esther (Edzja) Pinski

Welcome everyone, family, friends, and most importantly, my mother, Esther (Edzja) Pinski, née Szuc. The matriarch of our family. One hundred years young.

This is an occasion 100 years in the making. From Warsaw to Uzbekistan to Paris to Melbourne.

My mother has lived a remarkable life. She survived a terrible and tragic war and ultimately built her life in peace and safety in her adopted homeland. She arrived in Australia by boat in 1950 with my father Leizor. One of her first impressions of Australia was seeing women in floral hats in a Fremantle pub - she thought they were wearing flowerpots.

When she landed, she already spoke four languages (now five). Australia was, in her words, a monoculture: only white bread, terrible coffee, and no opera or theatre. She begged my father: "Leizor, take me back to Paris." He refused: "Edzja, this is a free and democratic country - the land of opportunity." Mind you, that was one of the few times my father ever stood up to my mother. Normally she got her way.

My father and uncle bought a continental supermarket in Footscray, and our home was always stocked with European delights: Kaiser rolls, dill cucumbers, quark, brisket, chalva, Elite wafers, imported chocolate... the list goes on. And my mother made the best baked cheesecake and apple strudel, and I was waiting patiently so I could lick the bowl.

My parents helped build the post-war Jewish community. They were active in Sholem Aleichem College, the Jewish Labour Bund, and their beloved monthly Yiddish reading group, the Lein Krize, alongside families who remain connected to us today.

Over the years, our family grew: two sons, two daughters-in-law, Sue and Marcia. Six grandchildren: Samuel, Joshua, Belinda, Rebecca, Abby and Jake. Three great-grandchildren: Elton, Essie, and five-week-old Juniper, Qantas' newest frequent flyer.

When my father passed away in 2006, after 66 years together, it was a heartbreaking time for my mother. She lost her partner, and her chauffeur. But in time, she rebuilt her life. She mastered public transport, attended foreign films at The Classic and Brighton Bay, and became our resident theatre and movie critic. (*Fiddler on the Roof*, unsurprisingly, was her favourite.)

My mother never considered herself to be a Holocaust survivor as she felt she had survived the war by fleeing from Poland to Eastern Europe. Yet she is a survivor. She had and still has a million stories, all oral testimony. She tells anyone and everyone who chooses to listen about those horrific times. We were able to capture many of those stories in her book, *A Glass Half Full*. We thought we had captured all of them but in the last few years she has uncovered additional memories.

Since 2021, she has lived at Gary Smorgon House, where she is well cared for — though she still misses

her home in East Brighton, her *haimishe* gatherings, her beloved husband, and (improbably) her cleaning.

My mother now acknowledges that my father made a wonderful decision in choosing to migrate to Australia. She has lived here for 75 years. She and our family have lived in a democratic, plural, tolerant multicultural and by-and-large peaceful society. I hope that the very recent tragic events will not destroy the unique fabric of this nation. In that regard, we all have a role to play to protect the values that made this country the great place we all love and cherish. "As the Good Book says", the price of freedom is eternal vigilance.

Esther has lived and continues to live an amazing life. I suspect that there is still another chapter to be lived.

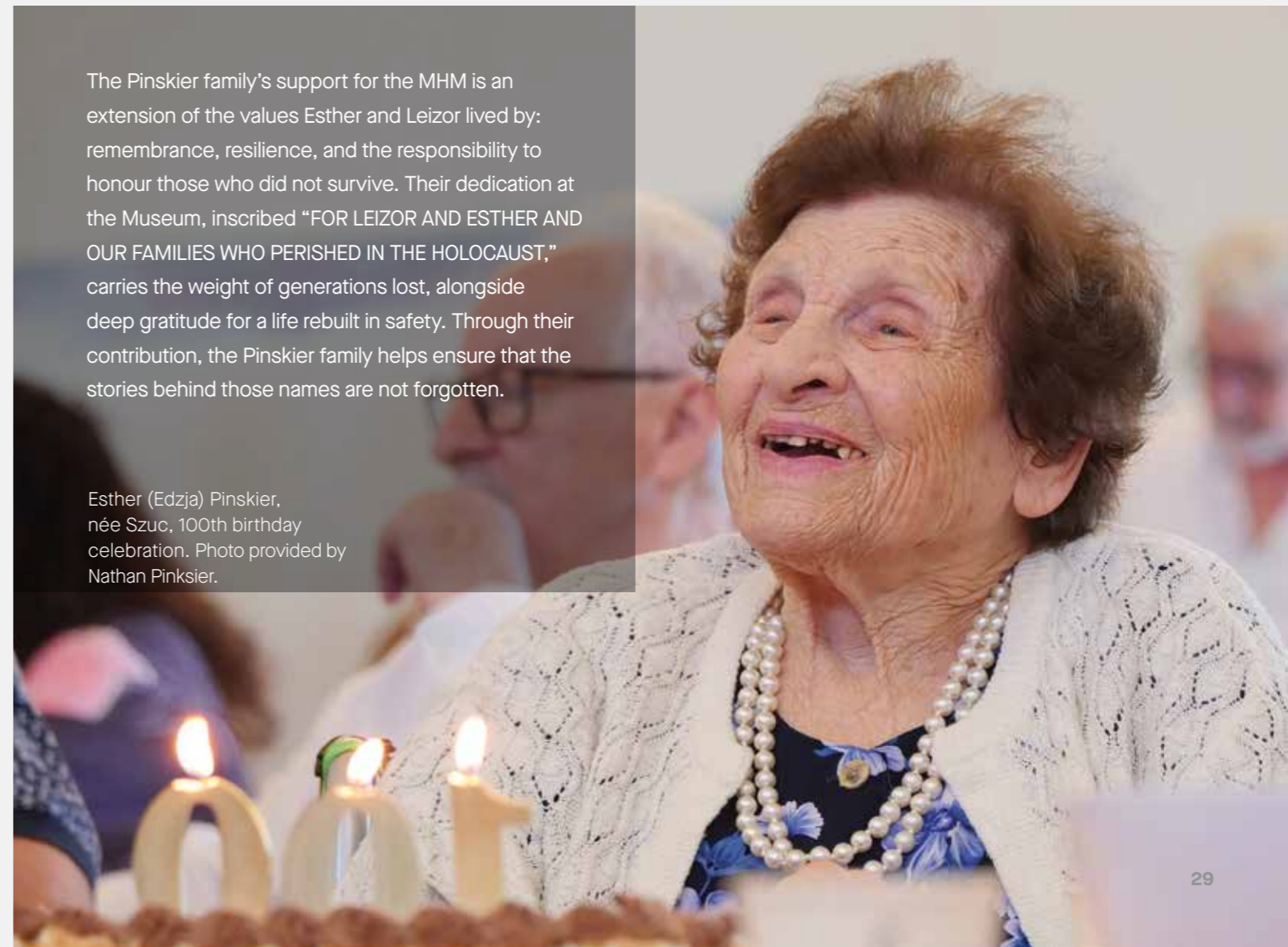
Biz 120. Zol zien mit glick. L'Chayim.

Right: Esther (Edzja) Pinski, née Szuc, wedding day. Photo provided by Nathan Pinski.



The Pinski family's support for the MHM is an extension of the values Esther and Leizor lived by: remembrance, resilience, and the responsibility to honour those who did not survive. Their dedication at the Museum, inscribed "FOR LEIZOR AND ESTHER AND OUR FAMILIES WHO PERISHED IN THE HOLOCAUST," carries the weight of generations lost, alongside deep gratitude for a life rebuilt in safety. Through their contribution, the Pinski family helps ensure that the stories behind those names are not forgotten.

Esther (Edzja) Pinski, née Szuc, 100th birthday celebration. Photo provided by Nathan Pinski.





A Love Story Unearthed From the Ashes of History

Left: Garry Ramler's Mother, Raja and Gdala in front of the cedar tree and government offices in Białystok, 1938. Photo: Provided by Garry Ramler.



Above: Love letter Gdala wrote to Raja in 1940. Photo: Provided by Garry Ramler.

Left: Portrait of Gdala, 1938. Photo: Provided by Garry Ramler.

Donor Story

by **Sam Shlansky**
Grants & Partnerships Specialist

A tender love that started under the trees of Białystok has unravelled the silence of one Holocaust survivor family.

Silence and Survival

In 2020 Garry Ramler – a Melbourne leader of the furniture world – was renovating his family home. This is where he grew up with his Holocaust survivor parents Lolek and Raja. Garry's father Lolek was a working-class young man from Lwów while his mother Raja came from a wealthy Białystok family.

After the war they met in Melbourne in 1947. They were part of the wave of Polish Jewish refugees who Australia welcomed with compassion and openness.

Together Lolek and Raja built a beautiful 60-year marriage with their two sons, Paul and Garry, and later grandchildren. They passed away only weeks apart in 2008. Raja spoke little of their early lives during the Holocaust. Instead, she carried a quiet sorrow that Garry began to understand only in recent years.

When renovating the family home, Garry found a safe that had been hidden away for decades. Inside there was no jewellery, cash or titles of easily understood value. There was instead a small bundle of papers tied with worn string.

Papers and a Promise

This bundle of paper proved to be a priceless collection of letters sent to Garry's mother Raja when she was sixteen – during the Holocaust.

In late 1939, along with countless other women and children, she had been deported by the invading Russians to the distant steppes of Kazakhstan. The letters were from her first love, 17-year-old Gdala Rajgrodzki, who had remained in Białystok. He wrote weekly, pouring out his longing for "Rajaszeka", detailing his daily life, and sketching a future he dreamed that they would share when she returned.

The pages are astonishing: filled with artful poetry, cut-out hearts, drawings of jewellery that he planned to craft for her. Also, there were love notes written in Yiddish, Polish, Russian and German.

His last letter is dated 8 June 1941. This arrived days before the German invasion of eastern Poland under Operation Barbarossa. After that there is nothing.

Gdala, his parents Yitzhak and Sheindl, and his brother Yaacov, all disappeared. There are no graves. No records. No survivors. Today these papers hold a promise of them being remembered for generations to come.

Memory in Action

Garry Ramler has always carried this memory with him despite the silence from his mother Raja. When he was born in 1955, she gave him Gdala's Hebrew name Gdalya, anglicised to Garry. This was one way to cut through her grief and to honour his memory.

Garry's mother rarely mentioned Gdala when he was growing up, but he knew the grief ran deep. With both his parents gone more than a decade, the letters were an unexpected bridge to their past. With help from MHM volunteer Sara Albeck, Garry was able to have the letters translated. This reflects the museums leading role in bringing together language and Holocaust experts to understand evidence of the Holocaust.

In 2023, after having the letters translated, Garry travelled to Białystok with his daughter and infant grandson. Garry was ready to put their memories into action. Garry walked the streets of their youth. Thanks to the detailed letters he could follow in their footsteps to the cinema, the park and other places they had their dates. Garry even found the place where they had their shy first kiss under a tree.

Connections and Curiosity

Garry has one photo of his mum Raja with Gdala in Białystok from around 1938. It could be any teens then or today trying to look cute but feeling a bit awkward on a date. It happens to be in front of one of the few buildings to survive the city's destruction. 85 years later, on Garry's trip, he found this very spot which today has a much bigger tree in front of the same building. History is very much alive.

Garry also knew where Gdala lived at the time. With some help from locals, he found the address with something unexpected. At that exact location today stands a sculpture installed in 2022 titled *The Promise*. This depicts two lovers reaching toward each other across time and space.

Remembering all Forgotten

Garry likes to remember a saying: "no person truly dies until they are forgotten."

Garry hopes that Gdala Rajgrodzki is remembered as the representative of families erased. Gdala is one story among six million others silenced by the Holocaust.

Through these letters, through Garry's mother's love, and through the name she passed on to him, Gdala continues to live.

Supporter List

With deep appreciation, we thank our donors and funders. Your generosity makes it possible to safeguard Holocaust memory and share its vital lessons with current and future generations. The following recognises those who contributed \$1,000 and above from January to December 2025.

6A Foundation	Michael Debinski	Ed & Ada Gurgiel	Phil & Sue Lewis	Michelle Reichenberg	Ross & Karen Snow
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	Renee Gross-Zylberstein				Ann Zomer

We apologise if your name has been omitted. Please contact [Aviva Weinberg fundraising@mhm.org.au](mailto:Aviva.Weinberg.fundraising@mhm.org.au) for donation enquiries.

Simcha Story



The Joy of Giving Back

Charlie Blackstone all dressed up for her Bat Mitzvah. Photo: Blackstone family.

Charlie Blackstone's Bat Mitzvah Simcha Gift

In December 2025, as Charlie celebrated her Bat Mitzvah, she made the thoughtful decision to ask family and friends to support the MHM in lieu of traditional gifts. It was a choice shaped by a year of learning, connection and a growing sense of responsibility as she stepped into Jewish adulthood.

A year of learning and community

Charlie's Bat Mitzvah studies were rich in learning and hands-on experiences. Through her weekly lessons at Chabad Glen Eira, she explored what it means to live Jewish values in everyday life.

"I learned how to be a good Jewish woman," Charlie shared. "We baked for *Tzedakah*, learned how to make challah, and learned lots of *mitzvahs*, especially about giving back to the community."

Charlie loved the learning process and the people she met along the way. She also had the opportunity to deliver her *Dvar Torah* at Central Shul with Rivki, an experience she found especially interesting and rewarding.



I didn't really have any challenges," Charlie explained. "I really enjoyed the weekly lessons, meeting lots of new people, and learning different things each week.

Commitment and meaning

Charlie's parasha was *Vayetzei*, a Torah portion that left a strong impression on her.

"It's about commitment," she said. "Once you commit to doing something, even if it's hard or not fun, you have to stick to it and do it anyway."

That message stayed with her as she prepared for her Bat Mitzvah day.

"I felt happy, excited, proud, and a little nervous to stand up at shul," Charlie said. "But I loved it, and I really loved my family dinner afterwards."

Celebrating with purpose

Charlie's Bat Mitzvah celebrations were full of joy and connection. Choosing to include a Simcha gift to the MHM allowed Charlie to bring deeper meaning to her celebration, reflecting the values she had learned throughout the year and her commitment to community and responsibility.

If you are planning a Simcha and would like to mark your celebration by supporting the MHM, we would love to hear from you.

To find out more about organising a Simcha gift or fundraising in honour of a special occasion, please contact **Abigail Gilroy-Smith** at abigail.gilroy-smith@mhm.org.au or call 03 9528 1985.

School Visits & Virtual Workshops 2025

Over the last year, more than 30,000 students from schools and other education institutions visited the MHM. We are very excited to see this number continue to grow as we plan to welcome more students than ever before.

- | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| Academy Of Mary Immaculate | Doncaster Secondary College | Mazenod College | Sholem Aleichem College |
| Aitken College | Donvale Christian College | McKinnon Primary School | Simonds Catholic College |
| Alamanda K-9 College | Dromana Secondary College | McKinnon Secondary College | Somerville Secondary College |
| Albert Park College | Drouin Secondary College | Melbourne Girls Grammar | South Oakleigh Secondary College |
| Alexandra Secondary College | Edenbrook Secondary College | Melbourne Girls' College | Southern Cross Grammar |
| Alkira Secondary College | Elevation Secondary College | Melbourne Grammar School | St Albans Secondary College |
| Alphington Grammar School | Elwood Secondary College | Melbourne High School | St Aloysius College |
| Altona College | Emerald Secondary College | Melbourne Rudolf Steiner School | St Andrews Christian College |
| Ararat College | Emmanuel College Warrnambool | Melton Secondary College | St Bede's College |
| Ashwood High School | Epping Secondary College | Mentone Girls' Grammar School | St Dominic's Primary School |
| Bacchus Marsh Grammar - Maddingley | FCJ College Benalla | Mentone Grammar School | St Francis Catholic College |
| Bacchus Marsh Grammar - Woodlea | Fintona Girls' School | Methodist Ladies' College | St Joseph's College Ferntree Gully |
| Baimbridge College | Fitzroy High School | Monbulk College | St Joseph's College Geelong |
| Ballarat Christian College | Flinders Christian Community College | Monterey Secondary College | St Kevin's College Toorak |
| Ballarat Grammar Schools City Cite | Frankston High School | Mooroolbark College | St Leonard's College Brighton |
| Balwyn High School | Gardenvale Primary School | Mount Eliza Secondary College | St Mary's College Seymour |
| Bayside Christian College | Geelong Baptist College | Mount Lilydale Mercy College | St Michael's Grammar School |
| Bayswater Secondary College | Geelong High School | Mount Scopus Memorial College | St Peter's College, Clyde North |
| Bayview College | Geelong Lutheran College | Mount St Joseph Girls' College | Star of the Sea College |
| Beaconhills College - Berwick Campus | Genazzano FCJ College | Mount Waverley Secondary College | Staugton College |
| Beaconhills College - Pakenham Campus | Gilson College Taylors Hill | Mullauna Secondary College | Strathcona Baptist Girls' Grammar |
| Beaumaris Secondary College | Gisborne Secondary College | Murtoa College | Strathmore Secondary College |
| Beechworth Secondary College | Glen Eira College | Narre Warren South P-12 College | Sunbury College |
| Belgrave Heights Christian School | Glen Waverley Secondary College | Nazareth College | Sunshine College West Campus |
| Bellarine Secondary College | Goulburn Valley Grammar School | Newhaven College | Surf Coast Secondary College |
| Belmont High School | Grovedale College | Noble Park Secondary College | Sydney Road Community School |
| Benalla P-12 College | Hallam Senior Secondary College | Northcote High School | Tarnait P-9 College |
| Bendigo South East College | Hampton Park Secondary College | Northern College of the Arts and Technology | Taylor Lakes Secondary College |
| Bentleigh Secondary College | Hawkesdale P12 College | Northside Christian College | Templestowe College |
| Berwick Secondary College | Hazel Glen College | Norwood Secondary College | The Grange P-12 College |
| Beth Rivkah Ladies College | Heritage College | Nossal High School | The King David School |
| Bialik College | Highvale Secondary College | Notre Dame College | Tintern Grammar |
| Billanook College | Hillcrest Christian College | Nunawading Christian College - Secondary | Toorak College |
| Birchip P-12 School | Hopetoun P-12 College | Oakleigh Grammar | Trinity College Colac |
| Blackburn High School | Hoppers Crossing Secondary College | Our Lady of Sion College | Trinity Grammar School Kew |
| Boort District P-12 School | Huntingtower School | Parkdale Secondary College | University High School |
| Boronia K-12 College | Ivanhoe Girls' Grammar School | Pascoe Vale Girls Secondary College | Upper Yarra Secondary College |
| Box Hill High School | Ivanhoe Grammar School | Patterson River Secondary College | Upwey High School |
| Brentwood Secondary College | John Monash Science School | Peninsula Grammar | Victorian College for the Deaf |
| Bright P-12 College | Kambrya College | Penleigh & Essendon Grammar School | Keilor East |
| Brighton Secondary College | Kilbreda College | Plenty Valley Christian College | Victorian College of the Arts Secondary School (VCASS) |
| Brunswick Secondary College | Killester College | Prahran High School | Victory Christian College |
| Buckley Park College | Kingswood College | Preshil, The Margaret Lyttle Memorial School | Viewbank College |
| Camberwell Girls Grammar School | Kolbe Catholic College | Preston High School | Wangaratta High School |
| Camberwell Grammar School | Koonung Secondary College | Princes Hill Secondary College | Warrandyte High School |
| Carey Baptist Grammar School | Korowa Anglican Girls' School | Pyramid Hill College | Waverley Christian College - Narre Warren South |
| Carrum Downs Secondary College | Korumburra Secondary College | Richmond High School | Waverley Christian College - Wantirna South |
| Castlemaine Secondary College | Kyneton High School | Rochester Secondary College | Weeroona College |
| Cathedral College Wangaratta | Lakeside College | Rosebud Secondary College | Wellington Secondary College |
| Catherine McAuley College | Lakeview Senior College | Rowville Secondary College | Werribee Secondary College |
| Catholic College Sale | Lalor Secondary College | Roxburgh College | Wesley College Elsternwick |
| Catholic Ladies' College | Lauriston Girls' School Armadale | Rutherglen High School | Wesley College Glen Waverley |
| Catholic Regional College Caroline Springs | Lavalla Catholic College | Ruyton Girls' School | Wesley College Melbourne |
| Caulfield Grammar School | Leongatha Secondary College | Sacre Coeur | Westall Secondary College |
| Caulfield Grammar School Wheelers Hill | Lilydale Heights College | Sacred Heart College Kyneton | Western Port Secondary College |
| Charlton College | Lilydale High School | Sacred Heart College Newtown | Whitefriars College |
| Chelsea Primary School | Loreto College - Ballarat | Sacred Heart College Yarrowonga | William Ruthven Secondary College |
| Christian College - Waurm Ponds | Loreto Mandeville Hall Toorak | Sacred Heart Girls' College | Williamstown High School |
| Clonard College | Lorne P-12 College | Salesian College Chadstone | Williamstown High School - Bayview |
| Clyde Secondary College | Lowther Hall Anglican Grammar School | Salesian College Sunbury | Woodleigh School |
| Cobram Anglican Grammar School | Luther College | Sandringham College - 10-12 Campus | Woodmans Hill Secondary College |
| Cohuna Secondary College | MacKillop Catholic Regional College | Scoresby Secondary College | Wycheproof P-12 College |
| Cornish College | Macleod College | Scotch College | Yarra Valley Grammar School |
| Cranbourne Secondary College | MacRobertson Girls High School | Seymour College | Yarram Secondary College |
| Croydon Community School | Marian College Ararat | Shepparton ACE Secondary College | Yea High School |
| Damascus College | Marian College Sunshine | Shepparton Christian College | Yeshivah & Beth Rivkah Girls' Colleges |
| Dandenong High School | Maribyrnong Secondary College | Sherbrooke Community School | |
| Diamond Valley College | Marist College Bendigo | | |
| Dimboola Memorial Secondary College | Maryborough Education Centre | | |
| Docklands Primary School | Matthew Flinders Girls Secondary College | | |

John Deane & Leanne Issko

Volunteer Spotlight

by
Jess Mansfield
Volunteer Coordinator/
Receptionist

As we are the last generation to hear from living witnesses of the Holocaust, museums like the MHM face a profound responsibility: how do we continue to bear witness in a world where there are no living eyewitnesses? For siblings and volunteers John Deane and Leanne Issko, the answer lies in memory, legacy, and a deeply personal commitment to carrying the truth forward.

For John and Leanne, their connection to the MHM is deeply personal. As children, they did not fully know their father's Holocaust story, as he revealed it to the family later in life. Their father, Wolf Deane, has been involved with the MHM for almost 30 years, and for John, continuing that involvement felt incumbent, both as an act of respect and as a way of honouring his father's legacy. For the last 22 years, John has been a part of the team organising the annual commemoration of the Łódź Ghetto liquidation. In the last year, John expanded his volunteer work in the Visitor Experience team assisting the public and facilitating exhibitions.

Leanne first volunteered in the library more than 25 years ago. Now, as she enters retirement, she has chosen to return to the museum as a charity she deeply values and with which she wants to remain involved. Her long-standing connection reflects a quiet but powerful truth: preserving memory is not a single act, but a lifelong commitment.

For John, our most recent exhibition, *Portraits of Survival*, stands out. Being able to tell visitors that Wolf's portrait was one of the 16 displayed, and to expand on his story, experiences, and survival, filled him with pride and reinforced the importance of personal storytelling within the museum space.

As the next generation, John and Leanne recognise their responsibility. The museum's recorded testimonies now form the backbone of Holocaust education in a post-eyewitness world. Their role is to carry the truth forward, adding a personal touch where possible, grounding exhibitions in lived experience, and passing the story on, again and again. In doing so, they help ensure that memory remains not just preserved, but alive.



Above left: John Deane and Leanne Issko with Wolf Deane's portrait featured at Anita Lester's special exhibition *Portraits of Survival* at the Melbourne Holocaust Museum. Photo: Deane family.

Above right: Wolf Deane celebrating his 100th birthday surrounded by family. Photo: Deane family.



In Memoriam

In Memory of Abram Goldberg OAM

Abram Goldberg OAM was a beloved father, husband, grandfather, Holocaust survivor, and community icon remembered for his unwavering strength, hope, and commitment to peace, tolerance, and humanity. His life began in unimaginable hardship. He lost his parents Chaja and Hersl, his siblings Freda and Estera, his community, his childhood dreams — almost everything was taken from him. His survival, strength and determination following the horrors he experienced and lived through and survived has been his guide with every breath of his being.

Despite the trauma, Abram rebuilt his life with resilience and hope, carrying forward the memory of those lost and teaching the importance of unity and respect for all.

After the war, Abram met his wife Cesia in Belgium, and together they built a life of love, healing and partnership. Their marriage was a testament to resilience and devotion, and their bond inspired everyone around them. They created a loving family, which became Abram's greatest legacy. He cherished his children, grandchildren, and great-granddaughter, Sienna, who brought him immense joy and hope for the future.

Abram's contributions extended far beyond his family. He was a founding member of the Melbourne Jewish Holocaust Centre, where he tirelessly educated others about the dangers of hate and the importance of remembrance, even at the age of 100. He also helped establish Sholem Aleichem College and was deeply involved in the Kadimah, ensuring the survival and flourishing of Yiddish language and Jewish culture.

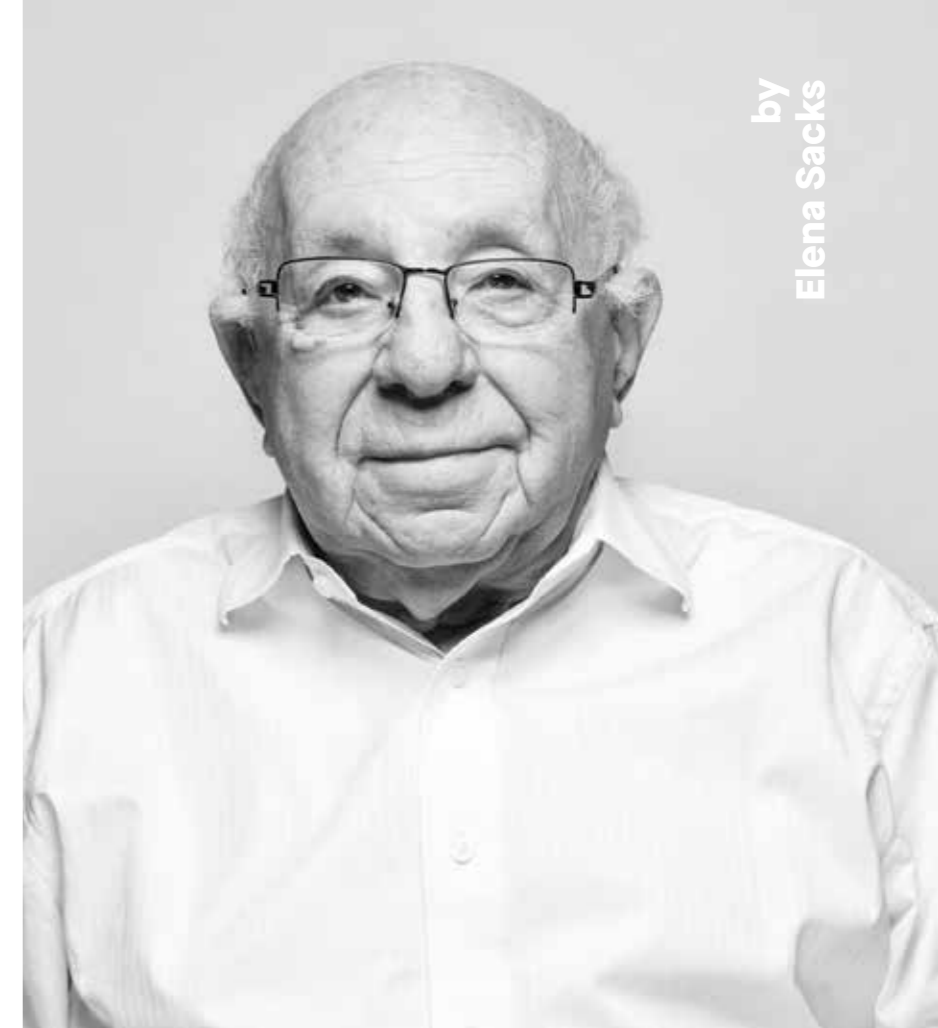
His dedication to peace and tolerance earned him numerous accolades, including the Medal of the Order of Australia and Citizen of the Year from Glen Eira Council.

Abram's life was a testament to turning suffering into wisdom and loss into love. His book, *Strength of Hope*, coauthored with Fiona Harris, encapsulates his guiding philosophy: "Hope is not a luxury - it is the seed of survival." He lived by this motto, inspiring countless individuals and leaving behind a legacy of love, resilience, and hope.

As the family bid farewell, they honour his memory by promising to carry forward his story and values. Abram Goldberg's life was a beacon of light, reminding us that even in the darkest times, the sun will shine again.

In Memoriam

In Memory of Andy Factor OAM



Andy was almost 102 when he passed away. Although his health had declined over the past few months, affecting his quality of life, for more than a century he truly lived an extraordinary life. One could never do full justice to all that he accomplished and experienced.

Andy was born on 18 January, 1924, in Plauen, Germany. His parents, Dora and Chiel, had immigrated from Poland. His brother Henry arrived exactly one year later to the day, and their little sister Ruth followed seven years after. He had a happy, carefree childhood, but when the Nazis came to power when Andy was nine, the family's idyllic life in the small town of Falkenstein was destroyed. The day after Kristallnacht, Andy and his father were arrested by the Gestapo and thrown in jail. He was only 13. Luckily, a few weeks later, due to the assistance of Max Factor (Andy's great uncle) in

America, the family was allowed to leave Germany and granted visas to emigrate to Australia.

Andy had a remarkable ear for languages. He taught himself English by listening to BBC news broadcasts and mimicking the announcers' accents and diction. His determination to assimilate, paired with his love of learning, enabled him to be accepted into the Conservatorium of Music for his exceptional talent as a violinist.

Andy's lifelong passion for music defined him. He played with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, the Australian Ballet and Opera orchestras, and in productions like *Fiddler on the Roof*. He performed alongside global stars such as Tom Jones and Sammy Davis Jr. Andy also taught violin privately as well as at prestigious Melbourne private schools.

After his wife Betty's passing, Dad began sharing his personal testimony at the Melbourne Holocaust Museum with high school students. His story captivated audiences, often leaving the room silent. He always ended with the same words:

"We are a multicultural society, and we should never tolerate discrimination. It tears at the fabric of a nation."

A special highlight came in 2023 when, at the age of 99, Andy received the Order of Australia Medal for his contributions to music and his voluntary work with the MHM.

ערב־ראש־השנה אין קאוונער געטאָ (זכרונות)

פֿון מאיר יעלין, פֿאַרווערטס, 18.09.2025

דאָס איז אַן אויסצוג פֿונעם בוך פֿאַרצייכענונגען אין קאוונער געטאָ, „אַרבעטן פֿאַר די דייטשן“, וואָס איז דערשינען אין „ה. ליוויק־פֿאַרלאַג“ אין 2018. דער מחבר, מאיר יעלין, איז געבוירן געוואָרן אין ליטע אין 1910 און געשטאַרבן אין ישראל אין 2000. ער האָט פֿאַרענדיקט די קאוונער העברעיִשע רעאַלי־גימנאַזיע און אין 1933 — די טעכנישע הויכשול אין דאַרמשטאַדט, דייִטשלאַנד. דיפּלאָמירט אין קאוונער אוניווערסיטעט און געאַרבעט ווי אַ בוי־אינזשינער. אַנטייל גענומען אין דער ווידערשטאַנד־באַוועגונג קעגן די נאַצי־הערשער, אין וועלכער זיין ברודער חיים יעלין איז געשטאַנען בראש. עולה געווען אין 1973. צווישן זיינע ביכער: „פֿאַרטיזאַנער פֿון קאוונער געטאָ“, „זייערע בליקן האָבן זיך באַגעגנט“, „בלוט און וואַפֿן“, „די מיראַזשן פֿון אַמאָק־לויפֿער אַסקאַר גריק“ אאַז״וו. זיינע ביכער זענען שוין איבערגעזעצט געוואָרן אויף העברעיִש, ליטוויש און רוסיש [דניאל גלאַן]. היינט באַגינען האָט מיר אַפּגעגליקט. כּיבין אַרײַנגעפֿאַלן אין אַ בריגאַדע, וואָס ווערט געשיקט אויף צוואַנגאַרבעט אין אַן אָרט, וווּ מע קען ווי נישט איז איבערקומען דעם טאָג אָן שווערער האַרעוואַניע און דער עיקר — מיקאַן דאָרט איינשאַפֿן זיך אַ ביסל עסוואַרג: איינקויפֿן אָדער אויסבייטן עפעס פֿון די געבליבענע בני אונדז זאָכן אויף אַ שטיקל ברויט, אַ ביסל קאַרטאָפֿל אָדער גרינוואַרג. און אַט שלעפּן מיר זיך שוין מיט מזל צוריק, „אַהיים“, אין געטאָ, און אויף אונדזערע פּלייצעס עפעס־ וואָס. אין מיין טאַרבע — אַ ביסל קאַרטאָפֿל און מערלעך. אויף דעם וואָרט מיט אומגעדולד מיין הונגעריק הויזגעזינד. איצט זאָל נאָר געראַטן דורכצוגיין בשלום דעם קאַנטראָל ביים געטאָ־טויער. מיר זענען אין דער בריגאַדע איבער הונדערט מענער. כּמעט אַלע מיט עפעס באַלאַדן. אַלע האַפֿן מיר, אַז פּונקט ווי נעכטן, ווי אייערנעכטן, וועט די דייטשע טויערוואַך אויך היינט, „קוקן דורך די פֿינגער“, וועט אונדז דורכלאָזן מיט די פעקלעך, און אונדזערע משפּחות וועלן עטלעכע טעג האָבן מיט וואָס אונטערצוהאַלטן די נשמה. מיד פֿונעם היפּשן מהלך און פֿון טראַגן אויף זיך די נײַ־ וואַרײַרטע, „ייִדישע טאַרבע“, דערנענטערן מיר זיך צום געטאָ־ טויער. מיר זעען פֿון דער ווייטנס, אַז דאָרטן איז רויק. עטלעכע דייִטשן דרייען זיך פֿויל אַרום און וועלן אַוודאי זיך פֿוילן אַ קוק צו טאָן, וואָס מיר טראַגן. (פּוטער, שפּעק, ווורשט, פּיש — זאָל גאָט אָפהיטן!). ערשט איצט באַמערקן מיר, אַז אַ לויטערער פֿריהאַרבעט־קער פֿאַרנאַכט האָט אַרױפֿגעלייגט אַ וואַרעמען בראַנדזענעם שטעמפל אויף דער וועלט — אויף די שטיבלעך פֿון דער אַרומגעצוימטער געטאָ מיט שטעכלדראַט, אויף די מענטשן. עס גייט אַזש אָפּ די פֿאַרפֿרויערע נשמה. — ייִדן, היינט איז ערב־ ראש־השנה, — טוט עמעצער פּלוצעם אַ זאָג אין דער קאַלאַגע. — אַזאַ שיינער ראַש־השנה... תּש״א 1941... דער ערשטער אין קאוונער געטאָ... צו שפעט האָט ער געזאָגט, עס זאָל קענען אַרויסרופֿן אומרו אָדער חשדים, כאַטש מיר האָבן שוין געהערט, אַז אין פּוילן, וווּ זיי בושעווען שוין צוויי יאָר, גרייטן צו די נאַציס דווקא צו די ייִדישע יום־טובֿים, „סורפּריזן“ פֿאַר די פֿאַרשפּאַרטע אין זייערע געטאָס. פֿאַרגעסן אין דעם, טראַכט יעדער איינער וועגן איין ענין: ווי כאַפט מען זיך אַרײַן אין געטאָ מיטן „פעקעלע“? די מענטשן פֿון די פֿאַדערשטע רייען זענען בשלום אַדורך דעם טויער. ערשט וואָס איז געשען? וואָס? — פֿרעגן די אַרומיקע.

און איך כּליפּע, ס׳פּנים באַגראַבן אין די דלאַניעס. כּיהאַב געקענט זיין דער מאַנצביל, וואָס איז אומגעלומפּערט געפֿאַלן אַ טויטער אויפֿן ברוק לעבן זיין אויסגעשאַפֿן זעקל קאַרטאָפֿל, און איך האָב געבראַכט קאַרטאָפֿל פֿאַר מיין משפּחה. כּיהאַב געקענט זיין דאָס יאַטל, וואָס האָט קניענדיק געבעטן רחמים, און איך האָב אויסגעמיטן דעם נסיון... און ווידער: צי וואָלט איך געפֿאַלן אויף די קני? די, וואָס האָבן זיך דורכגעריסן דורכן טויער, האָבן נישט „שטראַם“ געמאַרשירט, ווי דער דייִטש האָט געפֿאַדערט... דעם זעלביקן ראַש־השנה־אָונט האָט איבער דער געטאָ זיך פֿאַרשפּרייט די ידיעה, אַז אַ בחורל, פֿאַרווונדיקט אין אַ פּוס בעת דער שייסערײַ ביים געטאָ־טויער, האָט נישט געקענט זיך אויפֿשטעלן. האָבן די דייִטשן באַפֿוילן אויסגראַבן ביים זאַמדיקן ראַנד פֿון פּלאַץ אַ גרוב, אין וועלכן זיי האָבן געצווינגען די ייִדן פֿאַרשיטן אין איר דעם פֿאַרווונדיקטן. געווען איז ער אַ זון פֿון וואַרשעווער זשורנאַליסט שבת־ קלוגמאַן, אַ פּליט מיט זיין משפּחה. ער האָט איבערגעלעבט די קאוונער געטאָ, דעם קאַצעט דאַכאַ. נאָך דער באַפֿרייִונג — עולה געווען, אַנגענומען דעם נאָמען שבת־ קשב. געאַרבעט אין דער רעדאַקציע פֿון דער העברעיִשער טאַגצײַטונג „דבר“. אָנהייב די זעכציקער יאָרן האָט ער אונטער דעם פּסעוודאָנים ק. שבתאי אַפּגעדרוקט אין עבֿרית און ייִדיש אַ רושם־מאַכנדיקע גרעסערע בראַשור „כּצאן לטבח?“, — „ווי שאַף צו דער שחיטה?“. מיט איבערצײַגעוודיקע פֿאַקטן דערווייזט דער מחבר, ווי ווייט אומגערעכט איז דער סטערעאָטיפּ אַז ייִדן, קרבנות פֿונעם נאַצי־ קאַטאַקליזם, זענען געגאַנגען צו די מאַסן־עקזעקוציעס ווי שאַף צו דער שחיטה. די בראַשור האָט אויסגעהאַלטן עטלעכע אויפֿלאַגעס, איז איבערגעזעצט געוואָרן אויף ענגליש, שפּאַניש און פֿראַנצײַזיש. די משפּחה קלוגמאַן איז געווען אַ פּערזענלעכער בײַשפּיל פֿון ווידערשטאַנד. די טאַכטער איז אַנטלאָפֿן פֿון געטאָ, פֿאַרשטעלט פֿאַר אַ פּאַלקע. דער צווייטער זון איז אַנטלאָפֿן אין אַ קריטישן מאַמענט, נישט קוקנדיק אויף אַלע ספּנות. ביידע זענען געבליבן לעבן אויף צו להכּעיס דעם נאַציִשן משחית. הערט זיך אַ שאַס, דערנאָך נאָך עטלעכע. נאָך זיי — אַן אויסרוף אין דייִטש: — אַזוי מאַרשירט מען?! ס׳איז אַ דייִטש פֿון דער טויערוואַך. איצט באַפֿעלט ער: — שטיין בלייבן! און ווידער אַ שאַס. אַנשטאַט צו בלייבן שטיין צעפֿאַלט זיך אונדזער קאַלאַגע. עמעצער פּרוּווט אַפּציען זיך אויף צוריק. די קאַנוואַרן שטייען אָבער ווי אַ וואַנט הינטער אַלעמען און שטופן אונדז פֿאַרויס. נישט קיין צוריק! — אַזוי מאַרשירט מען פֿאַרביי דייִטשן?! — רעוועט דער זעלבער דייִטש, צילנדיק אין אונדז מיט זיין קאַראַבין. — שטיין בלייבן! די רייען אויסגלייכן!!! — ייִדן, בלייבט שטיין! — בעטן זיך קולות. קיינער פֿאַלגט אָבער נישט. מיר רוקן זיך פֿאַרויס צום אַפּענעם טויער מיטן איינציקן ציל — אַרײַנכאַפֿן זיך אין געטאָ. — די, יודענזעק“ אַרונטער! אויף אַן אָרט איבערלאָזן! — באַפֿעלט שוין אַ צווייטער דייִטש. — ייִדן, ס׳טויג נישט! מע גרייט אונדז עפעס לכּבֿוד ראַש־השנה... — טוט עמעצער אַ קרעכץ, אַראַפּנעמענדיק פֿון רוקן דאָס זעקל פּראַדוקטן. מיר נעמען זיך איבערקוקן, איבעררוקן — אפֿשר וועט אַן איינגעשטעלט שטיקל אַרדענונג האַמעווען די רוצחים. זייער בלוטדאַרשט האָבן זיי שוין געקענט שטילן — עס וואַלגען זיך טויער ייִדן אויפֿן ברוק... פּלוצעם, ווי אַ קאַטאַפּולטירטער, פּליט אַדורך דעם טויער אַ יאַטל מיט אַ פּויל זעקל אין דער האַנט. אַ וואַכמאַן לויפֿט אים נאָך. שייסט אין אים און טרעפֿט נישט. דעריאַנדיק דאָס יאַטל, צילט ער אין אים שוין פֿון גאַר נאָענט.

דאָס יאַטל פֿאַלט אויף די קני. צונויפֿגעלייגט די דלאַניעס ווי צום געבעט, אַפּעלירט ער צום דייִטש: — הער פּאַסטן, גנעדיקער הער פּאַסטן, שייסט נישט! טרוקן טוט אַ קנאַק דאָס געווער־צינגל. עס שווינגט דער קאַראַבין. דער דייִטש ציט האַסטיק אָפּ דעם וואַפֿנשלאַס און איבערצײַגט זיך: אויסגעשאַפֿן אַלע קוילן. כאַפט ער זיך צום פּיסטאַלעט. דאָס יאַטל ניצט עס אויס, שפּרינגט אויף, טוט זיך אַ לאָז פֿייל־אויסן־בויגן, שוין אַן דעם פעקל. האַרט פֿאַרן פֿאַרקערעווען זיך אין אַ געסל טרעפֿט אים די פּיסטאַלעטן־קויל. ווי דערשפּירנדיק פֿייער אונטער די פּיס, טוען מיר זיך אַ וואַרף צום טויער, רײַסן זיך אַרײַן אין געטאָ, צעלויפֿן זיך, נאַכגעיאַגטע פֿון קוילן. מיך מײַדן זיי אויס, אַ סימן — כּיפֿאַל אַרײַן אַ לעבעדיקער צו די אייגענע, האַלטנדיק פֿאַרקראַמפֿט דאָס זעקל אין האַנט, און צעכליפע זיך...

אויסשטעלונג: ווי דער גרויל פֿונעם חורבן האָט געווירקט אויף אַמעריקאַנער קינסטלער

פֿון דזשעניפֿער־פּייגל שטערן, פֿאַרווערטס, 16.10.2025
אַ נייע אויסשטעלונג אינעם עסקענאַזי קונסט־מוזײַ אין אינדיאַנער אוניווערסיטעט באַווייזט ווי אַזוי אַמעריקאַנער קינסטלער האָבן רעאַגירט אויפֿן גרויל פֿונעם חורבן. ס׳רובֿ פֿון זיי זענען געווען ייִדן, סײַ אימיגראַנטן סײַ היגעבוירענע. „דערמאַנונג און באַנייִונג: אַמעריקאַנער קינסטלער אונעם חורבן, 1940-1970“ איז די ערשטע אויסשטעלונג וואָס קאַנצענטרירט זיך אויפֿן חורבן אין דער אַמעריקאַנער קונסט בעת די 30 יאָר נאָך דער מלחמה — ווען די ווירקונג פֿון דער שחיטה פֿון די איראָפּעיִשע ייִדן איז נאָך אַלץ געווען פֿריש. די קינסטלער האָבן אויסגעדרוקט טיפֿן שאַק און צער אויף פֿאַרשיידנאַרטיקע אופֿנים. דער אויסשטעלונגס קאַטאַלאַג באַשרײַבט אַלע 74 ווערק פֿון איבער דרייַ טויזן מאַלערס, סקולפּטאָרן און גראַפֿישע קינסטלער, און שטעלט זיי אינעם ייִדישן און אַמעריקאַנער קאַנטעקסט. די אויסגעשטעלטע ווערק פֿון אַיליאַ שאַר, רות ווייסבערג און פֿראַנק סטעלאַ באַהאַנדלען, דער עיקר, די פֿאַרטיליקונג פֿון דער ייִדיש־ רעדנדיקער קולטור אין מיזרח־איראָפּע. יעדער קינסטלער רעפּרעזענטירט אַ באַזונדערן קוקוינקל: שאַר ברענגט אַרײַן דעם פּערספּיקטיוו פֿון אַ ייִדישן אימיגראַנט; ווייסבערג — פֿון אַ הי־געבוירענער ייִדישקע; און סטעלאַ — פֿון אַן אַמעריקאַנער נישט־ייִד. שאַר (1904-1961) איז געבוירן געוואָרן בײַ אַ חסידישער משפּחה אין זלאַטשאַוו, גאַליציע, און האָט אימיגרירט אין די פֿאַראייניקטע שטאַטן אין 1941. אין דער אויסשטעלונג געפֿינען זיך אַ פֿאַר פֿון זיינע אילוסטראַציעס — אַ פּאַפּולער בוך פֿון אַברהם יהושע העשל פּובליקירט אויף ענגליש אין 1950. דאָס בוך פֿאַראייביקט דעם אַנדענק פֿון דער פֿאַרשוונדענער חסידישער וועלט, וואָס האָט געבליט במשך פֿון 200 יאָר אין מיזרח־איראָפּע. דזשעניפֿער מאַקאַמאַס, די אויסשטעלונגס־קוראַטאָרשע, האָט מיר דערציילט אַז שאַרס אילוסטראַציעס רופֿן אַרויס טראַדיציאָנעלע פּאַפּירשניטן, וואָס ייִדן מאַכן שוין הונדערטער יאָרן לאַנג אין שײַכות מיטן יום־טובֿ שבוּעות. שאַר אַליין האָט געשאַפֿן זילבערנע יודאַקאַ, אַזוי ווי תּורה־קרוינען און קידוש־בעכערס, און זיינע בילדער אין העשלס בוך באַווייזן די השפּעה פֿון מעטאַל־ווערק. די אילוסטראַציעס מאַלן אויס טעמעס אַזוי ווי אַ רבֿ מיט אַ ספֿר־תּורה, מענער און ייִנגלעך וואָס טאַנצן

עקסטאַטיש אין אַ שיל, און אַ ייִד וואָס לייגט תּפֿילין אויפֿן קעפל פֿון זײַן קליינעם זון. די מאַסיווע, שוואַרץ־ווייסע פֿיגורן רופֿן אַרויס אַ פֿאַרשוונדן יראַת־שמידיק שטייגער לעבן. רות ווייסבערג, וואָס איז געבוירן געוואָרן אין שיקאַגע אין 1942, האָט געטרוערט איבער אַ וועלט וואָס זי האָט נישט פּערזענלעך געקענט. אין 1971 האָט זי געשאַפֿן „דאָס שטעטל: אַ נסיעה און אַן אַנדענק“, אַ קינסטלערס בוך מיט ניין בילדער וועגן דער אויסראַטונג פֿון מיזרח־איראָפּעיִש ייִדיש לעבן. מאַקאַמאַס האָט מיר דערקלערט אַז ווייסבערג האָט זיך אינספּירירט פֿון אַ יזפּור־בוך געשאַפֿן פֿון איר באַבען פֿון דער מוטערס צד. „ווען זי האָט אַנטדעקט דאָס דאָזיקע יזפּור־בוך האָט עס ממש טראַנספֿאַרמירט איר לעבן און קונסט“, האָט מאַקאַמאַס געזאָגט. נאָך אַ וויכטיקער קוואַל פֿון ווייסבערגס „שטעטל“ אַלבאַם איז געווען ביכער פֿאַטאַגראַפֿיעס פֿון פֿאַרמלחמהדיק ייִדיש לעבן ווי למשל „די פֿאַרשוונדענע וועלט“, אַ באַנד מיט 530 בילדער אַראַפּגענומען פֿון פֿאַטאַגראַפֿן ווי ראַמאַן ווישניאַק און אַלטער קאַציונע, פּובליקירט פֿונעם פֿאַרווערטס־פֿאַרבאַנד אין 1947 (און וואָס איז אַליין אין דער אויסשטעלונג). ווישניאַקס „פוילישע ייִדן: אַ בילדער־פּינקס“ פֿון 1947 האָט זי אויך אינספּירירט; ווי אויך „הילצערנע שילן“, אַ פּויליש בוך פּובליקירט אויף ענגליש אין 1959, וועגן די אַלטע שילן וואָס זענען אַלע אַפּגעברענט געוואָרן פֿון די נאַציס. ווייסבערג האָט אַנגעהויבן מיט די דאָזיקע פֿאַטאַגראַפֿיעס און זיי איבערגעמאַכט. למשל „נסיעה־1“ פֿון „שטעטל“ איז באַזירט אויף אַ פֿאַטאַ פֿון „הילצערנע שילן“. אַ שיל פֿאַרנעמט כּמעט דאָס גאַנצע בילד, אָבער ווערט געשילדערט ווי אַ מיראַזש. דער הימל זעט אויס צעשמאַלצן פֿון פֿייער אָדער פֿון אויפֿרייסן. אין דער פֿאַדערגרונט איז דער דורכזעיקער פֿיגור פֿון אַן עלטערער פֿרוי — אַ פּנים אַ פּאַנטאַם אָדער געדעכעניש. לעבן איר שטייען עטלעכע שוואַרצע געשטאַלטן, אפֿשר פֿאַרברענטע בלומען אָדער שטעכלדראַט. אין „1938“ האָט ווייסבערג געניצט אַ פּאַטאַגראַפֿיע פֿון ווישניאַקס „פוילישע ייִדן“. אין דער פֿאַטאַ גיין דרייַ מענער אין שוואַרצע מאַנטלען אין דער גאַס; אין ווייסבערגס באַאַרבעטונג זענען צוויי פֿון זיי נעלם געוואָרן. עס בלייבט איבער נאָר דער שאַטנדיקער פֿיגור אויף די טרעפּ. עס האָט זיך שוין אַנגעהויבן די פֿאַרשווינדונג פֿון אַ פֿאַלק. פֿראַנק סטעלאַ (1936-2024), אַ באַקאַנטער אַבסטראַקטער קינסטלער, איז געווען אַ קאַטויל פֿון מאַסאַטשוסעטס. מאַקאַמאַס האָט דערקלערט אַז דער ייִדישער אַרכיטעקט ריטשאַרד מייער האָט געשאַנקען סטעלאַן אַן עקזעמפּלאַר פֿון „הילצערנע שילן“, וואָס האָט אינספּירירט סטעלאַס „פויליש דאַרף“ סעריע פֿון 1971-1974 (נישט געקוקט אויפֿן וואָרט „פויליש“ האָט סטעלאַ באַשטעטיקט אַז די ווערק באַהאַנדלען צעשטערטע שילן). די סעריע באַשטייט פֿון 130 אַבסטראַקטע געאַמעטרישע געשטאַלטן. דאָ קען מען זען דאָס בילד „לונע“, וואָס איז אין דער אויסשטעלונג. לויט מעקאַמעסן רופֿן די הילצערנע פֿאַרעמס פֿון „פויליש דאַרף“ אַרויס דאָס האַלץ פֿון די שילן, און די העלע קאַלירן דערמאַנען אין די פֿאַרביקע וואַנט־מאַלערייען אינעווייניק. די קונסטווערק פֿון שאַר, ווייסבערג און סטעלאַ היטן אויף דעם זפּרון פֿון אַ ברוטאַל פֿאַרטיליקטער קולטור, וואָס האָט געבליט אין מיזרח־איראָפּע במשך פֿון הונדערטער יאָרן.

(צוזאַמענגעשטעלט פֿון: אַלעקס דאַפּנער)

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